



# THE NEWSLETTER

February 2019

ISSUE 2

VOLUME 26



## FOCUS ON THE HUMAN RIGHTS CAMPAIGN



Much of the newsletter highlights the Human Rights Campaign Foundation and its importance to the LGBTQ community.

Please join us for our general meeting on **Monday, February 25** at 7:00 pm at Jewish Family Service (JFS), 8788 Balboa Avenue, San Diego.

Our guest speaker is Beth Kind, current Co-Chair for The Human Rights Campaign (HRC) San Diego Chapter. HRC and Foundation serve as America's largest civil

rights organization working to achieve LGBTQ equality. Beth, who transitioned five years ago, is a board member of Metropolitan Community Church of San Diego. In that capacity, she founded a trans support group and provides ministry outreach to incarcerated LGBTQ inmates at the Sheriff's Department men's jail. While she will share HRC's latest local endeavors and programs, the emphasis on her presentation will be geared toward the transgender community.

Please join us for support groups, the cookie social, followed by Beth's presentation.

## TIME TO THRIVE

The 6th Annual Time to THRIVE conference, sponsored by the HRC Foundation, is this weekend, **February 15-17** in Anaheim. It's not too late to register ([www.timetothrive.org](http://www.timetothrive.org)).

As the impact of family rejection, bullying, and messaging they hear about being LGBTQ, it weighs heavily on youth. The Conference engages a broad audience of youth-serving professionals, including K-12 educators, parents and families, mental health providers, pediatricians, religious leaders, recreational athletic coaches and youth development staff (Boys and Girls Club, YMCAs, scout leaders, etc.), who all focus on creating spaces in which LGBTQ youth are affirmed, supported, and have the ability to thrive. The goal is to build awareness and cultural competency, learn current and emerging best practices and gather resources from leading experts and national organizations in the field. The conference is strongly committed to an intersectional approach in all conversations, workshops, and keynotes.

While there are many noteworthy conference speakers, several will be very familiar: Betty DeGeneres, LGBTQ Advocate and mother of Ellen DeGeneres and Jeanette and Jazz Jennings from TLC's *I Am Jazz*.

## ALWAYS IN NEED OF HELP!

The San Diego History Center is in desperate need of volunteers for the LGBTQ+ Community Exhibition in Balboa Park. Part of the AIDS Memorial Quilt is on display and they need monitors whenever the exhibition is open. There are two shifts: 10:00 am-1:30 pm or 1:30-5:00 pm daily. If you can sign up, please go to: <https://www.signupgenius.com/go/60b044ca5a82eabf94-february>. Any questions, please email Alison Hendrickson: [ahendrickson@sandiegohistory.org](mailto:ahendrickson@sandiegohistory.org).

## BOWLING FOR A CAUSE

Human Rights Campaign San Diego's 11th Annual Bowling for Equality is **Saturday, February 23**. It is one of their largest and most exciting events of the year. The event is at Kearny Mesa Bowl, 7585 Clairemont Mesa Blvd, San Diego. There are two shifts: 12:30-2:30 pm and 3:00-5:00 pm. Tickets comes with an HRC membership, two hours of bowling, shoe rental, food, and snacks. It's a fun afternoon of bowling with friends and colleagues, while supporting HRC's fight for equality.

Go to: [act.hrc.org/page/36291/event/1](http://act.hrc.org/page/36291/event/1) to purchase tickets.

## STILL PLAYING!

The Diversionary Theatre presents this poetic new play which "follows Ed, a gay Jesuit priest who leaves the Catholic church to reconcile with his estranged brother in an isolated and icy township in Alaska. As Ed confronts his tragic past and tenuous future, he unexpectedly finds love beneath the starry Alaskan sky, and support from an unlikely ally. *The Hour of Great Mercy* is a tender, insightful and compassionate story about our collective relationship to illness, family, and redemption."

The play runs until **March 3**. For performance times and ticket info, go to: [www.diversionary.org](http://www.diversionary.org). You can also call: 619-220-0097. For \$5 off each ticket, use Promo Code PFLAG. The theatre is located at 4545 Park Blvd. in San Diego.

## TANTRUMS & TIARAS

Reminder that the Center's fundraising event, Tantrums & Tiaras: Battle of the Bar Queens, is this Sunday, **February 17**, 2019. Join the spoof of beauty pageants, complete with a "talent" showcase. The event is in collaboration with Mo's Universe. For tickets and info, visit [www.tantrumstiaras.org/](http://www.tantrumstiaras.org/).

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National PFLAG, Washington, DC  
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## Membership Application

- New  Renewal  Change of Address  
 Please contact me for volunteer opportunities

Confidentiality is respected. Your donation is tax deductible (Tax ID 33-0512868)

Make checks payable to: PFLAG San Diego  
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 Accept my donation, please do not list.

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or apply online www.pflag.com

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City ..... State ..... ZIP .....

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## THANK YOU FOR YOUR EXTRA HELP

### General Fund Donations

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# LOOK LIKE A BIG FISH

Competition is fierce.  
It's time to get aggressive.



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858.220.7478  
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# Current Events

**February 15-17**

Time to THRIVE conference  
(see article)

**February 16 | Saturday**

South Bay Youth Center  
Ribbon Cutting  
(see article)

**February 17 | Saturday**

Tantrums & Tiaras

**February 18 | Monday**

**SOUTH BAY SUPPORT GROUP WILL NOT MEET IN FEBRUARY**

**February 23 | Saturday**

Bowling for Equality  
(see article)

**February 25 | Monday**

San Diego Metro General Meeting and Support Groups

**February 26 | Tuesday**

PFLAG Support Group  
North County Inland

**February 26 | Tuesday**

Our Space-Poway/  
High School

**February 26 | Tuesday**

Our Space-Poway/  
Middle School

**THRU MARCH 3**

Diversions Theatre  
*The Hour of Great Mercy*  
(see article)

**March 4 | Monday**

PFLAG Support Group  
North County Inland

**March 5 | Tuesday**

PFLAG Support Group  
Ramona

**March 11 | Monday**

Mi Familia

**March 12 | Tuesday**

PFLAG Support Group  
North County Inland

**March 12 | Tuesday**

Our Space-Poway/  
High School

**March 12 | Tuesday**

Our Space-Poway/  
Middle School

**March 18 | Monday**

Deadline for scholarship applications  
(see article)

**March 18 | Monday**

PFLAG Support Group  
South Bay

# SUPPORT GROUPS

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**SD METRO GENERAL MEETING & SUPPORT GROUP**

Meets every 4th Monday at 7:00 pm, at Jewish Family Service, 8788 Balboa Ave, San Diego in Kearny Mesa.

**For further information, contact the Info Line:**

**888-398-0006 or [www.pflag.com](http://www.pflag.com)**  
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**NORTH COUNTY COASTAL**

Meets the 1st Monday at 6:30 pm

Pilgrim UCC, 2020 Chestnut Avenue, Carlsbad.

**Annette: 760-518-3345 | [northcountycoastal@pflag.com](mailto:northcountycoastal@pflag.com)**  
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**NORTH COUNTY INLAND**

Meets 2nd & 4th Tuesdays from 6:30-8:30 pm

St. Bart's Church, 16275 Pomerado Road, Poway.

**Jill/Dan: 760-855-9424 | [RBPowaypflagsdc@pflag.com](mailto:RBPowaypflagsdc@pflag.com)**  
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**EAST COUNTY**

Not currently meeting. For questions and information:

**Raegan: 858-531-5426 | [eastcountysdc@pflag.com](mailto:eastcountysdc@pflag.com)**  
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**SOUTH BAY – NO MEETING FEB. 18**

Meets 3rd Monday from 7:00-8:00 pm,

Our Safe Place, 746 Ada St, Chula Vista.

**Patti: 619-227-6092 | [pboman@pflag.com](mailto:pboman@pflag.com)**  
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**RAMONA**

Meets 1st Tuesday from 6:00-8:00 pm, St. Mary's in the Valley, 1010 12th Street, Ramona. For meeting info::

**Carlee: 757-448-5640 | [Ramonapflagsdc@pflag.com](mailto:Ramonapflagsdc@pflag.com)**  
.....

**POWAY LGBTQ YOUTH SUPPORT/HIGH SCHOOL**

Meets 2nd & 4th Tuesdays from 6:30-8:30 pm

St. Bart's Church, 16275 Pomerado Road, Poway.

**Al: 858-382-2262 | [al@transfamilysos.org](mailto:al@transfamilysos.org)**  
.....

**OUR SPACE-POWAY--LGBTQIA/MIDDLE SCHOOL**

Meets 2nd & 4th Tuesdays from 6:30-8:30 pm, St. Bart's

Church, 16275 Pomerado Road, Poway. Facilitated by youth.

**Al: 858-382-2262 | [al@transfamilysos.org](mailto:al@transfamilysos.org)**  
.....

**MI FAMILIA (Spanish) NEW LOCATION**

Meets 2nd Monday from 6:00-7:30 pm, South Bay Youth Center, 1180 Third Avenue, Suite C1, Chula Vista.

**Patti: 619-227-6092 | [pboman@pflag.com](mailto:pboman@pflag.com)**  
.....

**TRANSFAMILY SUPPORT GROUP**

Support groups held separately for children, teens, & adults to explore topics around gender identity and expressions.

**Kathie: 858-382-9156 | [info@transfamilysos.org](mailto:info@transfamilysos.org)**

**VISION STATEMENT**

PFLAG envisions a world where diversity is celebrated and all people are respected, valued, and affirmed inclusive of their sexual orientation, gender identity, and gender expression.

**MISSION STATEMENT**

By meeting people where they are and collaborating with others, PFLAG realizes its vision through: Support for families, allies and people who are LGBTQ; Education for ourselves and others about the unique issues and challenges facing people who are LGBTQ; Advocacy in our communities to change attitudes and create policies and laws that achieve full equality for people who are LGBTQ.

## FEATURING



PFLAG San Diego County was pleased to present the **“We Believe in You” Award** to **Evan Hillard**. Evan is a student at San Diego City College with aspirations to transfer to San Diego State University. This is his third try at college as he was diagnosed with a mental illness late in his teenage years and struggled for years to get well enough to return to school. Evan has learned that not everyone’s trajectory in life is the same. He proudly accepted this award on behalf of every LGBTQ+ student who has been challenged with a mental health diagnosis, but who has not given up on themselves no matter how many times they may have had to start over.

Evan’s psychology professor stated that Evan is an excellent student who was ranked in the top 5% percent of her classes. He completed the Mental Health Work Certificate with honors; Evan is highly motivated and has a strong work ethic, as you will see in his essay.

“I am a current Psychology Major at San Diego City College and plan to earn an associate degree in psychology. Then I plan to go on to San Diego State University and earn a bachelor’s degree in psychology and a master’s degree in social work. I aspire to be a Licensed Clinical Social Worker and use my education to better the mental health of the transgender community.

This issue is personal to me, as I am a transgender man living with schizoaffective disorder. Isolation and suicide attempts are part of my story and I know are also part of many other transgender people’s stories, too. Unfortunately, many voices will never be heard because of the stigma of mental illness and the bigotry many transgender people face on a day to day basis. As a clinical social worker, I want to give voice to the voiceless. I want a more loving, tolerant world where people can be vulnerable and find their strength, even while exposed to the hatred many transgender people endure from society. I think an intimate conversation with a social worker can go beyond the confines of a clinic office and echo into the world. Giving people space to transform, as if helping them build their cocoon, will produce more butterflies in the world. The transgender community needs a voice, but it starts with someone listening to the muffled cries few want to face.

I work as a peer support specialist at a Bio-Psychosocial Rehabilitation Program in Bankers Hill. I have been working at my clinic for one and a half years and have been working as a peer support specialist in San Diego for five years. I have supported and advocated for many people living with mental illnesses over this time period. I have used my own lived experience to help guide my clients through their recovery journeys, but most importantly, I have listened

to my clients. I find that many of my clients’ symptoms decrease once they know they are being heard and that their stories have value. I have heard joy, anger, regret, guilt, sadness, confusion, and fear, but most of all appreciation for having someone to listen with compassion. I have heard the pitch, tone, and amplitude of the spectrum of emotions one may endure while recovering from a mental illness. It leaves me grateful for my journey and wanting to work harder to help others on their journeys as well. It is what has inspired me to go back to school. My ears are a great service to my community and to the world that often listens to those who have the ability to shout, while ignoring those who can only whisper.

Though the transgender community is starting to make some important social and political strides, so many of us whisper or are silent about our pain. Our high suicide rate is a grim indicator of this fact. If given the chance to better my education, I would use it to better serve my community. Transgender people have endured adversity from their



own bodies and society’s expectations of their bodies. Can you imagine how freeing it may feel to finally address the looming elephant in the room? Can you imagine how empowering that freeing feeling may be if it is received well? Can you imagine how devastating that feeling may

be if it is not received well and you lose your family, friends, community, religion, career, and home? Two things happen to every transgender person who chooses to transition. They experience a combination of gains and losses. Some may not lose the people, places, and things in their life, but they still lose their old identity. Not necessarily in a change of name or sex, but in a change of how they interact with the world. They lose the lie they once force-fed themselves and others and embrace the thing that everyone ultimately gains, which is freedom to be themselves. Many people lose people, places, things, and their old identity, but if they are able to be resilient through the losses, they also gain their freedom to be themselves, just like more fortunate transgender folks. But that resiliency piece is a hard thing to come by. It requires support and extra help to learn to develop, but once obtained, it is never broken or taken for granted. The once marginalized become unstoppable in their pursuit of happiness. They become the true American Dream, the powerful unyielding underdogs.

I want to use my education to bring resiliency to those that fall between the cracks in a behavioral health system not designed for their unique needs. I want to elevate the voices of those that may be whispering or silent, using only my ears. I want to help create a world that sees value in everyone, as my clients have found value in themselves. If

given the opportunity, I would be honored to be a part of this transformational time to be a transgender student living in America. I would use my influence as a social worker wisely and create change one person at a time. The American Dream is not dead, it is on the caseload of an aspiring social worker.”

**Congratulations** are in order, as Evan and his partner, Danny Dunn, were married in August, 2018.

## CAN YOU BE A GOOD DEED DOER?

WANTED: sponsors for the Launching Leaders Luncheon. Much of the luncheon's success depends on help from sponsors. Sponsorships are available at these levels: \$500 for a table of eight; \$1000 for an Awardee Sponsor; \$2500 for a Presenting Sponsor. To check out the Sponsorship Package, go to [www.pflag.com](http://www.pflag.com), click on the Education & Advocacy tab, the Scholarships from the drop down menu, then Support our Students. Individual ticket purchases are also available (\$60 each). For questions, please email [scholarships@pflag.com](mailto:scholarships@pflag.com).

## GRATEFUL FOR HRC FOUNDATION



The Human Right Campaign Foundation, in partnership with nine California civil rights and education organizations, released the California LGBTQ Youth Report, a groundbreaking resource detailing the experiences of LGBTQ students in California. The report analyzes responses

from more than 1,700 young people from California, ranging in age from 13 to 17, who participated in HRC's online 2017 LGBTQ Teen Survey.

“This groundbreaking data reveals that the cards remain stacked against LGBTQ youth in California -- and especially so for LGBTQ youth of color and transgender and gender-expansive youth,” said Ellen Kahn, HRC Foundation Director of the Children, Youth & Families Program. “However, despite these challenges, many LGBTQ students are taking action and advocating for inclusivity and equality in schools. As advocates, parents, teachers, school administrators and school board members, we must follow their lead by implementing recommendations in this report, including ensuring curricula are LGBTQ-inclusive and supporting LGBTQ student clubs, to create safe, affirming and welcoming schools.”

HRC and researchers at the University of Connecticut found that even with California state laws explicitly protecting LGBTQ students:

- Only 10 percent of LGBTQ youth in California say all of their school staff are supportive of LGBTQ students;

- Only 32 percent of LGBTQ youth in California always feel safe in the classroom;

- Half of all respondents have been teased or bullied because of their actual or perceived sexual orientation or gender identity, and 28 percent of LGBTQ youth in California have been threatened with physical violence at least once because of their sexual orientation or gender identity;

- Forty-three percent of transgender students can NEVER use the bathroom/locker room at school that matches their gender identity

In recent years, California has passed several laws designed to explicitly protect LGBTQ students and to provide guidance on compliance. However, data suggests that some districts may be unaware of their legal obligations, and others are still in the process of updating policies and procedures to ensure LGBTQ inclusion. These oversights and delays -- and, in some cases, decisions by the district to ignore the requirements -- have likely contributed to the challenges experienced by LGBTQ youth who responded to the survey.

The U.S. lacks reliable data about LGBTQ people, especially about the experiences of LGBTQ youth. In light of this, and in the face of consistent attacks on LGBTQ youth, HRC is committed to ensuring this data is in the hands of teachers, school counselors, coaches, doctors and other youth-serving professionals across the country. These findings will inform a variety of HRC Foundation programs for youth and youth-serving professionals, including the Sports Equality initiative, HRC Foundation's Welcoming Schools and All Children-All Families programs, and the HRC Time to THRIVE Conference (see article in this newsletter).

## THE LGBT CENTER HAD A BABY!

The Center proudly announced that they gave birth to the South Bay Youth Center (SBYC). It will be making an appearance at the Ribbon Cutting Ceremony on **Saturday, February 16** from 1:00-3:00 pm at their location: 1180 Third Avenue, Suite C1, Chula Vista. A welcome and remarks will be presented by: Assemblywoman Lorena Gonzalez, Chula Vista Mayor Mary Salas, Chula Vista Councilmember Steve Padilla, and the Center CEO Cara Dessert.

Come to meet the honored guests, take a tour, and enjoy light refreshments. Please RSVP to [bit.ly/sbyouthcenter](http://bit.ly/sbyouthcenter).

SBYC has a drop-in space for LGBTQIA+ youth: ages 10-13, Friday 3:00-7:00 pm; ages 14-18, Thursday 3:00-7:00 pm; ages 18-24, Wednesday 3:00-7:00 pm. For all three meeting days, the schedule is as follows: 3:00-4:00 pm Study Hour; 5:00-5:30 pm Common Ground Discussion Group; 5:30-6:30 pm Gender Identity Group. For questions, contact Victor Esquivel at 619-692-2077, ext. 207 or email [southbayyouth@thecentersd.org](mailto:southbayyouth@thecentersd.org).

## SMILE!

If you have an account with Amazon, you can help raise funds for PFLAG San Diego County by changing your account to smile.Amazon. For every purchase, our chapter will receive .05% of the dollar amount of the order. This may not sound like a lot, but it adds up with the more people we have participating.

Go to smile.Amazon.com and log onto your account. When selecting to support PFLAG, it will be listed as either PFLAG San Diego County or by Parents and Friends of Lesbians and Gays San Diego County (our original name registered with the IRS).

## PAYBACK IS HELL

Remember Kim Davis who refused to issue marriage licenses to same-sex couples? Remember she even went to jail for five days? She's not finished paying the piper – literally. Republican Kentucky Governor Matt Bevin was once one of Davis's biggest cheerleaders. Now his lawyers would like to take Kim Davis to task financially, asking that the former Rowan County Clerk pay upwards of \$225,000 in legal fees to the same-sex couples she refused marriage licenses to in 2015.

His lawyers describe her actions as “conduct that violates civil rights,” and say she should be responsible for court costs after the couples sued her for not abiding by the Supreme Court ruling.

An appeals court will hear the case shortly to see who is financially responsible. Originally, in 2017, a district judge ruled that the state of Kentucky should pay these fees. The governor take is that Davis acted alone without the state's endorsement.

In one of the briefs on his behalf, Bevin's attorney stated that, “Her local policy stood in direct conflict with her statutory obligation to issue marriage licenses to qualified Kentucky couples. The local policy also undermined the Commonwealth of Kentucky's interest in upholding the rule of law.”

Rowan County attorneys who represent Davis say neither she nor the county should pay the couples' court costs and it's the state that should foot the bill. The county cited that Davis' policies were not under their control. Davis claims her authority came directly from the Commonwealth of Kentucky.

Time will tell how this will be resolved. To add to what will be either the county, state, or Davis's woes is, if the couples win in the appeals court, they are expected to seek out additional fees above the \$225,000 for the additional legal process.

## “X” MARKS THE SPOT

A new law for 2019 in New York City (only the city - not the entire state) makes it easier for transgender and non-binary New Yorkers to match their birth certificate to their gender identity without needing a signed affidavit from a healthcare provider. The law creates a new label, "X," to reflect a non-binary identity.

"Transgender and gender non-conforming New Yorkers deserve the right to choose how they identify and to live with respect and dignity. Our city respects your gender identity and the right to have it affirmed on your birth certificate," Mayor Bill de Blasio said.

Under the law, individuals born in New York City can apply to have the gender marker on their birth certificate changed by submitting a notarized application stating that the revision is to reflect their "true gender identity and is not for any fraudulent purpose."

The move is the latest in the city's efforts to reduce legal red tape for transgender and non-binary individuals. Hundreds have already received amended birth certificates with a health care provider's signature since the city eased requirements for a gender marker change in 2015. Prior to that, individuals seeking to have their gender marker changed on their birth certificate would have had to provide proof of sex-reassignment surgery.

New York City joins the states of California, Oregon, Washington and Idaho in allowing a birth certificate change without the signature of a medical authority. New Jersey is scheduled to follow suit this month.

## LGBTQIA QUESTIONS ANSWERED

Every third Monday of the month (upcoming meeting is **February 18**), Dr. Colette Lord will be answering questions about gender identity and what it means to be transgender and non-binary. The goal is to increase the understanding, compassion, and empathy for LGBTQIA folks so that our community is loving for all.

The meeting is from 6:00-7:00 pm at St. Mark's United Methodist Church, 3502 Clairemont Drive, Room 10, San Diego (Clairemont). For questions or further information, please go to Dr. Lord's web site: [www.coletteLordPhD.com](http://www.coletteLordPhD.com).

*“I hate that word. Straight. At the very least, those of us who are nonstraight should get called curvy. Or scenic. Actually, I like that: 'Do you think she's straight?' 'Oh no. She's scenic'”.*

*-Nina LaCour*

## SPREAD THE WORD TO LGBTQ SCHOLARS

As in previous years, PFLAG SDC is partnering with the San Diego Human Dignity Foundation for another successful scholarship program. The scholarship committee hopes you are reminding LGBTQ high school seniors, full-time undergraduate and graduate students to apply for PFLAG scholarships. This year, half-time applicants will be considered with an explanation of the circumstances that prevents them from attending full-time.

The application and requirements are available on our web site, [www.pflag.com](http://www.pflag.com) (click on the Scholarship link). **The deadline to apply is Monday, March 18, 2019** and the awards presentation for our annual Launching Leaders Luncheon will be **Saturday, May 11**. Anyone who attended in previous years can tell you that we've come a long way in our presentation of the scholarships and the fanfare that is rightly due the recipients.

This is PFLAG San Diego County's 21st year of offering scholarships; we will be offering 10 scholarships for a minimum of \$2000 each.

For scholarship questions, email: [scholarships@pflag.com](mailto:scholarships@pflag.com).

## GET IN THE MEMBERSHIP SPIRIT!

Thank you to those members who have renewed their membership for 2019. We are looking forward to receiving more renewals or first-time dues. These monies are used to provide support, education, and advocacy on behalf of our LGBTQ community and their families. They enable us to provide monthly meetings, an info line, newsletters, educational brochures, etc.

Please send your dues to PFLAG San Diego County, as \$15 of it is sent to PFLAG National. If you renew with them, there is no benefit for our San Diego chapter.

The membership application is in this newsletter and also on our web site ([www.pflag.com](http://www.pflag.com)). We accept PayPal for your convenience. You can also pay at any of the meetings or mail a check made payable to: PFLAG San Diego, P.O. Box 82762, San Diego, CA 92138. All donations and memberships are tax deductible.

## BEEN THERE, GONNA DO THAT!

This past month, as always, PFLAG SDC was busy with community activities. We participated in the Women's March, the MLK, Jr. Parade, worked on a project for Habitat for Humanity, and volunteered at the LGBTQ+ Community Exhibition.

There are upcoming events that are sponsored by SD Pride: Pride World Forum: *Bridges of Love* (2/13), OUT at the Ballet (2/16), and Pride Youth Art Show (3/9). All details may be found at [www.sdpride.org](http://www.sdpride.org).

## HARD AT WORK FOR PFLAG SDC



In January, the PFLAG San Diego County Board Members and Regional Directors met on the weekend to strategize ways to expand our outreach across the county. Support, education, and advocacy for families with LGBTQ loved ones are our focus.

## TRUMP'S STATE OF SOME OF THE UNION

As is consistent with his style, Trump had high-flying rhetoric about American greatness and unity – rhetoric that was at odds with many of his policies, while he also erased large swaths of the American people.

He praised the nation's military and veterans but never mentioned his plan to kick out thousands of service members simply because they are transgender. There were six trans military members in the audience as guests of Democratic members of Congress.

There were a couple of vague lines that Trump planned to end the HIV epidemic by 2030 with a promise of increased spending; however, in the past, the Trump administration has proposed cutting expenditures on HIV and AIDS. In addition to his wish to cut these funds, he also dismissed his entire advisory council on the issue. And, of course, this administration supports health care providers who would deny care that violates their religious sensibilities.

While he applauded the record number of women in Congress, there was no mention of the record number of LGBTQ people in Congress. As a matter of fact, he never uttered the term "LGBTQ" or anything similar.

And the Trump-et beat goes on....



## IN SYMPATHY

Our condolences to the family of Louise McWhorter who passed away in January, just before her 98th birthday. Louise was a Lifetime member of San Diego County PFLAG. She remained active with PFLAG well into her 90s and, for several years, sponsored a scholarship in the name of her husband, Mac, who was also a member of PFLAG and who predeceased her.

Louise's family has suggested donations to PFLAG San Diego County in her memory.

## IN MORE TROUBLE THAN WE THOUGHT

A federal judge has issued an injunction against a conversion therapy ban because she says it likely violates the free speech rights of conversion therapists.

The hate group Liberty Counsel sued the city of Tampa, Florida, on behalf of two conversion therapists, arguing that Tampa's conversion therapy ban violates the rights of conversion therapists.

Judge Amanda Arnold Sansone agreed with them. She ruled that conversion therapy is a form of speech protected by the First Amendment and that the city of Tampa was probably engaging in viewpoint discrimination.

Key to Sansone's decision was the 2018 Supreme Court decision National Institute of Family and Life Advocates v. Becerra. In that case, the five conservative Supreme Court justices ruled that the state of California can't force crisis pregnancy centers to give patients information about abortion and even rejected the idea of "professional speech."

In her ruling, Sansone said that conversion therapy is speech, not conduct, as long as it's limited to speech and doesn't involve techniques like electric shocks. She said that

while the city has an interest in protecting minors from harm, there were alternatives to a ban on conversion therapy, like getting the "informed consent" of minors... even though those minors are usually dependent on their homophobic parents and can't meaningfully give consent to something as harmful as conversion therapy.

The damage that conversion therapy causes, even if it's only "talk therapy," is well-documented. People who go through conversion therapy face depression, difficulty with intimate relationships, loss of social support networks, lowered self-esteem, and increased suicidal thoughts and attempts.

Previous courts have had no problem finding that conversion therapy bans are constitutional. Both the Third and the Ninth Circuit Courts have upheld conversion therapy bans for minors.

The Supreme Court has so far refused to hear appeals when Circuit Courts rule in favor of conversion therapy bans. What a shock (no pun intended)!

This current ruling by Judge Sansone may be a sign that the increasingly conservative Supreme Court will one day rule that conversion therapy bans are unconstitutional. Get ready to rumble!



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