



Greater Boston PFLAG CONNECTIONS

Winter 2011

Massachusetts LGBT Youth at Risk: The Key is Family

By Ken Heideman, Board Member

If nothing else could grab the attention of the general population and focus it, however briefly, on the plight of LGBT youth in this country, the wave of suicides that occurred in 2010 certainly did. We have a national problem that is particularly bad in certain regions of the United States. But what about here in Massachusetts?

With respect to LGBT issues, there is a perception among many that Massachusetts is an enlightened and progressive place to live. Relative to many other parts of the country it most certainly is:

- The political ideology is more liberal than that of most other states;
- Marriage became legal for gays and lesbians;
- We have a prominent openly gay eleven-term congressman, Barney Frank;
- There is a state commission for LGBT youth and a numerous resources and support for LGBT people and families.

Throw in the Gay Straight Alliance groups in many of our high schools and you might think that LGBT youth have it made in Massachusetts.

Sadly, and in some cases, tragically, that is simply not the case. Here, as in all regions of the nation, LGBT youth all too often meet with rejection from their parents and families and the derision of their peers. It is too easy to see that LGBT youth are at risk elsewhere, but not to acknowledge that it is happening right here in our own communities. This blind spot can lead to complacency, and complacency is our worst enemy. The truth is that Massachusetts kids who have come out or who are trying to come out are as vulnerable to depression, bullying, and even suicide, as kids anywhere else.

This article will attempt to shed light, in a quantitative way, on the risks facing Massachusetts LGBT kids, and also discuss what we can do to address and reduce those risks. The good news—and there is good news—
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Greater Boston PFLAG Hails New Guidance for Schools to Notify Parents of LGBT Students Targeted for Bullying

By Stanley Griffith, President

Greater Boston Parents, Families and Friends of Lesbians and Gays (PFLAG) applauded new guidance unveiled today by the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) that would help school officials comply with parental notification requirements in the state's new Bullying Prevention Law. The document, *GUIDANCE ON NOTIFYING PARENTS WHEN A STUDENT HAS BEEN BULLIED BASED ON SEXUAL ORIENTATION OR GENDER IDENTITY/ EXPRESSION: IMPLEMENTATION OF 603 CMR 49.05*, was presented at a January 25, 2011 meeting of the Massachusetts Board of Elementary and Secondary Education, and distributed to school officials throughout the state.

“This guidance provides school officials with research-based advice on how best to respond to bullying incidents involving Massachusetts' most at-risk youth,” said Stanley Griffith, board president of Greater Boston PFLAG. He noted that one of the most common forms of bullying and harassment in Massachusetts' schools is based on actual or perceived sexual orientation, according to the *Massachusetts Youth Risk Behavior Surveys*. Research shows that a hostile climate in school contributes to elevated risks, including an increased number of violent attacks against LGBT students and higher rates of suicide attempts and the use of drugs and alcohol among LGBT youth.

Mr. Griffith noted that many states have adopted bullying prevention laws that, like the Massachusetts law, require schools to notify the parents of students who are found to be targets of bullying. “These provisions make sense and can be an important step to helping families cope with bullying, but if the student is gay, there are significant risks if the notification process is not handled properly.”

In Greater Boston PFLAG's experience, a very small percentage of students, probably fewer than one or two percent, have disclosed their orientation or identification to their parents. Therefore, the student should participate in discussions of how and when
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Massachusetts LGBT Youth at Risk

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is that any of us who choose to can use this information to make a hugely positive difference in the lives of our kids.

The accompanying table shows data from The Massachusetts Youth Risk Behavior Survey (MYRBS) for 2009. This ongoing biennial survey has not yet specifically addressed transgender youth, thus the GLB headings.

Reported Behaviors	GLB Students*	Other Students
Attempted suicide in the past year	24.7%	5.6%
Required medical attention as a result of a suicide attempt	8.8%	2.2%
Skipped school in the past month because of feeling unsafe on route to or at school	13.9%	3.4%
Was threatened/injured with a weapon at school in the past year	17.3%	6.4%
Was in a physical fight resulting in treatment by doctor or nurse	9.0%	3.0%
Has been pregnant or gotten someone pregnant	10.5%	5.2%

*All differences between GLB students and Others are statistically significant, $p < .05$.

The numbers are appalling on a number of levels. First, considering only the “GLB Students” column, the **percentage** of reporting students stating that they had attempted suicide or experienced bullying/violence is shocking on its own. Second, the **disparity** between adverse behaviors experienced by GLB Students and “Other Students” is a stark indication of the magnitude of the problem at hand. Finally, the **persistence** of the disparities over biennial surveys going back to 1995 (not shown here) is alarming and unacceptable; in many ways we are making real progress, but in several key areas we have been moving our feet really fast but gaining little ground.

Does this mean that all of the efforts made up to this point to reach struggling LGBT youth and to encourage a general climate of acceptance have been for naught? Is this a problem so intractable at its core that we should just throw up our hands? Absolutely not on both counts! The efforts that have been made have brought us to the point where we can now focus our collective energies more directly on areas that research has suggested will be most effective.

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Find a Greater Boston PFLAG Support Group Near You

Greater Boston PFLAG's Confidential Helpline:
866-427-3524

Arlington

2nd Tuesday of the month, 7:15pm; First Parish Church, Sunshine Nursery School, 630 Massachusetts Ave., Arlington; Contact: Ann at pflagarlmass@yahoo.com or 781-891-5966.

Boston

Group for parents of transgender and/or gender variant children; Next meetings Wednesday February 23 and March 9, 6:30pm; Sidney Borum Jr. Health Center, 130 Boylston St., Boston; Contact: Pam at 781-891-5966 or Melissa MacNish at 617-457-8140.

Cape Ann

1st Tuesday of the month, 7:00pm; First Universalist Church of Essex, 57 Main St., Essex (the intersection of routes 133 and 22); www.uuessex.org for directions; Contact: Melanie at weeartie@yahoo.com or call 978-768-3690.

Concord

3rd Sunday of the month, 7:00pm; Trinity Episcopal Church library, 81 Elm St. (enter from River St.), Concord; Contact: Beth at bobandbethshaw@gmail.com or 978-448-3999.

Dorchester

3rd Thursday of the month, 6:30pm; Codman Square Health Center, 637 Washington St., Conference Room A, Dorchester; Contact: Pam at 781-891-5966.

Easton

4th Monday of the month, 7:30pm (if holiday, then 3rd Monday); Unity Church, 9 Main St., Easton; Contact: Cecile or Mary at pflageaston@comcast.net.

Fall River

1st Wednesday of the month, 7:00pm; Administration Building, 386 Stanley Street, Fall River, MA. Use main entrance; Contact: Mary or Marianne at zemawoman@verizon.net or 401-391-1874.

Framingham/MetroWest

2nd Sunday of the month, 7:00pm; The First Parish Church, 24 Vernon St., Framingham; Contact: metrowestpflag@verizon.net or 781-891-5966.

Merrimack Valley PFLAG Chapter

4th Tuesday of the month, 7:00pm; South Church, 41 Central St., Andover, MA. Contact: merrimackvalleypflag@gmail.com or 781-891-5966

Reading

2nd Thursday of the month, 7:30pm; Loring House, 211 Summer Ave., Reading, on the campus of the Unitarian Universalist Church of Reading, at the intersection of Woburn St. and Summer Ave.; Contact: Martha at pflagreading@aol.com.

Always Our Children

1st Tuesday of the month, 7:00pm; Community Room of Sacred Heart Convent (behind Sacred Heart Church), 395 Chestnut St., Springfield; Contact: www.fortunatefamilies.com or Ann 413-736-6803.

One-to-One Parent Support

If you wish to speak more extensively over the phone or in person with one of our trained volunteers, we offer one-to-one parent support. We match your situation to that of one of our volunteers (i.e., dad with a gay son can speak to another dad if he wishes). All meetings are confidential. For more information, please call 781-891-5966 or email info@gbpflag.org.



About Greater Boston Parents, Families and Friends of Lesbians and Gays, Inc.

We are a group of parents, families, friends, and lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender people. We help change attitudes and create an environment of understanding so that our LGBT family members and friends can live in a world that is safe and inclusive. Through support, education, and advocacy we foster dialogue, create safe environments, and open hearts and minds. For more information, visit www.gbpflag.org.

Office Location

85 River Street, Ste. 3A
Waltham, MA 02453
781-891-5966
Help Line: 866-427-3524

Mailing Address

P.O. Box 541619
Waltham, MA 02454-1619

Greater Boston PFLAG Connections

We welcome coming-out stories, articles, letters, and comments from our readers. E-mail articles to: GBPFLAG_newsletter@yahoogroups.com. Please include your name and phone number.

Editor and Layout: Jennifer Swanson
Proofreader: Ann Schlesinger

Advertising Information

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DEADLINE FOR NEXT ISSUE: Mar 25

Massachusetts LGBT Youth at Risk

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It all begins with families. Caitlin Ryan, Ph. D, ACSW, directs the Family Acceptance Project (FAP) at San Francisco State University. A landmark FAP study that she directed looked at the effect of family acceptance on the health and well-being of LGBT youth (Ryan et al. 2009). When trying to change entrenched, negative, and intolerant attitudes, neither well-reasoned logical nor emotional arguments can hold a candle to ir-refutable facts.

The FAP study provides such facts in a way that represents a call to action for allies of the LGBT community. Ryan and her team found that when compared to LGBT youth who were fully supported by their families, those who encountered a number of identified rejecting behaviors when they were teenagers were:

- **8.4 times** more likely to report having attempted suicide;
- **5.9 times** more likely to report high levels of depression;
- **3.4 times** more likely have used illegal drugs; and
- **3.4 times** more likely to report having engaged in unprotected sexual intercourse by the time they were young adults.

Ryan et al.'s study goes even further in identifying *fifty-one specific rejecting behaviors* that some LGBT kids are subjected to by their families, including verbal harassment, physical violence, exclusion from family activities, and prevention of access to the LGBT community (Reardon, 2009). What's more, a neutral or ambivalent response (e.g., "We love you but you are never to bring that subject up again.") produces nearly the same consequences! As if these data aren't discouraging enough, *many parents are engaging in damaging rejecting behaviors toward their children and are completely unaware that they are doing so.*

So where do we go from here? Armed with the data from MYRBS and Ryan et al., here are some important steps we can and must take:

- Get beyond our denial and realize that there is much work to be done – even here in Massachusetts.
- Educate parents and families about MYRBS data, what rejecting behaviors are, and the dire consequences for their LGBT kids if these behaviors persist.

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Massachusetts LGBT Youth at Risk

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- In addition to families, disseminate the facts on the impact of family-rejecting behavior and Massachusetts LGBT youth-at-risk data to teachers, doctors, therapists, clergy, and every adult professional who regularly comes in contact with kids.
- Provide resources and ongoing support for parents about the very real feelings they are experiencing in adjusting to their child coming out.

Happily, we are not starting at square one; far from it. We can build on the efforts already being made by Greater Boston PFLAG and other organizations with a renewed focus on facts, getting the word out, and understanding and communicating that families are at the very center of the constellation of support needed by LGBT youth. Families save kids and facts can save families. Dr. Ryan and her colleagues have given us a call to action. What we do with it is up to us.

References

Reardon, Christina, 2009, *Social Work Today*, Vol. 9, No.6, p.6

Ryan, Caitlin, David Huebner, Rafael Diaz, and Jorge Sanchez, 2009, *Pediatrics*, Vol. 123. No. 1

Greater Boston PFLAG Hails New Guidance for Schools

(Continued from page 1)

the notification will occur, and the student should be involved in the decision over how much detail should be disclosed.

“Actual parental and family rejection or fear of rejection may cause the student to deny that bullying has occurred, to run away, or to engage in other self-destructive behavior,” said Griffith. “Research shows that parental rejection is associated with high levels of attempted suicide among LGBT young people. Anti-gay bullying is bad – but when linked to parent rejection, it kills. That’s why what Massachusetts is doing is so important.”

Mr. Griffith noted that the guidance specifically incorporates the research of Dr. Caitlin Ryan’s Family Acceptance Project, which was published in *Pediatrics*, the Journal of the American Academy of Pediatrics, in January 2009. Dr. Ryan’s team has shown that LGBT youth with highly rejecting parents are more than 8.5 times more likely as young adults to report having attempted suicide

and nearly six times more likely to report high levels of depression. Dr. Ryan’s research draws a connection between elevated levels of risk of all kinds and parental rejection. This research also documents the connection between parental acceptance and higher levels of self-esteem, significantly reduced levels of attempted suicide and better overall health for LGBT youth.

In response to two widely reported suicides in Massachusetts, the Massachusetts legislature passed its sweeping Bullying Prevention Law on May 3, 2010. Among other provisions the law mandated notification of a bullying incident to the parents of both the perpetrator and the victim and directed the DESE to adopt regulations governing parent notification by September 30, 2010.

On June 22, 2010, the Massachusetts Board of Elementary and Secondary Education released proposed parent notification regulations for public comment. Greater Boston PFLAG and a number of other LGBT advocacy groups expressed concerns that the parent notification requirement could have unintended adverse consequences when the bullying incident involves an attack based on the victim’s actual or perceived sexual orientation or gender identity or expression.

Although the Board’s final regulations, approved on September 21, did not specifically address these concerns, the Board also adopted a resolution directing the Commissioner of Elementary and Secondary Education to “work with interested organizations to develop and provide additional guidance and technical assistance to schools on implementation of these notification requirements.” The new guidance was the product of those consultations.

“Massachusetts has long been a national leader in advocating for and protecting all our youth,” said Pamela Garramone, Executive Director of Greater Boston PFLAG. “By issuing this guidance, the Massachusetts DESE is at the forefront of the movement to make our schools safe, welcoming and inclusive. The guidance is practical, well researched and allows school officials to exercise common sense discretion in handling difficult situations.”

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Essay about Coming Out

By Elisabeth Beckwitt

From the time I was very young, I had memories of watching Disney movies where the Princess would wait for her Prince. A bit later, I would watch TV shows where young girls lost their minds when they talked about boys. Many of the books I would read talked about romance between a man and a woman so I just assumed that was the way life was. As a result, I played the part, even going to a dance with a boy at a summer camp when I was 10 years old.

But something was not right. I didn't spend all my time thinking about boys. Instead, I thought about girls. It was quite confusing and at first, I had no one with whom I felt comfortable talking about it. I began to read and think about these feelings until I convinced myself that I was gay. I did not feel comfortable saying it to anyone. I couldn't see telling my parents and I definitely couldn't see telling my older brother. He was a typical inconsiderate teenager who would use the word 'faggot' as an insult when he played video games with his friends. In fact, the first anti-gay bias I experienced was in my own household.

Luckily, I was able to enroll at Concord Academy for high school. When I arrived on campus, I found a group called the Gay-Straight Alliance (GSA). I attended some meetings and met a friend who was also in the closet. We began talking about our feelings and decided to come out together at a 'Diversity Circle' on Martin Luther King Day at our school. The purpose of this circle was for the whole community to be gathered in the gym and step into the circle to answer 'yes' or 'no' to various questions.

On January 22nd, 2008, I came out in front of the whole school. The question was "step into the circle if you consider yourself gay or lesbian," and with one look at my best friend, we both stepped in together. It was the scariest yet best moment of my life and it felt amazing to finally share more broadly what I had kept inside for several years. I was warmly received by all my friends (and even people I didn't know congratulated me), which gave me strength to tell my parents. I was surprised that they did not react negatively, although I'm pretty sure my dad worried about how unconventional my life would be.

Unfortunately, that would be as far as it would go in telling my family. There is no way I would tell my brother, aunts, uncles, cousins or grandparents. To this day, I think my grandparents are still waiting for the time when I announce that I'm engaged to a young man. I don't think my reluctance is due to a feeling that they would reject me. It's just a conversation I have never wanted to have.

I have had one of the better high school experiences as a gay teenager because the community at Concord Academy has been gay-friendly. There has been the occasional insult, but my friends at school have accepted me for who I am.

But this is where the good news ends. Outside of the protective walls of Concord is a world filled with huge negative bias against gays and lesbians. So while this country is more progressive than it used to be, there are still bigots everywhere. The recent suicides by seven gay teenagers is a signal that our country has a huge way to go before homosexuals even feel safe, let alone feel like they are an equal. I wrote a poem about these boys and the helplessness in their lives which I have included at the end of my essay. (Warning: this poem is disturbing).

I am now a senior and currently a Co-Head of the GSA that I joined when I was a freshman. I love the opportunity to support others who are in the position I was when I was a freshman. I will fight for gay rights with every breath. Given how long it has taken to improve the rights of other minority groups, I imagine I will be fighting for this cause for decades. Perhaps the mood will continue to shift more positively over time. But this will be a long, long journey.

Vulture

*Leather dripped sweat,
each drop falling on concrete.
Fractured skull, seven broken bones,
broken heart encased in cracked ribs.
Spit flying from lips,
colliding with blood red eyes stained
with screaming fathers
denying relation and love.
Open the vein and let it fly*

*little bird,
lost in the sky among
the vultures.
Closed arms and faces
splattered with hate of love.
Slammed down into the
pavement outside the door*

*buy the rope and
tie the noose in a knot.
Oozing from the tearing
in the flowered wallpaper,
infecting the room with ignorance
that swims in the water of disgust.*

(Continued p.6)

Words fueled by some desire for acceptance.

Memorize their faces, their names, their stories forever caged inside your intolerable mind.

Raymond, 19.

Tyler, 18.


Cody, 17.

Justin, 15.

Billy, 15.

Seth, 13.

Asher, 13.



TRANSGENDER EXPLAINED
For Those Who Are Not

by
Joanne Herman

A much-needed basic primer organized by topic into short, easy-to-read chapters. Perfect for parents, relatives, colleagues, friends, allies, and even journalists who want to quickly get up to speed on what it means to be transgender.

Find it on Amazon.com, BarnesAndNoble.com, Borders.com, and at select retailers

148 pages—Suggested Retail Price \$14.95

From your Regional Director – January 2011

By Roberta “Bobbie” Barry

It’s been a wonderful six years in this role of Regional Director in New England for the National PFLAG organization. I have met many dedicated and passionate people who are bringing our mission of education, support, and advocacy to their towns and cities. It is you who make this grass roots organization so valuable to those who may be struggling for family and cultural acceptance. I wish that we were not needed in our fairly liberal New England communities; however, in spite of the progress in equality and safety, discrimination continues to fester in schools and other institutions. I thank you all for what you do to make change a reality. From the tasks of making sure there are refreshments at

meetings to taking on the role of Chairperson, each individual’s contribution is of great importance to making a difference in the lives of our LGBT family and friends.

My work as Regional Director is to help the leadership in NE chapters to connect and share ideas and information among themselves as well to be an integral part of the PFLAG National work. While I try to visit as many chapters as possible, most of this volunteer work is done via the Internet and phone. There are a dozen other regional directors who volunteer throughout the country. We meet yearly in the fall in Washington, D.C. to share our joys and concerns and to learn more about how to support chapters in our respective regions. Being a part of this group provides each of us opportunities for new perspectives in our membership and work in PFLAG. We are term limited to six years, thus my note to all in the region.

I encourage any of you to consider calling or e-mailing me to ask more about the specifics of this role. Helpful skills are: basic communications via computer, data base use, written and spoken communication, and a belief in the mission of PFLAG. It is extremely rewarding. There is a small expense budget, and support from the staff in the National office. Of course, I shall continue to assist whomever decides to accept this invitation. I am not leaving PFLAG, but continuing in a new role as a National Board Member, where I hope to be of assistance in sharing the realities of grassroots chapter development in New England.

You can contact me at: bbarry29@ne.rr.com or 603-352-6854

“Journeys to Understanding” Greater Boston PFLAG Starts New Support Group in Andover

November 9, 2010

“Be the change you want to see in the world”.

Quoting from Gandhi, Dave Bryan began the evening by explaining how he came to be a facilitator for the “Journeys to Understanding” Greater Boston PFLAG Merrimack Valley Chapter Kickoff Event. Dave stated that he had no strong connection to the gay community that would have automatically yielded a yes when asked to facilitate the evening. He was neutrally supportive. As he pondered his answer, Dave’s wife, Brenda, offered the aforementioned Gandhi quote and moved him to accept the invitation. Shortly before the kickoff event, Dave attended an annual family weekend. When the conversation turned to the “Journeys to Understanding” event Dave was going to facilitate, his brother was overcome

with gratitude. Just the week before, Dave's teenage niece had come out to her parents. So began an emotionally charged and eventful meeting.

Pam Garramone detailed the various supportive branches of PFLAG and introduced the extraordinary film, *Always My Son*. The father in the film was in denial that his son was gay. After the son began engaging in destructive behavior, the parents sought out and created supportive communities. They did not want their son to become another statistic.

Then, the panel participants shared their experiences. Sam, a transgender youth, spoke about his parents' unaccepting attitudes; Roger, father of a gay son, told of his son's suicide attempt; George, a gay Tufts University student, was kicked out of his home; Lara, an area Unitarian Universalist minister and partnered lesbian, denied her sexual orientation and spent years married to a man; Manny, a married gay man and founder of Inclusive Coaching, was initially asked by his family to deny who he was.

Deeply moved by the panelists' stories, the audience of 140 people was reluctant to end the evening. A lingering sentiment reigned: *It's not enough to be supportive. We must actively work to be the change we want to see in our families, in our communities and in our world.*



The Samaritans provide a free and confidential 24-hour befriending helpline. This unique service, staffed entirely by volunteers, provides unconditional and non-judgmental support to anyone who feels alone, depressed, or in crisis.

Samariteens is a peer support line staffed by teens talking to teen callers during after-school and weekend hours. For more information on volunteering, call us at 617-536-2460 or visit us online at www.samaritansofboston.org. If you need to talk to someone on our help lines for any reason, you can reach us at **617-247-0220** or **877-870-HOPE (4673)** or for teens at **800-252-TEEN (8336)**.

Are you excited about Greater Boston PFLAG's activities, or has Greater Boston PFLAG helped you handle a particular situation? Write us a letter to explain how we were able to help, and with your permission, we'll publish it to show members what types of services they can count on from us.

New Hospital Visitation Rules in Effect Today

From The Advocate.com

New federal regulations that prohibit hospitals from discriminating against visitors based on sexual orientation and gender identity took effect on January 18, 2011.

According to the Human Rights Campaign, "These new regulations require all hospitals participating in Medicaid and Medicare programs – virtually every hospital in the country – to permit patients to designate visitors of their choosing and prohibit discrimination in visitation based on a number of factors, including sexual orientation and gender identity."

Last year, President Barack Obama announced the regulations in response to the tragic story of Janice Langbehn and Lisa Pond of Florida. The couple was kept apart while Lisa died at a Miami hospital.

A Message from PFLAG's New National President, Rabbi David M. Horowitz

By Jennifer Swanson, Editor

National PFLAG elected a new president in November, and he published this message as he took office. This is a short excerpt from his letter, which can be found at the national PFLAG website.

"As I came out as the parent of a lesbian daughter, so did more than 200 families in my congregation who had a close connection to the LGBT community. As I learned more and found myself around this new and expanding family, I became comfortable with my daughter's sexual orientation and was able to reach out to others. That ability to connect with people – especially those in the very start of their own learning and acceptance process – keeps me an active part of my local chapter today.

PFLAG is much more than simply a support for LGBT people, their friends, and relatives. It is a powerful organization that is helping us shape and change our culture every single day, in hundreds of communities around the country."

See the entire letter at:

<http://community.pflag.org/Page.aspx?pid=1333>

Greater Boston PFLAG invites you to Pride and Passion 2011- Step Up!

Wednesday Evening, April 27, 2011

One Marina Park Drive, Boston – On the waterfront! Great views of the harbor and city skyline!

6:00 pm Cocktails and Celebrity Chef Taste Around, Program and Live Auction to follow

Tickets: \$125 to benefit Greater Boston PFLAG's Safe Schools & Communities Program

Honorary Chairs

Massachusetts Governor Deval L. Patrick and First Lady Diane B. Patrick

Event Co-Chairs

Joan Parker, philanthropist and community leader
Liz Page, activist and Principal, Liz Page Associates

A Taste Around Featuring a Reunion of Top Chef Masters Competitors

Jody Adams, James Beard award-winning chef/owner of Rialto

Susan Feniger, award-winning chef, restaurateur, cookbook author and a leading authority on U.S. Latin Cuisine

Ana Sortun, awarded Best Chef Northeast in 2005 by the James Beard Foundation, owner of Oleana and Sofra

Other Select Guest Boston Chefs (to be announced)

Special Appearance by Tufts University's Famed A Cappella Group The Beelzebubs

Featured on Fox Network's *Glee* as the voices of the Dalton Academy Warblers

Please contact Pam Garramone, Executive Director, 781-891-5966 or Pflagsafeschools@aol.com or log on to www.prideandpassion2011.com to purchase tickets and follow our progress.

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