

Interweave Connect

March
2013

Board Members

**Maryka Bhattacharyya,
President**

North Augusta, SC
marykahb@yahoo.com

**J.David Macey, Jr.,
Secretary**

Oklahoma City, OK
jdavidmacey@msn.com

Valerie White

Treasurer
Sharon, MA
treasurer@interweaveuu.org

**Tova Vitiello,
Newsletter Editor**

Iowa City, IA
tovavitiello@aol.com

Rev. Michelle LaGrave

Petersham, MA
michellelagrave@gmail.com

**Nisco Junkins,
Newsletter Production
Manager**

Eugene, OR
niscohappy@comcast.net

The Interweave Continental Board welcomes your articles for *Interweave Connect*. All articles will be given consideration for printing in our newsletter. Please note that members of the *Interweave Connect* staff reserve the right to edit all articles.



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Dear Interweave Members and Friends,

I hope you enjoy our March 'Focus on the Family' issue of Interweave Connect. We have tried to share insights from both the parent and child points of view.

For me, parenting has been one of the most challenging and deeply rewarding investments of my life. It has drawn on all of the emotional energy in my being and invited me to grow in new and important ways. Today I am blessed with an adult son who understands me and makes me feel loved. I am a lucky lady.

In April, we will focus on BLGTQ health care and aging. How many of you have thought about the care that you might seek for your later years? It turns out there are a number of organizations that are addressing these issues that you might like to learn about. It is never too late to start learning! If you have experiences you would like to share, or insights you have gained in this area, please share them us!

Remember that May 30 is the deadline for nominations for our Mark DeWolfe Award and our annual Sermon Contest. We hope you are preparing to send in your applications! Look for more details in the April newsletter.

your families for this issue. You are the ones who keep our newsletter lively!

All good wishes,
Maryka Bhattacharyya
President, Interweave Continental

Attend the UU United Nations Office Annual Intergenerational Spring Seminar!



Every April, youth and adults from around the United States and Canada gather in New York City for a three-day seminar on a topic of global concern. This year you are invited to join 175 youth, young adults, and adults to learn about and dialogue around crucial lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer (LGBTQ) issues.

Sex, Love, and Violence: Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity in a Globalized World, April 4-6 2013 (youth arrive the evening of April 3). www.uua.org/unspringseminar

The seminar will feature keynote speakers Charles Radcliffe, Chief of the Global Issues Section of the [Office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights](#), and Andre Banks, Co-founder and Executive Director of [All Out](#), an organization that uses social media and "people power" to advance the lives and freedoms of LGBT people globally. Through panel discussions with other notable speakers, collaboration groups, and fun activities, participants will engage with issues such as LGBTQ

representation in media and culture, global discrimination and criminalization of LGBTQ peoples, and how to make a difference in the international fight for recognition and equality.

Come be a part of this powerful intergenerational gathering for education, dialogue, and justice! Registration closes March 15. Register now!

Can't attend this year? **Sponsor a youth attendee!** [Click here](#), scroll down and click the secure link to make an online payment using the UU College of Social Justice Program Payment Form, and then enter "Scholarship" in the Participant field and "UUUNO" in the Program Code field. Learn more about the UU United Nations Office: www.uua.org/un



I was raised by lesbians

My name is Katy, and I was raised by lesbians. That sounds a lot like being raised by wolves in my own mind when I write it out or say it out loud, but it really was quite a good experience for me. For example, I was always fed at the same time as everyone else at the table – no waiting for the alpha female to have her fill. They never carried me around by the scruff of my neck. And their ability to convey love to one another in their relationship has shaped for me my understanding of what a “good” relationship is and can be. I often went to bed at night and woke up in the morning to the sound of their giggling together. One thing my mom and Deb shared was a wonderful sense of humor and light that carried them through hard times together.

I have a wonderful book that I love love love and it is called “The Riverhouse Stories”. It is a collection of short stories about two women who live and love together on a river house. They take care of children, and watch ducklings swim, and rescue a log that has floated out from underneath another riverhouse from further upstream. They discover things about living together and they discover things about loving each other.

What I’ve come to appreciate is that we each have our own unique story that makes us who and what we are. For a long time, I resented the fact that I was raised by lesbians. I wanted a “normal” family with a “normal” story, and I was in turns relieved and utterly dismayed when I came home from a six month trip abroad to learn that my family was disbanding. My mom had rekindled a flame with a very nice man who lived in Kansas City, and I was asked to follow her into her new “normal” life. I was 17. I didn’t follow her. I didn’t follow Deb either.

The divorce of my family is one of the hardest and most confusing times of my life, and believe me, I’ve lived through some hard and confusing times. At 18, I became pregnant with my son, Sage. At 19, I gave birth to him. At 20, Deb was diagnosed with cancer, and nine months later, at 21, she was gone.

It wasn’t until the week before she died that Deb decided she was ready to be my other mom. I think some of the reason it is hard for me to write about being raised by lesbians is that it is not entirely accurate to say that I had two moms. But what I had was a house filled with love and laughter and also some hard things.

We lived in a small town in conservative Alaska, and so my family felt we had to keep ourselves a secret. I was asked to call Deb our roommate, and honestly, that confusion of titles most likely played a role in confusing our relationship with one another. The “out” lesbians who lived down the street from us had their car and front door defaced - frightening, degrading stuff writ large across their front door.



I am the first to admit that I am a huge nerd, so I was probably an outcast based solely on my own personality, but being raised by lesbians certainly didn't help my case in middle school. Because let's face it, roommates at 40 is at best a fishy cover story. And nothing feeds the middle school rumor monster better than a fishy story.

It is funny to me that I now live with a roommate and we are not lesbians and one of us is in her 40's! Maybe having the "roommate" arrangement as a kid growing up paved the way for me to be open to having the roommate arrangement I have now. It's been quite wonderful, and we've lived together for five years, and we both have kids and when my son says "This is my mom's roommate," he is not hiding anything. It's just a fact. People do quietly wonder, and those who are counted among my friends ultimately end up having a conversation with me at some point, usually over a glass of wine, which goes: "When I first met you, I totally wondered if you guys were, you know, more than roommates..." I think when that question moves from curiosity to judgment is when our natural tendencies take an unhealthy turn. There are lots of ways to do life, and some of them work for you and some of them don't. But wouldn't it be wonderful to just approach those differences with curiosity rather than giving in to the impulse to spray paint obscenities across one another's door? I guess my point is that it's a natural curiosity to wonder what your friend, neighbor, or classmate is doing. It helps us to define normal. And thank goodness our cultural definition of "normal" is changing. It's the unhealthy judgment, and the fear it incites, that stopped my moms from coming out in their community back when I was a kid. It's what compelled them to ask me to keep their secret. And that secret-keeping was by far the hardest part of being raised by lesbians.



I recently was discovered as Deb's by a woman who is becoming a friend of mine, and who was once a friend of Deb's before she died. This woman said to me "I see so much of her in you. It is amazing how much a non-bio child picks up from their parents!" Which sent me into a frenzy of tears. One of the things about other people around you not acknowledging the importance or the depth of the relationship is that you are less inclined to understand the importance of the relationship fully. Deb never claimed me, and in effect, I never claimed her, until a few days before she died. And then, again, on that day when a mutual friend heard my story, and saw Deb in me.

I am forever grateful to my moms for their courageous living. Their decision to strike out and create a grand adventure for their own lives, and their decision to bring me along with them for the ride. The older I get, the better able I am to understand the nuances of the adult world that shaped their decisions. It was the late 80s and 90s, and they were very brave. They loved each other. They loved me. And that, my friends, is family.

Katy Siefert, DRE (Director of RE)
UU Church of Eugene, OR



Katy and her mother

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Justice for the Buntmeyer Family in Iowa

After several years of legal battles with the Iowa Department of Public Health, Jenny and Jessica Buntmeyer have received an accurate death certificate for Brayden, their stillborn son. Both parents are now listed as his mothers.

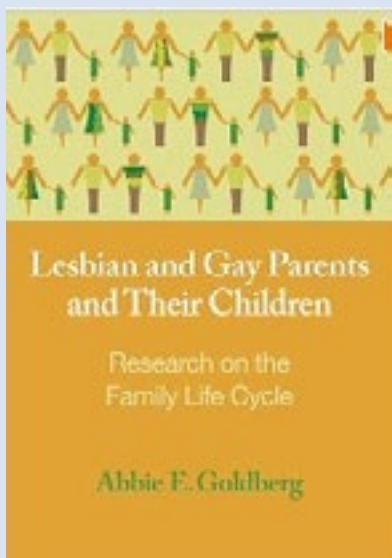
In January, the Iowa Department of Public Health (IDPH) declined to appeal its defeat in *Buntmeyer v. Iowa Department of Public Health*.

Not only is this a wonderful victory for the Buntmeyer family, who may begin to find closure, but the court decision has established a precedent for other lesbian families in Iowa who have been denied legal ties to their children.

One Iowa couple, Lambda Legal, Unitarian Universalists, and many, other groups and individuals worked to bring full equality to all loving, committed couples and their families.



Tova Vitiello



Lesbian and Gay Parents and Their Children (book review)

So, how do lesbian and gay parents compare to heterosexual parents? Are there any differences in parenting abilities? According to Abbie Goldberg, a psychologist at Clark University in Massachusetts, lesbian and gay parents tend to demonstrate a “greater commitment on average and more involvement” than heterosexual parents. Goldberg points out that lesbians and gays more often chose to become parents, while close to fifty percent of heterosexuals have not chosen pregnancy. Goldberg’s findings have been published in her book, *Lesbian and Gay Parents and Their Children: Research on the Family Life Cycle*. In her book, Goldberg discusses issues of gender, sexual orientation, and family. *Lesbian and Gay Parents* provides an interesting and comprehensive overview of same-sex parenting.

Book Review by Tova Vitiello



We are a family

We are two moms, two daughters and a son. Our son isn't writing today. He isn't living with us, so he'll have to report another time. Being a two mom family is special. Here are reflections from each of us:

Mom 1: I get to have my best friend every day, and being a woman, she gets everything. She likes the same chick flicks, and we cry over the same things. We both work hard to care for our children, and we do service in the community. We both cook and clean up. We are best friends, and we enjoy connecting.

Mom 2: We've created our own rules as we go along, based on our strengths and preferences. I deal with the alarm clock while she makes sure the cars get oil changes. We take turns with preparing food. She drives more than I do because she enjoys driving. It has required being conscious and communicating about agreements whereas our parents merely did what was expected for their gender roles. This creativity has carried over into many areas of living, and generally encouraged us to become very conscious of the messages we give our children. They are not learning that females do one type of task while males do another. They see two females doing different things, and learn that they can make choices about their own preferences.

Daughter, age 9: What works for me, is that we get more bonding time. If we were a mom and dad, we wouldn't get so much bonding time. They'd both be working all the time. Having two moms is great and fantastic because they're my parents.

Daughter, age 18: With two moms, growing up and maturing is not awkward. They understand everything I go through. Boy talk doesn't discomfort them. They have answers to all of my questions. I

can be more emotionally connected to both of my parents than I might be otherwise. I can be close to both of my parents because there isn't a gender barrier. The relationships outside my family are stronger because I've been taught such good relationship skills. As a female, I think I generally connect with females better; therefore, I am able to connect with my parents. As I have never

lived in a family with a father, I cannot say how the two situations differ, but I can say that I never wanted anything different. Although it can be awkward at times, and I often feel I need to let new friends know before they come to my house, I have always felt that I'm where I belong. I moved in with my parents when I was four years old, and they adopted me when I was six. They have been foster parents to many, many, many children and changed the lives of all of them. Being a two mom family didn't change that and doesn't make my family any worse or better than others. It just makes us unique. My parents are my parents no matter what gender, ethnicity, sexuality, size, shape, or anything else. They love me and I love them, and that's all that matters. Family is family no matter what it looks like.

Moms: We feel lucky that we are living in a place where we feel supported and within the "norm." Or uniqueness as a family constellation has guided our choice of place. We have chosen not to spend time or energy being frustrated or angry about the limitations that we've experienced because of our unwillingness to live closeted or put ourselves and our family at risk. We recognize the progress that has been made in our society even in the last decade. We rejoice in the increasing freedoms we have experienced, and we hope for even more for the next generation. We have had a sense of the biases of the political structures, individuals and communities in other locales. We have experienced those biases even in this community, but that has been the exception rather than the norm for us. We have taught our children a little about that unfairness. However, we have positioned our lives so that they have rarely experienced the fears that are becoming less prevalent because same-sex couples are becoming more accepted and understood.

Written by a family



Raising My Son

As I start to write this article, I know that my experiences of being a lesbian and raising a child has been much easier and a more smooth process than for many women. I live in a very progressive community in the Pacific Northwest where same sex couples abound and children of these households rub shoulders with each other daily in our public schools. My own son has said that being the child of gay moms has been a complete non-issue for him since we moved to this town when he was a young boy.

Of course, growing up in this very welcoming atmosphere has been a pleasure for him. He has been surrounded by support for his family throughout his life—at church, at school, and with friends. He hasn't ever had to feel that his family is anything different than anyone else's.

I believe that this has helped shape him into the strong, confident, accepting, open, and empathetic person that he is. Almost 17, my son has a real sense of himself and what he wants out of life; much more so than a lot of people much more seasoned. He has always had this sureness about himself. Grounded, one could say.

And I know that being a mom has shaped me in profound ways, not the least of which was the fact that for me becoming a mom meant that I was completely and totally out of the closet forever and for all times. I made the leap of faith toward beautiful freedom not just for myself, but for my child as well, for seeing his mother hide her true self from the world as though

she was less worthy would have sent him that very same message. That maybe his mothers and their relationship, including him may be just a little less worthy than all those “regular” families.

I knew that I couldn't imprint that damaging and hateful message on my son. Don't get me wrong, I wasn't living a life confined into the closet before my son was born. I was very active in a local lesbian chorus, attended all kinds of activities with my partner, and attended the local UU Church. But I knew that for myself, the standard of openness around my being a lesbian and a mom would have to be 100% out everywhere and at all times.

I am happy to say that there have been only benefits from living out and proud as a family and as a lesbian mom. We have done all the average family things throughout my son's life: soccer, t-ball and karate, music lessons and school programs, church and social events. We have associated with people from all neighborhoods and many different churches and congregations and we have always felt an equal part.

Lynn Smith,
Member and pianist
UU Church of Eugene

The Kids Are All Right

I sit in the dark next to Jane, munching the contraband cinnamon roasted nuts that we snuck into the movie theater, past the NO OUTSIDE FOOD OR DRINK sign. Against all odds, we have finally secured a babysitter and made it out to see *The Kids Are All Right*. Fairly early in the movie, the two mothers, Nic and Jules, are lying in bed together. “Good night, chicken,” one says. “Good night, pony,” says the other. Jane nudges me just as I elbow her. “Oh my god,” I say. “They are such lesbians.”

I like the film immediately for the way it captures the long-term lesbian relationship, at least one version of it, right down to the menagerie of nicknames. There’s overmothering at the dinner table; snuggling in front of the TV; tensions around work; years-old inside jokes; rehashed insecurities—basically the challenges, joys, hopes and disappointments of marriage, all wrapped up with an estrogen bow.

But I’m interested in the film not just because I am a lesbian in a long-term relationship, not just because I want to see this film that has brought lesbian-headed families to mainstream attention.

I want to see it because we, too, have an anonymous donor in our lives, though for the time being, he is still anonymous. I don’t know if we will ever meet him. I would like to leave that up to our daughter to decide since her relationship with him is decidedly closer than ours. So far, Hannah, who is now just seven years old, has not expressed much interest in her donor. Will she want to meet him someday? I have no idea. Would I like to meet him someday? I don’t know the answer to that one either.

For now, at least, I think that I will be OK with whatever she chooses. But there are a million or more variables that could push me in different directions, toward Nic’s defensiveness or toward Jules’ reaction (well, maybe not the jumping-into-bed part, though I understand it served the movie’s plot).

But really? Would I be OK? I mostly liked the character of Paul, the donor, but he was in a movie, not in my life. And although I liked him, I nonetheless wanted to cheer when Nic tells him: This is not your family. Because it was not his family; it was a family to which he was genetically connected. That’s a crucial difference. And yet...

I also get it that these things are complicated. The truth is that sperm donors and half-siblings who share the same donor are both family and not family, all at the same time. Hannah’s sperm donor is not

her “father” in any meaningful sense of the term, but he is also not just a random guy. He does share a connection with her. He shares features with her. His influence is felt in her life, whether or not it is ever directly acknowledged. What’s more, a passel of half-siblings are out there, growing up in families across the Midwest. Several of them have two moms; some have a mom and a dad. A few are known to us. They are connected and not connected, related and not related, all at the same time.

So Nic is both right and wrong when she tells Paul that her family is not his family. The fact is that the lines of kinship are blurrier—or perhaps more multifaceted—in gay- and lesbian-headed families, a reality that drives our opponents nuts. I don’t believe for a minute that our families “undermine” anyone else’s, but it is true that they are expanding the definitions of what it can mean to be a mother, a father, a sister, a brother. Our families might be a little more complicated, or a little surprising, or hard to explain, but it’s also kind of awesome to have the chance to explore new ways of being family.

Will Hannah choose to meet her donor? Maybe, maybe not. But in the end, I think, whatever happens, it will be all right.

Copyright 2010 Amie Klempnauer Miller

This post originally appeared at Beacon Broadside. Amie Klempnauer Miller is a frequent speaker about gay and lesbian families and author of the book *She Looks Just Like You: A Memoir of (Nonbiological Lesbian) Motherhood*. Miller works as a development consultant to the public media industry and lives with her partner and daughter in St. Paul, Minnesota

She Looks Just Like You



After ten years of talking about having children, two years of trying (and failing) to conceive, and one shot of donor sperm for her partner, Amie Miller was about to become a mother. Or something like that. Over the next nine months, as her partner became the biological mom-to-be, Miller became . . . what? Mommy’s little helper? A faux dad?

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The Struggle for LGBT Equality in Kansas

The Unitarian Universalist Fellowship of Salina, played a key role in the recent nondiscrimination ordinance for LGBT equality in Kansas. LGBT inclusion as a protected class under Chapter 13 of the city's ordinance has long been contemplated and discussed, both by the UU Fellowship and by the Salina's Human Relations Commission. The fellowship has provided its facilities for the North-Central Kansas Equality Coalition meetings. In addition, a significant number of UUs have been members of the Coalition.

The fight for LGBT equality has not been fought only in Salina, but throughout the state. The cities of Topeka, Hutchinson, Manhattan, Wichita, and Lawrence have also been in the spotlight. These battles have been fought under the shadow of a threatened state law which passed the House, but not the Senate, in 2012. Kansas' Legislature has had HB2260 in "the hopper" for several years. It would make all local non-discrimination laws that included sexual orientation and gender identity unenforceable.

Locally, the real action began when Janice Norlin went before the city commission in January, 2012 to introduce and request adoption of a resolution for LGBT inclusion as a protected class. After three well-attended hearings, sponsored by Salina's Human Relations Commission, the resolution passed the City Commission at the end of May on a vote of 3-2. The resolution became an amendment to Salina's Chapter 13 ordinance, making it fully-inclusive. It added employment, housing, and public accommodations protections based on both sexual orientation and gender identity.

"Yes" votes came from two newer, and younger, city commissioners and the former Human Relations Executive Director. However, opposition among city staff led to a careful spelling-out, in public proceedings, of how this vote could be petitioned for a city vote—just in case any of the public might want to do so. And they did! The opposition was given enormous amounts of help and "guidance" by Robert Noland of the Wichita-based Kansas Family Policy Council.

Noland and crew, a state organization devoted to such opposition, made the wild and offensive claims their playbook has been using for years – LGBT folks "were a danger to children. Gay men would rape children in bathrooms. They were out to destroy the American family. They were nothing more than HIV/AIDS carriers." The bathroom argument kept surfacing over and over, despite overwhelming evidence, presented in public forums, that these charges went beyond ridiculous.

The petition passed muster for a vote in the General Election, even though early in the County Clerk's examination, it looked like a mistake in certifying signatures might result in an invalid petition, thus sustaining the City Commission's decision. However, further examination showed enough signatures had been gathered.

It should be noted that there was much support from the UU Fellowship, which voted unanimously to support the amendment. Later, Janice Norlin ran for the Kansas Senate in a pivotal race against a tea-party anti-LGBT amendment Salinan, who had worked his way up into the Kansas House and was supported by the Koch Brothers and other big-money PACs. All this despite his voting for one of the most regressive tax reform plans in the nation.

Also, David Norlin, former UU President, was on the Human Relations Commission, having served as chair until only the year before, and Gary Martens, President of the local North Central Kansas Chapter of the Equality Coalition, was also on the HRC. Only one HRC member voted against recommending it favorably to the City Commission. That woman has come under heavy fire for addressing a "religious freedom rally" opposing the ordinance amendment while an HRC commissioner.

At the November election, the ordinance lost, as did Janice Norlin's Senate bid. While progressive forces made many more inroads than in previous elections (running 44-47% of the vote, as opposed to 33-37% in previous elections), we did not win.

However, the movement gained wide recognition and many Salnans are now much better informed than before. As Gary Martens said in his post-election letter to the editor, "We're not going away."

Submitted by David Norlin
UU Program Chair and Member, Kansas Equality Coalition

ADDRESSING THE LGBTQ FAMILY AT CREATING CHANGE:

The 2013 National Conference on LGBT Equality

Maryka Bhattacharyya and Nisco Junkins represented the Interweave Continental Board at Creating Change in Atlanta, GA in January. This amazing and energizing conference held so many workshops that there was NO WAY to take advantage of all that was being offered! So, for this newsletter, we present to you five workshops that addressed LGBTQ families, providing you with the names of the associated organizations and their leaders. We hope these descriptions generate ideas and solutions on issues important to your families.

We're Here, We're Queer, and We're Parents: How to Build and Sustain Robust LGBTQ Family Support Programs

We're here! We're queer! AND we're parents! Join us for this interactive workshop on building and sustaining robust LGBTQ family support programs for your community. This workshop will focus on our experiences as the nation's largest city-funded LGBTQ Family Resource Center (FRC). Participants will learn and leave with practical tools to implement a more inclusive LGBTQ family environment, including but not limited to LGBTQ family programs, community collaborations, the FRC model, and funding ideas.

Presenters: Julia Po, Our Family Coalition, San Francisco, CA; Cheryl Troup, Our Family Coalition, San Francisco, CA

Winning, Keeping, and Expanding Benefits for LGBT Couples and Families

Recognizing that some of the highest concentrations of LGBT headed families live in states without marriage or other statewide protections for LGBT families, and that some employers are using gains in marriage equality as an excuse to drop domestic partner (DP) benefits, this workshop will help attendees understand and implement proven strategies for passing local and state DP and Equal Benefits (EB) laws and persuading private employers to adopt and keep DP benefits.

Presenters: Denise Brogan-Kator, Family Equality Council; AJ Bockelman, PROMO; Geoff Kors, National Center for Lesbian Rights

The Gender Dance: Smashing Gender Stereotypes in Children's Literature

As the author of the children's classic, *Heather Has Two Mommies*, Leslea Newman knows how crucial it is for children to see themselves

and families like theirs portrayed in literature in order to build self-esteem. In this lively discussion, she presents groundbreaking books that offer children a wide range of examples of gender expressions, including *The Story of Ferdinand*, *William's Doll*, *Princess Smartypants*, *King & King*, *10,000 Dresses* and others.

Presenter: Leslea Newman, Author, Northampton, MA

The Artifice of the Nuclear Family: Exploring Alternative Family Models

A moderated workshop session exploring the presumptions of what constitutes a family, not only in the straight world, but within the LGBT community. We will explore the notion of family within the queer community and offer alternative family models that challenge the hetero-normative concept of family. The alternative family models include issues of: racial and economic justice, foster parenting, legal protections under the law, gender variance and working with straight allies. The objectives of the workshop are to show several models of effective families and types of parenting that fall outside of nuclear family and to challenge the concept of the usual choices for LGBT parents. We will be showcasing the concept of extended family parenting by using examples of positive alternative family models. Each presenter will briefly explain their alternative family to the session and will include: key concepts of parenting that include family dynamics and legal issues/protections. Participants will have the opportunity to ask questions, offer suggestion and participate in the discussion.

Presenters: Hope Wisneski, Gill Foundation, Denver, CO; Julie Childs, National Gay and Lesbian Task Force, Washington, DC; Trystan Reese, NGLTF, Washington, DC; Monroe France, New York, NY; Liebe Gadinsky, Miami Beach, FL

Low-Income LGBT Families: Know Your Rights

LGBT families, and especially families of color, have lower average incomes and are more likely to face poverty. LGBT families face unique challenges in applying for government benefits and protecting their family relationships. Come learn about your rights in applying for government benefits like Medicaid, welfare, public housing, Social Security and more, and what you can do to best protect your family.

Presenters: Cathy Sakimura, National Center for Lesbian Rights, San Francisco, CA; Dan Torres, LGBT Advocacy California, San Francisco, CA; Cole Thaler, Georgia Legal Services Program, Atlanta, GA; Maya Rupert, National Center for Lesbian Rights, Washington DC.

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ARTICLE FROM ANONYMOUS

Times Have Changed!!

Today, we feel so removed from the "hey we are gay parents" perspective. It was so new to us 15 years ago and so overwhelming while we were trying to figure out how to even become parents. But now, 11 years into public school, raising a teenager, it's so not in our brains. We really are just Jennifer's parents. Plain and simple. Very rarely do we think of it any different. I guess that might be a testament to a societal shift as well. Things are certainly different than they were 15 years ago.

But Let's Not Forget Another Perspective...

Why Gay Families Still Hide

Of course you are free to share your story of Mary Jo, other gay families, and us but NOT using our names or photos

You may recall the man arrested for threatening to plant a bomb at our UU church from the gay marriage banner? He LIVES DOWN OUR STREET!!!!

I sat outside before & during both Sunday services the following week after I knew he was paroled. I knew he might charge into our church with a weapon to retaliate for his arrest. If the church put up a gigantic gay marriage banner outside and had congregants willing to face the risks of neighborhood complaints and bomb threats, I, a lesbian mom, sure as heck was willing to put myself between the violent protestor and my beloved congregation. So, I told my family to stay home that Sunday just in case he showed up. I went however and sat in a chair smiling and greeting everyone. They acted curious to me in my chair outside, but I didn't say I was keeping watch. No need to alarm them. But inside I knew it was my "Rosa Parks-type line in the sand." I would die if necessary for the right to be openly gay at church on that hot day.

Fortunately, he never showed up.

Unfortunately, he lives among us making me tell this story without giving my name.



This is why you see gays on TV and in movies all the time, yet so few in the workplace and on your block...we still try to stay hidden. Right now someone you think is straight isn't!

Embrace gay rights, stop gay jokes. Human beings, including children of GLBTs, deserve the same respectful considerate treatment others have enjoyed every day of their lives.

So, you see, state and federal gay marriage is necessary to make employment safe & housing free of violent neighborhoods a reality. Then it is a world where a child of gay parents doesn't hesitate to have anyone at school know about two parents of one gender.

Soon, I dream, this will be a conversation of a bygone era.

First comes love, then comes marriage, then comes The Pope saying God told him to allow gay marriage!



This Hidden Camera Footage Of A Gay Couple In Texas Will Shock You

<http://front.moveon.org/this-hidden-camera-footage-of-a-gay-couple-in-texas-will-shock-you/?rc=daily.share>

BREAKING NEWS: Illinois Senate Passes Marriage Bill

Recently, I received an e-mail telling me that the Illinois Senate passed the freedom to marry bill with bipartisan support. The vote was 34 to 21. I was asked to take a moment to celebrate this landmark event, and to think about what it meant for hundreds of thousands of LGBTQ individuals throughout Illinois who have waited for this moment. Then I read: "Now, we must immediately build on this momentum and move forward in getting the bill passed by the Illinois House."



After reading the above, I began to feel sad that the people who are voting in the Illinois House are no longer my representatives, and I cannot influence their vote. I am sad that this is happening while I no longer live in Illinois, a state that I lived in for 35 years!

However, I remind myself of the many years that I invested in supporting the LGBTQ community as a member of the DuPage Unitarian Universalist Church and as a resident of Naperville, IL. I have so many wonderful

memories. Among my favorites are making posters with our Interweave group for

my first Gay Pride Parade in Chicago; arranging a Sunday service for National Coming Out Day, led by LGBTQ members and friends, during which one church member was moved enough to come out to the congregation during Joys and Concerns; riding on the bus to Springfield IL for LGBTQ Lobby Day and lobbying my State Senator and Representative; arranging for the many workshops that led to our congregation becoming a Welcoming Congregation, and engaging in the many moving discussions that arose during those workshops.

I remember one particular trip to the state capital for Lobby Day. I missed the bus and decided to drive down on my own. As I stood in line waiting for my Representative to come out of the House session to speak with me, an elderly, PFLAG mom and I began to talk. With a twinkle in both of her eyes, she asked me: "Do you know what I say to my representative? I ask him, do you want your daughter to marry a gay man?"

I knew my Representative's wife from my workplace, and knew that he was Irish Catholic and



not at all ready to deal with gay rights. I, also, knew he had several teenage daughters. At first, I hated the PFLAG mom's question. Obviously, I didn't know what she asked her representative. In addition, I thought gay men would make wonderful husbands, just not to his daughter. But, I screwed up my courage and thought about how to ask the question, and went ahead with it. If his Catholic church did not encourage gay men to express themselves, one (or all) of his daughters could very well marry a wonderful Catholic man who later in life decided that he had to live authentically. The decision could come after having children. I know, on that day, that my Representative began to think about the issues of gay rights differently. And that was one reason why I was there.

Next week, the Illinois House will vote on the Freedom to Marry Bill. If it passes in the House and the bill becomes law, I cannot help but think that I played a small part in making that happen.

Maryka Bhattacharyya



Fatherhood Dreams

The documentary Fatherhood Dreams invites people into the day-to-day lives of gay dads Scott, Steve, Randy and Drew, who are fathers through ADOPTION, CO-PARENTING and SURROGACY. We'll stay with Steve and his co-parenting partners, lesbian mothers Coreen and Wendy while they are raising two children on an isolated island. We'll hear from a surrogate mother expecting Scott's twins. And we'll visit the house of adopted child's birth family that chose Randy and Drew, a gay family, to be the parents to baby Jack.

These men represent a new possibility, showing how in a modern world gay parenting can transform from a distant dream into a reality.



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