



Club Sneakers new web site

from Mark

Sneakers in Jamestown NY has just launched a new website. The website has a photo gallery, listing of events at the bar, a history section and information about the bar.

The website is interactive, so registered users may upload photo galleries and leave comments. Also, an RSS feed is coming soon.

Visit the Sneakers website at www.clubsneakers.com

Sneakers has been in business for over 22 years. They are located at 100 Harrison Street, Jamestown NY.

New video gallery at EGN website

from Erie Gay News

We now have a gallery of videos at the Erie Gay News web site. Check it out at <http://videos.eriegaynews.com/>. We have videos related to various events and also of GLBT interest going back to 2006. We have also enhanced the photo gallery at <http://photos.eriegaynews.com> with thumbnails for each gallery. Photo galleries go back to 1995.

Also check the right sidebar at the Erie Gay News site (www.eriegaynews.com) to find us on Facebook, MySpace, Twitter and Frappr!

Penn State Erie conference on Gender Feb 12-13

from Sarah Whitney

The School of Humanities and Social Sciences at Penn State Erie, The Behrend College, is holding its second annual conference on gender, titled Fortunes of Gender. The two-day conference will be held Feb. 12-13, 2009, in the Samuel P. "Pat" Black III Conference Center

Please address all questions to Sarah Whitney (Committee Chair) at sew17@psu.edu



Tiffany Stephens (front) and Lee Ann, Kelly, Meko and Michelle at Lee's Birthday Party at Craze on Jan. 17. More photos online at www.eriegaynews.com Photo by Michael Mahler

National Food Drive for Equality

by Mike Mahler

As part of the Nationwide Food Drive for Equality, Erie's LGBT community collected 172 pounds of food and \$100 for the Second Harvest Food Bank of NW PA. Collection sites included Chicory Hill Herbs, Craze Night Club, Mercyhurst College, Papa Joe's Pepperoni Cafe (W 8th St), Presque Isle Gallery and Coffeehouse, Zodiac Dinor and Zone Dance Club. For these wonderful businesses, our volunteers and everyone who donated, THANKS for doing good for both the LGBT community and the greater community as well!

Gramley's group attacks Allegheny Co. Human Relations Ordinance

Information from Steel City Stonewall Democrats and Pgh Lesbian Correspondents

A newly proposed Allegheny County Human Relations Ordinance which would help protect people from discrimination in housing, employment and public accommodations based on "race, color, religion,

(continued on page 3)

In This Issue...

Obituary	5
Transitions	5
Point Foundation Offers Scholarships for GLBT Students	5
Calendar	6
On Stage	9
Making anger pay	10
Harrisburg City Council passes Life Partner Registry	11
Love Came Down at Christmas	12
Pope is wrong on "gay threat"	13
Java Buzz.....	14
Health	15
Screen.....	17
Thank Pepsi for Supporting Our Families! 18	
LBT Women news	18
Students For Equality - on Jan. 27	19
Study: Tolerance lowers GLBT teen suicide	19



Erie Gay News
 1115 West 7th St.
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Editors: Deb Spilko and Mike Mahler
Ad Design: Mike Lipiec
Deadline for next issue: Sunday, February 15; this will be distributed the night of Tuesday, February 24.

The *Erie Gay News* is published monthly as a source of news, events, information, and support for gays, lesbians, bisexuals, transgendered people (GLBTs), their families, friends, and supporters in the Erie PA area.

We welcome and encourage all readers to submit timely news, comments, and opinions of interest to local GLBTs for publication in these pages. We will consider for publication any nonfiction article, blurb, or illustration graphic that upholds that spirit. Please include your contact information with any piece you submit.

We will not publish any material that promotes hatred or discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation, gender identification, race, religion, age, class, physical ability, or any other reason. We do not support the exploitation of minors.

Views and opinions expressed in this publication do not necessarily represent those of the EGN staff.

Classified Ads are available!
See page 13 for more info.



QUARTER PAGE	FULL PAGE	HALF PAGE VERTICAL
HALF PAGE HORIZONTAL	EIGHTH PAGE	

AD SIZE	PRICE/ISSUE	DIMENSIONS
EIGHTH	\$30 - \$27 Prepaid	1 ⁵ / ₈ " high X 2 ⁷ / ₈ " wide
QUARTER	\$50 - \$45 Prepaid	3 ¹ / ₂ " high X 2 ⁷ / ₈ " wide
HALF VERT.	\$90 - \$81 Prepaid	7" high X 2 ⁷ / ₈ " wide
HALF HORZ.	\$90 - \$81 Prepaid	3 ¹ / ₂ " high X 6" wide
FULL PAGE	\$160 - \$144 Prepaid	7 ¹ / ₂ " high X 6" wide

Camera ready art or manuscript and/or photos, illustrations and logos must be received by the 15th of the month.
 Photos and Illustrations should be PDF or TIFF and HIRES.
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To the Zone for hosting, Andrea, Bart, Bruce ShROUT, C. Michael, Charles, Dennis, Doug Mauri, Erin M. M., James von Loewe, Janice Hanusik, Jeff, Jerry McCumber, Johauna, John, Kim, Laurie Finch, Mike, and Misty Harvey; Bruce ShROUT, Charles, Deb Spilko, James von Loewe, Janice Hanusik, Jeff, Jerry McCumber, Johauna, and Laurie Finch for distribution, Mike Lipiec for ad layout & etc. If you're interested in helping out, contact Michael Mahler at (814) 456-9833 or info@eriegaynews.com.

Community News

national origin, ancestry or place of birth, sex, gender identity, sexual orientation, disability, marital status, age” and use of animals to aid those with disabilities is facing major opposition from people who do not even live in Allegheny County.

Diane Gramley, spokesperson for the American Family Association of PA appears to be the primary organizer of this opposition. Predictably, the main reason that they oppose the ordinance is that it is based on the current City of Pittsburgh Human Relations Ordinance, which includes the categories of sexual orientation and gender identity.

The Pittsburgh Lesbian Correspondents blog has been following this situation closely. In a December post, one of the bloggers, Sue, pointed out that “Diane Gramley is not from Allegheny County. She doesn’t vote here. She represents some shadow members who can’t be bothered to show up to testify themselves.”

Since the AFA began their opposition campaign, three members of County Council have withdrawn their support of the legislation.

A hearing on January 15 produced a huge crowd, from both sides of the issue. Passing this could have state-wide ramifications.

To follow the Allegheny County situation, and/or read past posts, visit Pittsburgh Lesbian Correspondents at www.pghlesbian.com

Pride Picnic meeting

by Michael Mahler

The initial meeting about the Pride Picnic will be Sunday, February 1 at 2 PM at the home of Michelle Williams, 4013 Lancaster Rd, Erie PA 16506.

I am guessing that the first meeting will not need to be too long, but please come and be ready to roll up for your sleeves to work on the 17th Annual Pride Picnic. We are already confirmed for Saturday, June 13 from 1 to 6 PM at the Rotary Pavilion at Presque Isle State Park, Erie PA.

For more info, call Michael Mahler at (814) 456-9833, email is info@eriegaynews.com. You can sign up for the Picnic planning email list, as well as other lists, at <http://lists.eriegaynews.com>

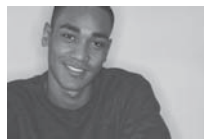


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Community News

Lesbian Dating Survey

from Dr. Jennifer Dyck, Psychology Dept SUNY Fredonia
and Dr. Anne Eisenberg, Sociology Dept SUNY Geneseo

Lesbian Volunteers Wanted for research on lesbian dating. Dr. Jennifer Dyck from SUNY- Fredonia and Dr. Anne Eisenberg from SUNY-Geneseo are researching how lesbian initiate and define dating relationships. We need volunteers who would be willing to complete a short survey on lesbian relationships. In order to complete the survey you must meet the following requirements:

- Identify as a lesbian
- Be 18 years of age or older
- Must have had a minimum of one date with a woman

If you are interested in participating in our research project, please send an email to: Dating.Survey@fredonia.edu

SafeNet needs cell phones

from SafeNet

SafeNet is currently in need of used cell phones to be used by our clients for 911. You can drop off your donation to 1702 French Street, Erie, Pa Phone (814)454-8161. SafeNet serves victims of domestic violence.

Vertigo needs new location

by Mike Mahler

The Lyndora Hotel did not work out as a location for Vertigo parties, so organizers are once again looking for a new location. If you would like to offer a suggestion for a possible event location, contact Kirsten at vertigov@aol.com The Vertigo website is at www.myspace.com/butlervertigo

Kudos to the group for putting on some truly wonderful events.

Pizza and Porn returns

from Menspace

Menspace is bringing back the very popular Pizza and Porn party. We are getting together on Saturday, February 7 at 7:30 PM at the home of Rick and Rod, 127 Lakeview Ave, Jamestown NY 14701. Their phone is 716-483-6825. They will provide pizza and beer. Bring your old videos, mags, whatever to swap. For more info, contact: Michael Mahler. Phone: (814) 456-9833. Email: info@eriegaynews.com. Visit <http://menspace.eriegaynews.com>.

Dining with Dykes in upstate NY

from Dining with Dykes

Dining with Dykes is a fun social group for queer identified women, their friends and allies who support the queer community and who reside in Upstate New York. Our widely diverse membership includes queer women from all walks of life who are seeking social interaction with other like minded individuals.

Starting in January 2009, we will be hosting potluck dinners and social outings twice a month. Places for gatherings will vary and will cover Syracuse to Rochester to Buffalo and towns in between!

Email it to us at: dining.with.dykes@frontiernet.net Website: <http://www.dining-with-dykes.com/> MySpace: http://www.myspace.com/dining_w_dykes

Lesbian Volunteers Wanted FOR LESBIAN DATING RESEARCH PROJECT

Purpose of study is to understand how lesbians initiate and define dating relationships.

We need volunteers who are willing to complete a short survey on lesbian relationships.

Requirements:

- Identify as a lesbian
- 18 years of age or older
- Must have had a minimum of one date with a woman

Interested, send email to: Dating.Survey@fredonia.edu

This research project is being conducted by:

Dr. Jennifer Dyck
Psychology Department
SUNY-Fredonia

Dr. Anne Eisenberg
Sociology Department
SUNY-Geneseo



Obituary

Marilyn Bivona

Marilyn A. Bivona, 61, of 1107 Newland Ave., died Tuesday, Dec. 16, 2008, in WCA Hospital.

A Jamestown native, she was born Oct. 15, 1947, a daughter of the late John and Edith Restivo Bivona.

She was a 1965 graduate of Jamestown High School and attended Jamestown Community College.

She was co-owner of Sneakers Bar for 22 years.

She was a member of South Hill Country Club, Mulligan Mommas Golf League at Maplehurst Country Club, the Eagles Club and a former member of Jamestown Moose Lodge.

She was an avid golfer participating in many tournaments, especially those raising funds for the cancer charities.

Surviving are a sister, Mary Kay Romano of Greenville, S.C.; a brother, John Bivona of Redondo Beach, Calif.; and very close friends: Mary Green, Gloria Trout, Kay Palmquist, Janet Lilli and Byrd Ledebur.

She was preceded in death by her parents.

A memorial service was held Saturday in the Lind Funeral Home. The Rev. Mel McGinnis officiated.

Friends will be received from 1 to 3 p.m. Saturday in the funeral home.

A celebration of life was held following the memorial service at Sneakers Bar, 100 Harrison St., Jamestown, N.Y.

Memorials may be made to Chautauqua County Humane Society, 2825 Strunk Road, Jamestown, NY, 14701.



Transitions

Michelle W (who has helped with the picnic) and **Scott W** were engaged on December 25, 2008. Congratulations to the happy couple!

Point Foundation Offers

Scholarships for GLBT Students

from the Point Foundation

Point Foundation, a scholarship-granting organization for lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender students of merit, has announced the opening of its 2009 application season.

The scholarship program's selection criteria include academic excellence, leadership skills, community involvement, and financial need. Particular attention is paid to students who have lost the financial and social support of their families and/or communities as a result of revealing their sexual orientation, gender identity, or gender expression. For further information and application guidelines, visit the foundation's Web site at www.pointfoundation.org/apply.html

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Calendar

This calendar is also online at www.eriegaynews.com/calendar.html

Jan 24 (Sat) - "Prayers for Bobby" (2009) premieres On Lifetime. Based on a true story about a mother whose gay son commits suicide.

Jan 29 (Thu) - "The Trials of Ted Haggard" premieres. On HBO 8PM. Documentary about the homophobic evangelical minister who was exposed by a male prostitute whose services he used.

Feb 1 (Sun) - Pride Picnic Meeting (Michelle's, 4013 Lancaster Rd, Erie, PA) 2 PM. This will probably not need to be a long meeting, but we will be kicking off planning for the 17th Annual Erie Pride Picnic, which will be on Saturday, June 13 from 1 to 6 PM at the Rotary Pavilion at Presque Isle State Park, Erie PA. Contact: Michael Mahler. Phone: (814) 456-9833.

Email: info@eriegaynews.com. Browse to <http://www.eriegaynews.com>.

Feb 6 (Fri) - G2H2 - Erie Gay Business Alliance social get together Under the Clock Bar & Grill, 100

Boston Store Plc, Erie, PA. 6 PM - 8 PM. Social mixer for GLBT/friendly professionals and business people. Sign up for the Erie Gay Business Alliance email list at <http://lists.eriegaynews.com>. Email: egba-owner@eriegaynews.com.

Feb 1 (Sun) - LBT Women of Erie meets (Presque Isle Gallery Coffeehouse, 35 Peninsula Drv, Erie, PA) 2 PM. Social group for lesbian, bisexual and transgendered women. Meets the 1st Sunday of each month at Presque Isle Gallery Coffeehouse. Sign up for email list at <http://lists.eriegaynews.com/> Email: womynspace-owner@eriegaynews.com. Browse to <http://womynoferie.wetpaint.com/>.

Feb 7 (Sat) - Menspace - Pizza and Porn (Rick & Rod's 127 Lakeview Ave. Jamestown, NY 14701) 7:30 PM. Social group for gay/bi men. Phone at site is 716-483-6825. Ask for Rick or Rod. "We will provide pizza and beer. Bring your old videos, mags, whatever to swap." For more info, contact: Michael Mahler. Phone: (814) 456-9833. Email: info@eriegaynews.com. Visit <http://menspace.eriegaynews.com>.

Feb 11 (Wed) - The Cupid Affair: R.A.W. at Craze Night Club 1607 Raspberry St, Erie, PA. Presented by Erie Awareness Outreach. Special guests: Taylor Morgan, Miss Connie, Buffy Lynn Hayes, Mark Swift. Featuring the Cupid Theme Dancers. Music by DJ BlackCat. Must be 18 years old to party. Contact: Duane. Phone: (814) 456-3027. Browse to www.crazeerie.com.

Feb 13 (Fri) - Watchfire Alliance Valentine's Dance Unitarian Church of Jamestown, 1255 Prendergast Ave, Jamestown, NY. 7 PM. WatchFire Alliance invites LGBTs everywhere to a Valentine's Dance: bring your favorite music for dancing. Contact: Bethany



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Calendar

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Feb 14 (Sat) - Valentine's Social at The Latonia 1 East 1st St, Oil City, PA. 8 PM. \$5. BYOB. Presented by Oil City Gay/Straight Alliance. Contact: Linda Henderson or Roxanne Hitchcock. Phone: (814) 677-1260. Email: thelatonia@verizon.net. Browse to <http://www.thelatonia.com>.

Feb 14 (Sat) - Zone Dance Club: Red Hot Dance Party (Zone Dance Club, 133 W 18th St, Erie, PA) We are going to heat things up—Cupid is lighting the flames of passion at the Zone! Wear red or come in costume. Dress as a horny devil, leather Cupid, flashing fireman, Drag Queen of Hearts, diva dominatrix. or wear sexy lingerie or Valentines boxers! Phone: (814) 452-0125. Browse to <http://www.thezonedanceclub.com>.

Feb 14 (Sat) - Valentine's Day at Craze! 1607 Raspberry St, Erie, PA. Put your red (or black — depending on your mood!) on and join us for a night of *Crazed* fun! Phone: (814) 456-3027. Browse to www.crazeerie.com.

Feb 14 (Sat) - Valentine's Day at Sneakers (Jamestown NY) 100 Harrison Street. Check back for details at www.clubsneakers.com

Feb 15 (Sun) - Deadline for EGN March 2009 print edition (Erie Gay News, 1115 W 7th St, Erie, PA) Please have all articles, ads, and submissions in by this date. This issue will be released the evening of February 24. For a complete list of upcoming deadlines and release dates, check the print edition schedule here. Contact: Michael Mahler. Phone: (814) 456-9833. Email: info@eriegaynews.com. Browse to www.eriegaynews.com.

Feb 16 (Mon) - Come on OUT! to Trivia Night Presque Isle Gallery Coffeehouse, 35 Peninsula Drv, Erie, PA) 7 PM. Bring your team of four (maximum) or join others to form a team. Great questions and great prizes. Presque Isle Gallery and Coffeehouse is located at the entrance to Presque Isle State Park next to Sara's. Sponsored by Erie Gay Pride, Inc., Browse to <http://www.eriegaypride.org>.

Feb 18 (Wed) - Erie Gay Business Alliance meets Matthew's Trattoria, 153 E 13th St, Erie, PA. 7 PM. Local activist Doris Cipolla will be speaking about marriage equality and other issues relevant to the GLBT community to the Erie Gay Business Alliance, which is for GLBT professionals and business people and their supporters. Phone: (814) 456-9833. Email: egba-owner@eriegaynews.com.

Feb 21 (Sat) - Mardi Gras Party - Zone Style! 133 W 18th St, Erie, PA Follow the parade from Bourbon St. to the Zone for Erie's biggest Gay Mardi Gras Party.

continued on next page

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Calendar

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Feb 22 (Sun) - 3rd Annual Chil-E cook-off Brewerie at Union Station, 123 W 14th St, Erie, PA. 2 PM - 6 PM. Again this year you will have the chance to test and vote for some of the best chili in Erie. Well over 15 local restaurants will again gather at Brewerie at Union Station to compete for the Best Chili in Erie. This is a benefit for SafeNet. Phone: (814) 455-1774. Email: rliebel@safeneterie.org.

Feb 24 (Tue) - Erie Gay News folding/distributing work party Mike Kohler's, 614 Cherry St, Erie PA, Erie, PA. 7 PM. Help us get out the print edition of Erie Gay News. We'll be folding and distributing the copies. 21 and over, please! (because it is taking place in a bar). It is also a great way to hang out and chat with folks! Phone: (814) 456-9833. Email: info@erie-gaynews.com. Browse to www.eriegaynews.com.

Mar 19-29 - Cleveland International Film Festival Over 290 films from 60 countries includes Ten Percent Cinema LGBT series, Tower City Cinemas, Cleveland; www.clevelandfilm.org, (216) 623-3456.

Stay updated!

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On Stage

Fredonia Opera House to Present "Boheme to Broadway"

A variety of popular selections from opera, operetta and musical theatre will comprise a special night of music at the 1891 Fredonia Opera House on Saturday, Feb. 21, at 8 p.m. Noted Bass-Baritone and Soprano John and Stephanie Sikora will headline the event, titled "Boheme to Broadway."

The Sikoras, a husband and wife duo, are well-known to audiences for their individual performances with Cleveland Opera, Lansing Lyric Opera, Akron Lyric Opera Theatre, the Cleveland Orchestra and the Canton and Reading symphonies. John Sikora has sung with regional opera companies throughout the country in more than 20 leading roles including Basilio in Barber of Seville, Figaro and Bartolo in Marriage of Figaro, Rocco in Fidelio, Leporello in Don Giovanni and Osmin from Abduction from the Seraglio. Most recently he and his wife sang in J.S. Bach's Kaffee Kantate in Paris, Nice and Freijús, France with the American Friends of Baroque Music. His collaborations include performances with John Reardon, Carol Neblett, Vernon Hartman and Diana Soviero as well as productions with Boris Goldovsky, John DeMain, Anton Guardagno and Bruno Aprea. Mr. Sikora currently is Director of Opera at Kent State University.

Stephanie Sikora has sung more than 100 performances with Cleveland Opera on Tour, as well as appeared in Cleveland Opera productions of The Merry Widow, Hansel and Gretel, Mikado and Die Fledermaus. She has been a soloist with the Cleveland Orchestra, including in performances of An Evening of Gilbert and Sullivan, under the baton of Robert

Page, Bernstein's Broadway, conducted by Leonard Slatkin, and most recently, the world premiere of Augusta Reed Thomas' Song in Sorrow, conducted by Jahja Ling. Ms. Sikora currently is head of Voice in the Department of Music at Ashland University.

Tickets to "Boheme to Broadway" are \$15 general admission (\$6 for students) and may be purchased by phone at 716-679-1891 or online at www.fredopera.org. Chautauqua County's only year-round performing arts center, the 1891 Fredonia Opera House is a member-supported not-for-profit organization located in Village Hall in downtown Fredonia.

Upcoming

Jan 25 - "Hairspray" in Erie at the Warner Theatre 7 PM www.erieevents.com (814) 452-4857 or (814) 456-7070. www.hairsprayontour.com

Feb 5 - Lily Tomlin in Cleveland at Playhouse Square Palace Theater. www.playhousesquare.com

Feb 7 - Lily Tomlin in Pittsburgh at Benedum Center www.lilytomlin.com www.pgharts.org

Feb 13 - Jennie McNulty in Pittsburgh. At at Club Café 56-58 South 12th Street at 7:30 PM. Advance Tickets sold online via TicketWeb, \$10. For further show info contact (412)431-4950. Voted one of the Top 10 Funniest Lesbians in America, she can presently be seen on MTV's LOGO network. www.jenniemcnulty.com www.myspace.com/jenniemcnulty

Apr 1 - David Sedaris in Pittsburgh at the Benedum Center, 7:30PM www.pgharts.org

Apr 7 - k.d. lang in Pittsburgh at the Benedum Center, 8PM www.pgharts.org

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Making anger pay

Employment rights and civil liberties for all Pennsylvanians now

by Rep. Babette Josephs (PA-182nd District)

On Nov. 4, we proved that Americans care about each other, children, our planet and democracy; voters did something I would never have imagined even two years ago by electing Barack Obama. But things were not golden everywhere: in California, Proposition 8, which sought to ban same-sex marriage, passed by 52 percent of the vote -- a major step backwards.

People are angry -- as they should be. All families deserve to be valued. No family is second-class. No individual should be forced to remain single. No child ought to be raised outside of marriage just because some adults are small-minded, biased and unfair. But not everyone in the LGBTQ community (or the straight community, for that matter) wants to marry. Same-sex marriage puts the pressure on -- sometimes where it is not wanted.

Being single, footloose, carefree and non-traditional has its fans (in both communities), but being discriminated against in the workplace sucks for everyone.

Those of us in Philadelphia, Pittsburgh and Erie County and 11 other communities in the Commonwealth have recourse if we are denied a job, refused a promotion, evicted from our apartment or thrown out of public accommodation based on our sexual orientation, but the remaining 75 percent of the state's more than 12 million residents do not live with such protection. That's why the Pennsylvania Human Relations Commission's job should be expanded.

Your rights should not depend on whether your town or county has decided to protect them. Every Pennsylvanian deserves this help.

Several of my colleagues and I worked diligently last session to correct this deficiency. Two bills to prohibit discrimination in employment, housing and public accommodation based on a person's sexual orientation or gender identity were introduced: one in the House and one in the Senate. As chairwoman of the House State Government Committee, tasked with review of the legislation, I held public hearings across the state to gather testimony from any Pennsylvanian interested in participating. I am proud to have organized the first-ever official Pennsylvania General Assembly-sponsored

hearings on a lesbian-gay issue.

Last September, the committee was poised to report out the historic legislation, but the Catholic Conference and the Pennsylvania Family Institute ignited fears and the bill had to be withdrawn -- not such a different scenario than in California.

These legislators who succumbed to anti-gay hysteria disregarded the wishes of their constituencies. A Susquehanna Polling and Research poll reported 86 percent of Pennsylvanians believe there should be workplace equality for lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgendered people; 84 percent supported laws prohibiting discrimination in housing; and 89 percent favored equal access to public accommodations. Those are enormous margins; they show that most Pennsylvanians already know that ensuring protection from these kinds of discrimination is the right thing to do.

It's also the smart thing to do for our economy. Nationwide, 20 states -- including our neighbors of Maryland, New Jersey and New York -- already have laws that ban job discrimination based on sexual orientation. Twelve states, including New Jersey, have laws banning job discrimination based on gender identity. These states have a competitive advantage over Pennsylvania when it comes to attracting and retaining businesses and residents.

As the economy continues to decline and jobs are lost, we can and must do more to ensure equal employment rights for all Pennsylvanians, regardless of gender identity or sexual orientation. But elected officials cannot do it without you. Get active in organizations that protect civil liberties. Write the gay and straight press. Talk gay rights up with your neighbors, friends and family. Involve your church, synagogue, mosque or temple. As the 2009-10 legislative session gets under way, let's turn our anger over Prop 8 into making Pennsylvania a better place for everyone.

Josephs is chairwoman of the Pennsylvania House State Government Committee, which reviews legislation on issues ranging from voting and elections to campaign finance reform, lobbyist disclosure and civil rights. As chairwoman, Josephs sets the committee's legislative agenda.

Harrisburg City Council passes Life Partner Registry

from Equality Advocates

HARRISBURG- The Harrisburg City Council has voted unanimously to adopt an ordinance to create a Life Partnership Registry, allowing unmarried, committed couples to affirm and recognize their relationships with the city. By a vote of 7 to 0, the Harrisburg City Council has taken an important step to streamline the process for domestic partners to obtain healthcare and other benefits afforded to married couples

“This vote shows that people all across Pennsylvania are committed to treating same-sex couples with the same respect and dignity as other married couples,” said Jake Kaskey, policy and outreach coordinator with Equality Advocates Pennsylvania, the state’s largest lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender advocacy organization. “This type of legislation has strong support across Pennsylvania, and will concretely help countless unmarried couples obtain benefits afforded to married couples.”

Kaskey noted that polling conducted by Susque-

hanna Polling and Research in November 2007 found that 91% of people polled supported hospital visitation rights for same-sex couples.

Equality Advocates Pennsylvania worked with Councilman Miller and Harrisburg Attorney Benjamin C. Dunlap, Jr. to draft the ordinance.

Councilman Dan Miller, who introduced this legislation, remarked, “I am proud that the Harrisburg City Council unanimously passed the Life Partner Registry Bill last night. It is a positive step toward equality for all residents. I hope this new law expanding lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender rights in the state capital will inspire state legislators to take similar action.”

Lesbian and gay, as well as unmarried heterosexual couples, can register with the city. Harrisburg would become the third municipality in Pennsylvania to approve this type of registry, joining Philadelphia and Pittsburgh.

The ordinance now awaits the approval of Mayor Stephen Reed.

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Love Came Down at Christmas

By Rev. Richard A. Moyer
Pastor, Community United Church

As I was preparing for my Advent-Christmas devotions this year, I was particularly inspired by a modern day monk and a Victorian poet.

The monk was James Stephen Behrens who resides at the Monastery of the Holy Spirit in Georgia. He wrote, "We carry a little chip inside of us that is reserved for connecting with God—and there are time we need to find the buttons to make that chip glow." The words jumped out of the page as of they were written just for me. I needed to connect with God this Christmas. I wanted Christmas to "glow" in my life.

As a pastor it's far too easy to get caught up in all the church administration, activities and services that are essential at this season and forget what Christmas is really about.

It was the poetry of Christina Rossetti (1830 – 94) that inspired me to make this Christmas special. The words that made me re-think the true meaning of this holy and wonderful time of the year were, "Love came down at Christmas, love all lovely love divine;

love came down at Christmas, stars and angels gave the sign."

Having read those words I was determined to make this Christmas the most spiritual Christmas ever. But how was I going to do it? My goal was sincere and my ambitions were high. The flesh was willing, but my spirit was weak. I wanted desperately to find the glow of Christmas, and so I looked deep within my soul.

What I came up with surprised even me. If Rossetti is right that "love came down at Christmas", then love is the most important Christmas theme. I needed to share the love of Jesus in some extraordinary way.

As I thought about Christmas love I realized that there were some people I had never told that I loved them. I started to make a mental list. I came up with about ten names.

If this Christmas was going to mean more to me than any other Christmas in my life, I would have to tell these people not only of my appreciation for them, but also that I loved them!

Some I told in person. Others I called on the telephone. A few received letters. I wasn't at all sure what kind of response I was going to get. After all, to simply go up to someone and say, "I love you" can be awkward at best and down right embarrassing at worst.

For the most part, the recipients of my love were gracious. Almost all of them responded with reassuring words that they loved me as well. A friend of mine who is a bishop responded with a beautiful letter expressing his love for me. Only one person gave me the look that did not need words to say, "What, are you crazy?"

Allowing myself to tell people of my love for them without apology turned out to be the best Christmas gift I had to give. Love did come down for me this Christmas. I was able to experience the glow that shepherds and Wiseman must have felt on that first Christmas as the star shown over Bethlehem.

What I learned this Christmas is that saying, "I love you," isn't as difficult as I thought it would be. We don't say it enough. Indeed, all of us need to say it more often. What the world needs now is love, and love is the greatest gift that anyone can give!



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Pope is wrong on “gay threat”

London UK (petertatchell.net) Dec. 23, 2008—
“By choosing to highlight homosexuality instead of hunger, war and homelessness, the Pope has lost his moral bearings and sense of priorities.” said Peter Tatchell of the lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender human rights group OutRage!

He was responding the Pope’s bizarre claim that saving humanity from homosexual and transsexual behaviour is just as important as saving the rainforest from destruction.

“Free market capitalism, and its culture of greed and consumerism, is a far greater threat to the ecological survival of our planet than homosexuality or transsexuality,” added Mr Tatchell, who is also the Green Party parliamentary candidate for Oxford East.

“Is the Pope ignorant or malevolent?”

“The suggestion that gay people are a threat to human survival is absurd and dangerous. It is poisonous propaganda that will give comfort and succour to queer-bashers everywhere.

“Homosexuality is a part of human ecology. It has existed in all cultures in every epoch. At a time of global over-population, by not having children gay couples contribute to population stabilisation and thereby reduce pressure on over-strained natural resources. We are an ecological asset to humanity.

“The Vatican’s continued rejection of a modern scientific understanding of homosexuality is a throw-back to the Dark Ages. It defies rationality and compassion.

“Why is Benedict so obsessed with gay sex? He seems to talk about it all the time, issuing an almost weekly tirade of denunciations that borders on a compulsive disorder.

“This prejudice is par for the course. The Vatican

recently opposed a United Nations statement condemning homophobic violence and the criminalisation of same-sex relations.

“Without gay priests and bishops, the Catholic Church could barely function. At least a third of the clergy are gay, which makes this latest outburst by the Pope totally hypocritical. If Benedict objects so strongly to homosexuality, why does he surround himself with gay advisors and Vatican officials?” queried Mr Tatchell.

The Catechism, which sets out the basic doctrines of the Roman Church denounces same-sex relationships as a “grave depravity” and “intrinsically disordered.” It also states that lesbian and gay relationships are “contrary to natural law ... and do not proceed from genuine affective and sexual complementarity. Under no circumstances can they be approved.”

Various other Papal pronouncements condemn homosexuality as a deep-seated personality disorder and psychological flaw; variously condemning same-sex acts as “grave sins....objectively disordered....(and) intrinsically immoral.” Even people who have a gay orientation but abstain totally from sex are condemned by the Pope as possessing a “tendency towards an intrinsic moral evil.”

“Despite the fact that 40 million people are infected worldwide with HIV, the Pope condemns safer sex and condoms. He has turned his back on a proven method of stopping virus transmission, and instead promoted the lie that condoms have tiny holes that HIV can pass through. This irresponsible scare-mongering is tantamount to complicity with the needless deaths of millions of people who have died because they had unsafe sex,” added Mr Tatchell.

"Any religion that professes to be concerned with the souls of men and is not concerned with the slums that damn them, the economic conditions that strangle them, the social conditions that cripple them is a dry-as-dust religion."

~ Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr

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Java Buzz

Papa Joe's downtown closes

Mike and Liz Augustine say that they have closed their doors for the last time.

In a message sent from their MySpace page on January 15, they wrote

Well, it was a good run, but...

...we have closed the doors at Papa Joes for the last time. We are officially out of business.

Thank you to all of our customers and supporters, and especially all of the employees who have worked for us over the past 7 years. It was a blast.

Don't forget the good times!

[...]

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Mike and Liz

ps Thai is not dead.

Best of luck to Mike and Liz in whatever they choose to do next!

At Intermezzo

The Intermezzo Coffeehouse is located at 12 Park Place (on Barker Commons) in Fredonia NY For more information, call 716-672-6070 or visit www.intermezzocoffeehouse.com

Valentine's Day Dinner

Be Naughty this Valentine's Day at Intermezzo. Saturday, February 14th. Seating from 6-8pm. (Reservations Only – Seating is limited). \$50 per couple includes live music and a rose for your sweetheart. Featuring our seven-course Valentine's Dinner: *Pride* - Gazpacho Cocktail with antipasto skewers, *Envy* - Layered Tomato, Mozzarella and Basil, marinated with infused extra virgin olive oil, *Sloth* - (Cup of Soup - Your choice), Monika's Delites Garlic Soup or Roasted Butternut Squash Soup, *Wrath* - Mushroom Ragout Pastry, *Greed* - Beef Burgundy or Vegetarian Stew, *Lust* - Layered Chocolate Cake with fudge frosting and chocolate chips or - Carrot Cake with Cream Cheese frosting, *Gluttony* - Fruit & Cheese Plate

Photography exhibit by Barbara Del Monte

Photographs taken of the same subject albeit in different seasons are featured in the next display of local art at Fredonia's Intermezzo Coffeehouse. The exhibit, titled "There is a Season ...," highlights the work of Forestville photographer Barbara Del Monte. A special "Meet the Artist" reception will be held at the coffeehouse Sunday, Jan. 25, from 12-2 p.m. The public is invited.

"Moving to Chautauqua County spurred my interest in photography," says Del Monte. "Realizing I could capture a little of the beauty around me caused me to pick up a camera six years ago; and I haven't been able to put it down since. In my travels around the County there are certain places that keep calling me. I've found that I've returned to those places again and again. Over time this has given me a collection of these places at different seasons of the year."

Turned wood bowls created by Del Monte's husband Patrick Del Monte, of Forestville Woodturning, also will be on exhibit and for sale at the Jan. 25 reception.



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Health

Study: Childhood sexual abuse contributes to risky behavior in gay and bisexual men

from Oregon State University

CORVALLIS, Ore. — Men who engage in risky sexual behavior with other men report much higher rates than average of experiencing severe childhood sexual abuse, according to a new study in the November 2008 issue of the International Journal of Child Abuse & Neglect.

According to the study, about 20 percent of men who have sex with men are sexually abused as children, a rate similar to that found among heterosexual women. The difference is that 80 percent of gay and bisexual men, compared to 20 percent of heterosexual women, who are sexually abused report experiencing “severe” abuse, often involving violence. Both men and women who are abused as children tend to engage in what researchers define as “high-risk” behavior as adults, which includes unprotected sexual encounters.

This research is based on a 2002 survey of approximately 1,000 gay and bisexual men in San Francisco and extends earlier work conducted in 1996 which surveyed several thousand gay and bisexual men in San Francisco, Los Angeles, New York and Chicago. The results of the two surveys confirm that approximately 20 percent of gay and bisexual men have a history of childhood sexual abuse.

In the more recent study, researchers point to the high prevalence of sex abuse being a major contributing factor to psychosocial conditions that have sustained the HIV epidemic over several decades. In 2002, the HIV rate for men who have sex with men in general was about 26 percent. However, that HIV rate jumped to 34 percent for men who report a history of childhood sexual abuse.

“Thirty-five percent is the HIV rate you find in Sub-Saharan Africa,” said Joseph Catania, a professor of public health in the College of Health and Human Sciences at Oregon State University and lead author on the study. Catania has worked in public health for more than 25 years on issues related to infectious diseases and sexual health. “This is a chilling number that shows we must deal with the sexual abuse issue.”

The effects of childhood sexual abuse are pervasive for both men and women. Studies show that

abuse victims have more school-related problems as teens, a variety of sexual health problems including teenage pregnancies among girls and high rates of sexually transmitted diseases. People who experience severe trauma may have life-long challenges in relationships, work and health. That sexual abuse increases risk for HIV infection is not surprising, but what has not been well understood is how it contributes to this and other types of health problems. Having a better understanding of how this happens will guide efforts at prevention and treatment.

In the recent study, investigators found a subset of men who have been sexually abused that tend to “mentally check-out” during sex, Catania said.


“They experience a severe form of coping that involves disassociating from the present, a form of mentally retreating to a safe place until something awful passes. This happens to people who have experienced other types of trauma as well. From a disease prevention perspective it may be quite debilitating,” he said.

continued on next page

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Risky behavior

continued from previous page

“In addition, we found some of the men with abuse histories use drugs or alcohol excessively when they have sex. The drug and alcohol use is also a means of coping with emotional issues around sexual trauma, but it may also be another means of mentally escaping from the present when it involves sex. The result is you are not in good shape to be making healthy decisions.”

Sexual abuse trauma has other diverse and negative effects on the interpersonal skills needed to negotiate safe sex. Men with sexual trauma histories are also more likely to get raped in adulthood or find themselves in abusive and violent romantic relationships.

Catania said the reason both gay and bisexual men and heterosexual women tend to have similar rates of experiencing childhood sexual abuse is that perpetrators are often male authority figures or men who have access to children and are in a position to take advantage of a childhood infatuation or crush.

“During the early stages of sexual development, gay and bisexual youth, just like heterosexual youth, will

form emotional attachments in the form of crushes or infatuations on adult authority figures. The difference is that gay and bisexual youth form these attachments with same gender adults,” Catania said. “And adult males are much more likely, by a large margin, to be perpetrators of sexual abuse than are adult women.”

Based on their findings, the researchers came to three conclusions. First, the complex challenges faced by men with severe childhood sexual abuse experiences may limit the effectiveness of typical short-term HIV risk reduction programs; more intensive treatment maybe needed. Secondly, Catania said clinical psychologists and psychiatrists with patients who have sexual abuse histories should routinely consider issues of sexual health; patterns and types of sexual partners may be useful markers for identifying more problematic cases.

Finally, Catania said public service messages directed at removing the stigma of childhood sexual abuse may increase use of health and mental health services.

“When it comes to HIV and sexually transmitted infections (STIs), current intervention strategies focus on intervening early on before men become infected, which is a significant challenge, or intervening after they have become infected to prevent further spread of the disease to other sex partners,” Catania said.


According to Catania, these interventions tend to be brief and very focused. He said this type of intervention does not serve men with histories of sexual abuse since their problems are more pervasive and complex.

“There is a lot of social stigma around sexual abuse, particularly for men,” he said. “An important next step then is to reduce the stigmatization of men who are confronting these issues and provide them with the help they need.”

Researchers from the Center for AIDS Prevention Studies at University of California San Francisco contributed to this study.

A link to the study can be found at <http://www.physorg.com/news148149327.html> or the online version of this article at www.eriegaynews.com

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Screen

TV

Prayers for Bobby (2009)

An Original Lifetime movie

Academy Award nominee and Golden Globe winner Sigourney Weaver stars in this emotional true story about a 1970s religious conservative who struggles with the fact that her son is gay. When Bobby commits suicide, it causes Mary to question her faith. Ultimately this mom changes her views in ways that she never could have imagined.

Also starring: Ryan Kelley (“Mean Creek”), Henry Czerny (“The Tudors”), Dan Butler (“Frasier”) and Susan Ruttan (“L.A. Law”), Austin Nichols (“John From Cincinnati”), Carly Schroeder (“Mean Creek”), Scott Bailey (“Guiding Light”), and newcomers Shannon Eagen and Rebecca Louise Miller. Based on the book “Prayers for Bobby” by Leroy Aarons.

Prayers for Bobby premieres January 24 at 9 pm on Lifetime.

NEW VIDEO

Arizona Sky (2008) Starring Eric Dean, Jayme McCabe, Patricia Place. “Old-fashioned romance of a warm hug of a movie.” - ThisWeekInTexas.com *Wolfe*

Drifting Flowers (2008) Weaving three poetic tales as the lesbians in Drifting Flowers seek their true identity. In the first story, Jing, a blind singer, falls in love with her band’s tomboy accordionist Diego. In another time and place, Lily, an elderly lesbian and Yen, her gay friend, create an unexpected bond and support each other in a time of crisis. Finally, we see Diego before she joined the band, when as a teenager she came to grips with her gender identity. English subtitles. Winner of Audience Award Best Women’s Film at Pittsburgh LGBT Film Fest. Available 2/3/09 *Wolfe*

Girl + Girl: Classic Lesbian Short Films (2008) lesbian short films showcasing long unavailable film festival favorites and pioneering works. Available February 3, 2009.

The Guitar (2007) How would you behave if you had to confront your own mortality? Especially if you were young, in your twenties or early thirties, how would you react if you learned you had less than two months to live? These questions create the point of departure for Amy Redford’s whimsical fairytale. *Starz/Anchor Bay*



Mary is frustrated by her son Bobby (Ryan Kelley, left) when he tells her he is done praying to God to cure his “illness.”

Photo: Lifetime

He Likes Guys (2007) Package of English-language gay men’s short films showcases some of the best films of the year *Wolfe*

Karen Williams: I Need a Snack (2008) Live comedy special. *Ariztical*

Save Me (2007) Acclaimed drama about a young gay man and the ex-gay retreat he is brought into. Subtly nuanced and deeply sympathetic look at both sides of one of the most polarizing religious and sexual debates in America: the conflict - and possible reconciliation - between homosexuality and Christianity. *First Run Features*

k.d. lang: Live in London with the BBC Concert Orchestra (2008) Highlights from this thrilling performance include “Coming Home,” “Wash Me Clean,” “Western Stars,” “Smoke Rings,” “I Dream of Spring” and “Hallelujah.” DVD includes interview with k.d. lang. DVD and Blu-Ray. Available 2/3/09 *Image Entertainment*

Whirlwind (2008) Handsome David Rudd stars as Drake, an exciting stranger who enters the lives of a group of thirty-something gay men in New York City. The flirtatious Drake spices up their lives, but soon creates unexpected drama. A smart and sexy story about the complexity of gay relationships, this touching, funny ensemble film explores non-monogamy, commitment, friendship and more. Available 1/27 *Wolfe*

Thank Pepsi for Supporting Our Families!

from PFLAG National blog

January 13, 2009 — Last week, the American Family Association launched a boycott of PepsiCo. The AFA boycott is based, in part, on the PepsiCo Foundation's support of PFLAG's Straight for Equality in the Workplace project.

Please let Pepsi know that you appreciate their support for our families and will support the company when you are shopping.

Please call PepsiCo's customer relations line at 1-800-433-2652 today.

When you call, please be brief in your comments. Politely tell the operator that:

* [If you are a PFLAG member] You are a PFLAG member and want to thank Pepsi for its support of your family;

* You plan to purchase Pepsi products whenever possible to show your support for the company's welcoming policies; and

* You support Pepsi and your area bottlers and will refuse to participate in the boycott.

For more info on Pepsi's generous gift to Straight for Equality, visit <http://pflagblog.blogspot.com>

Thank you for your support of PFLAG, Straight for Equality and PepsiCo. Then, forward this alert to all of your friends . . . ask them to support PepsiCo . . . and remember when you shop to buy Pepsi products, like Tropicana, Frito Lay, Quaker and Gatorade.

LBT Women news

by Laurie Finch

The monthly meeting of our group, the LBT Women of Erie was held today, January 11th at the Presque Isle Gallery Coffeehouse. Seven women attended, which was great as we thought that with the football playoffs being on TV, we would have a smaller turnout. We were pleasantly surprised. We saw familiar faces and made yet another new friend, Suzanne, who recently moved into this area.

Plans were talked about, but dates not yet finalized.

We are going to meet at the movies one night. Kathy and Yvonne will be in charge of setting up that date and time.

DeeDee Foll has organized a snowshoe walk for Saturday January 24. Contact her through <http://womynoferie.wetpaint.com/>

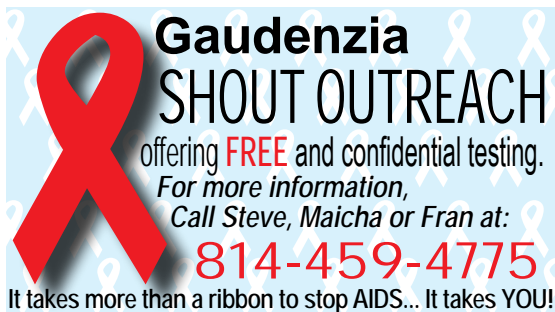
I have selected Saturday Feb.21st as the date for our Tubing Party at Peek n Peak! This party is for all LBT women and their children if they choose to bring them, however, there are rules regarding children's age and height requirements so please heed them. I know that it is \$10.00 an hour and \$14.00 for 2 hours, having done this recently, I think two hours would be good, as I wasn't quite ready to leave after one hour. Also, dress warmly, since you are pulled up the hill, and slide down, you don't really get a full workout like you would downhill or cross country skiing! Some snow spray also. so bring a scarf or whatever to cover your face. Here are the specifics.

Please read over rules for snow tubing at the Peek'nPeak website www.pknpk.com (click on Snow Sports), Clickable link at the online version of this article at www.eriegaynews.com

The next meeting will revert to the usual first Sunday of the month, which would be February 1st. Meeting as usual to be held at the Presque Isle Gallery Coffeehouse at 2 PM.

Remember our standing date for Erie Gay News Folding Party which will be at Mike Kohler's, 614 Cherry St, Erie PA at 7 PM on February 24. We always have a lot of fun at these parties and meet a lot of really nice folks!

Check out the LBT Women of Erie Pa. website at <http://womynoferie.wetpaint.com/>



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Students For Equality - on Jan. 27

from Students for Equality

On January 27th, 2009, high school and college students across the country will wear the same shirt to school as a way to show unity within the community in the fight towards LGBT equality, particularly marriage equality. This is a visibility/fundraiser event geared towards achieving the following goals:

- * Get students more involved in the fight towards LGBT equality.
- * Raise the visibility of the LGBT movement towards equality by having everyone wear the same shirt on the same day. Students are encouraged to take group photos of everyone at their school wearing the Students for Equality t-shirt. Locations and time suggestions for group photos should be emailed to Eric Ross at eross@studentsforequality.com for better coordination. Students for Equality is encouraging students to submit the group pictures to their school year-books and newspapers.
- * Have the event one week after the inauguration to remind Obama that we are not going away. We are expecting him to address same-sex marriage, and LGBT rights in general.
- * Raise money towards fighting for the legalization of same-sex marriage in the courts. Students for Equality will be donating a portion of the proceeds to Lambda Legal since they are currently fighting the state of California to repeal Proposition 8. Lambda Legal has also fought for LGBT equality in many other cases, including overturning sodomy laws in the United States on a federal level. To see more landmark cases fought by Lambda Legal, go to <http://www.lambdalegal.org>.

“The younger generation was very involved in the election this year,” says Eric Ross, co-founder of Students for Equality. “This event is a way for them to stay involved in political activism, and not just unite in the fight for marriage equality, but for LGBT equality as a whole.”

Designs for the shirt were submitted by students and voted on by visitors of the Students for Equality

website. The winning design was announced on January 1st, 2009 and people wishing to buy one of these shirts to raise money in the fight of revoking Proposition 8 can do so by going to www.studentsforequality.com. People can also go to the same website to find out information about future events sponsored by Students for Equality

Find out more at <http://www.studentsforequality.com/>

Study: Tolerance lowers GLBT teen suicide

from PFLAG National blog

The Suicide Prevention Resource Center has just published a study entitled Suicide Risk and Prevention for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender Youth. The study carefully details the compounding reasons why lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) youth have higher rates of suicide and attempted suicide. And while the information is critically important, the conclusions are ones PFLAGers know very well. Indeed, they can be summed up in three words --support, education and advocacy – the PFLAG mission.

The study explores the role the internet, social environments, family connectedness - and other risk factors, including HIV/AIDS, drug abuse, depression, and homelessness - have on LGBT youth.

And most importantly, the study contains detailed recommendations of how to reduce the risks for LGBT youth.

PFLAG and our chapters are mentioned a number of times in the study as the antidote. The support we provide in our chapters; the advocacy we do in coalitions on suicide prevention (making sure that the message is reflective of our community and LGBT youth in particular); and the education we do in schools to make sure there is strong policy, good resources and programs that make LGBT students visible and safe in their schools were all cited as recommendations for suicide prevention.

Take a look at the study and remember that the work all of you at PFLAG do really does protect our childrens' future.

- Suzanne Greenfield

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