



# The Flagpole

*The Newsletter of Parents, Families and Friends of Lesbians and Gays  
of the Metropolitan Washington DC Area*

*On the web at [www.pflagdc.org](http://www.pflagdc.org) or [www.stayclose.org](http://www.stayclose.org)*

January 2006

## Two New Foundations Support PFLAG Safe Schools Program

Metro DC PFLAG Safe Schools got a big boost in December with news of two new foundations awarding us grants to work with Sexual Minority Youth Assistance League (SMYAL) on gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgender (GLBT) issues involving youth in DC public schools.

The Association for the Study and Development of Community (SSDC) selected PFLAG as one of three organizations out of the 296 proposals they received. ASDC staff reported that the organization was very specifically interested in working with PFLAG.

“Not only are they giving us \$20,000 to help us create a community that includes GLBT students in a DC school, they will provide their expertise in community building to help us be successful,” said Rhonda Buckner, Metro DC PFLAG executive director.

As it is a research and development organization for community capacity building and social problem solving, SSDC certainly has the expertise to help build the Safe Schools program. It combines the principled, rigorous use of scientific methods with practical tools to foster learning and improved capacity

for social change. (Thanks to member Andrew Byrd and Resource Associates.)

The Common Ground Fund awarded SMYAL, with Metro DC PFLAG as a subcontractor, a planning grant to create a safe schools coalition in DC.

Common Ground was established in 1996 in response to the rising tensions within diverse neighborhoods in the Greater Washington region. It was one of the original six community foundation partnerships that received national matching grants from the Ford

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### Is Homosexuality a Sin? Metro DC PFLAG Has Answers!



*by Armand Cuccinello*

Metro DC PFLAG has published its second edition of *Is Homosexuality a Sin?*, providing alternative responses from Christian, Jewish, and Muslim leaders to questions that have, for too long, received dogmatic answers that still continue to dominate religious rhetoric.

*Is Homosexuality a Sin?* gives its readers a glimpse into the minds and hearts of noted religious personalities – such as Episcopal Bishop John Spong, Islamic Imam Daayiee

Abdullah, and Roman Catholic Sister Jeannine Gramick – who answer three questions that concern those who want to know if homosexuality is sinful: Does God regard homosexuality a sin? Do scriptures object to homosexuality? Does God approve of two gay men or two lesbians having a committed relationship?

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### Report from Metro DC Safe Schools Coordinator

*by Jillyenne Harris*

Metro DC PFLAG is partnering with the Sexual Minority Youth Assistance League (SMYAL) and with the Department of Mental Health (DMH) on a collaborative effort to update the counseling and mental health support services for GLBTQ youth within the Washington, DC Public School System (DCPS).

The week before Thanksgiving, PFLAG and SMYAL met with Dr. Olga Acosta-Price, Director of the School Mental Health Program for the DC Department of Mental Health to introduce PFLAG and to learn about Mental Health Programs in DC Schools. Dr. Diane Powell, Assistant Superintendent for Student Services joined us by phone to collaborate on planning goals for providing services to the students in the DCPS. Through our combined efforts, we will be able to increase awareness

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## Strategic Plan for 2006-07 Developed

The board of directors adopted four goals to guide the work of Metro DC PFLAG for the next two years:

- Expand and increase the effectiveness of our Safe Schools program
- Strengthen our “Stay Close” program
- Increase membership, develop a more active grassroots membership, and enhance support group participation
- Improve outreach and strategic alliances with groups and organizations.

During the summer and fall, the PFLAG board, volunteers, and Executive Director Rhonda Buckner worked with Christopher Hamilton, a volunteer consultant from Booz Allen Hamilton to create the plan.

As part of the process, President Allen Keiswetter conducted meetings in Maryland, Virginia, and DC to seek input from members. The consistent message that Allen heard from members was for the need for increased outreach to potential new members and encouragement to activate a grassroots network. He also heard sustained excitement for the Stay Close campaign. Additionally, members who completed the survey on their renewal forms this summer identified Safe Schools as a high priority.

Details about the strategies will appear in upcoming issues. ▼

### *Safe Schools Grants, continued from p. 1*

Foundation and the Charles Stewart Mott Foundation. It has become an innovative grant-making program supporting the Community Foundation for the National Capital Region's commitment to social justice. PFLAG will receive \$5,000 from a \$20,000 grant awarded to SMYAL.

These grants, added to the Cafritz Foundation's grant of \$10,000 brings our total funding for the Safe Schools program to \$35,000 and allows us to increase our Safe Schools Coordinator position to a full-time job. Most significantly, it firmly establishes our Safe School effort as a viable and ongoing program with the potential to effect the schools' treatment of bullying, and creating safe and welcoming learning environments. Our increasing collaboration with SMYAL enhances both agencies' ability to make progress. ▼

**Save the Date!**  
**Metro DC PFLAG Gala**  
**March 11, 2006**

## Announcements

### Metro DC PFLAG goes to France!

Europe 1, a radio station in France interviewed founding President Paulette Goodman, a native French speaker, and Armand Cuccinello, a survivor of so called reparative therapy for a broadcast on gay issues.

### Gay Into Straight America Coming to DC!

Two women and a poodle are on a year-long journey, Gay Into Straight America. Dotti Berry, Robynne Sapp, and Rylee Joy will be traveling to the Northeast US at the end of March and beginning of April.

They've been featured in the Southern Voice and PFLAG National's Weekly Alert. You can read about their journeys online by visiting [www.gayintostraightamerica.com](http://www.gayintostraightamerica.com).

### One Human Family

A one-man organization in Key West, FL is promoting a three-word message that we are all one human family regardless of our differences - we are “ONE HUMAN FAMILY”!

Request FREE stickers that boldly state “ONE HUMAN FAMILY” by sending an #10 SASE to VA-OHF, c/o PO Box 69, Madison, VA 22727. ▼

### *Safe Schools Coordinator, continued from p. 1*

in DCPS of GLBTQ students who are in need of counseling or other mental health services. Our goal is to help create a friendlier learning environment for students to increase school attendance and safety for GLBTQ students.

Through our partnership, PFLAG and SMYAL will work directly with Dr. Acosta-Price who is eager to do all she can to support GLBTQ youth within DC schools. She is already working with the DMH to provide mental health services to 30 public and charter schools in the DC metro area by offering mental health screenings, short-term counseling, and referrals.

Through our collaboration DMH will be able to add PFLAG and SMYAL to the lists of referrals to provide DCPS students who need information on sexual orientation and gender identity issues. We are currently working on a Memorandum of Understanding to clarify our individual responsibilities for the collaboration. On January 20, we will be attending a meeting of the Qualified Mental Health Professionals to present our goals in supporting GLBTQ youth in the DCPS and will report on the progress that we will have made and expect to see in 2006. ▼

## Thank You Metro DC PFLAG Contributors!

### Life Time (\$1000)

Kathryn Braeman

### Flagwaver (\$500)

David and Phyllis Jacobson-Kram

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### Donations in Honor of the Commitment Ceremony of Tom Buerger and Ralph Segar-Buerger

Total \$2,030.00

Patty and George Buerger

Gary and Wanda Legge

Dorothy Ann Thompson

**Happy New Year!**

### *Is Homosexuality a Sin?, continued from p. 1*

The booklet gives insight into how 21 practitioners of 13 different religious denominations feel about sexuality as it pertains to GLBT people, as well as provides an alternative to the viewpoints of conservative leaders.

As America is currently involved in a so-called "culture war," and issues important to GLBT persons are used to drive a wedge between those that are misunderstood and those with restrictive viewpoints on topics such as gay marriage, a resource such as *Is Homosexuality a Sin?* will prove to be a useful guidebook that faith-loving members of religions that are typically viewed as being "anti-gay," who see no contradiction between their faith and homosexuality.

Copies of the 45-page booklet, which includes a listing of LGBT-friendly religious groups for members of many religious traditions – including Hindus and Buddhists – can be purchased from Metro DC PFLAG.

The pricing structure is as follows:

1: Free for local residents

2-5: \$3.00 ea. + .75 per brochure S&H

6-25: \$3.00 ea. + \$5 S&H

More than 25: \$10 S&H (up to 100 copies)

*Discounts:*

50 or more: \$2.75/copy

100 or more: \$2.50/copy

Orders exceeding five copies will be sent media mail. ▼



## Support Group Schedule

Everyone is welcome! Trained facilitators lead our support groups and confidentiality is maintained. Our goal is to help families heal and stay together. For additional information about any Metro DC PFLAG support group, call (301) 439-FLAG (3524) or (202) 638-3852.

### Washington, DC:

Galludet University

No meeting in January.

### Reston, VA: Jan. 3, 7:30 p.m.

Washington Plaza Baptist Church  
1615 Washington Plaza  
Lake Anne Village Center  
(First Tuesday of the month)

### Alexandria, VA: Jan. 10, 8:00 p.m.

Beverly Hills Community United  
Methodist Church  
3512 Old Dominion Blvd. (near  
West Glebe Road)  
(Second Tuesday of the month)

### Annandale, VA: Jan. 15, 4:30 p.m.

Little River UCC  
8410 Little River Turnpike  
(Third Sunday of the month)

### Bethesda, MD: Jan. 15, 2:00 p.m.

Cedar Lane Unitarian Church  
9601 Cedar Lane  
(Third Sunday of the month)

### Trans-people and their families

(Concurrent with the monthly  
Bethesda support group)

### Manassas, VA: Jan. 23, 7:00 p.m.

Bull Run Unitarian  
Universalist Church  
9350 Main St.  
(Fourth Monday of the month)

**REMEMBER:  
YOU ARE NOT ALONE!**

