

Celebrating
30 years in the
Cincinnati Community

Quarterly
Newsletter

PFLAG

CINCINNATI

VOLUME 30 ISSUE 1

SUMMER 2015

Letter from the President

It has been a busy summer and as we head into the fall season we hope that you have enjoyed seeing PFLAG out and about. In June we had the fortunate opportunity to walk in the Cincinnati Pride parade and host a booth at the festival. This year was especially monumental as we celebrated the Supreme Court decision to allow all people the right to marry. Marriage Equality has been a huge issue for so many people and we are now on the right side of history. So many emotions ran rampant for so many families and we were happy to be part of it. August 15 and 16 we will be at Sawyer Point hosting a booth with GLSEN for the Black Family Reunion. If you are in the area stop out and see us.

PFLAG of Greater Cincinnati turns 30 this year and we will be celebrating in high form in the upcoming year. Please check out our website and Facebook to see what we have planned.

One of the most important things we do at PFLAG is our scholarship program. Each June we honor deserving students with a scholarship to help further their education. It is our small way of making sure our future leaders are equipped with the utmost knowledge and advantages. IF you are interested in being a part of our scholarship program you can donate on our website or simply drop a check in the mail. We appreciate all donations and they are tax exempt. Our membership drive is coming up soon as well as our elections for board positions. We vote for our board positions at our October board meeting and

members get the right to vote for those seeking a position. I would be remiss if I didn't mention that we have experienced some tragedies in the PFLAG Family. Our founder Marian Weage lost her daughter and we know that while she is not in pain anymore, it still hurts to lose anyone, especially a child. Please keep Marian in your thoughts. We also lost our former treasure Brent. Please keep his family and friends in your thoughts. Tell those around you that you love them—tomorrow is never promised! PFLAG is always here for you - if you need us call the hotline or send us an email. We need each other and we want to make sure we are available. Until next time remember that when YOU no longer need PFLAG, PFLAG needs YOU
Sincerely,
Michael

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Vision & Mission Statement

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

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

2014/2015 Executive Board

President: Michael Cotrell
president@pflagcinci.org

Vice President: Lauren Grosser
vicepresident@pflagcinci.org

Secretary: Monica Plett

Treasurer: Colette Lindemann
treasurer@pflagcinci.org

Members at Large
Tom Jenkins & Marian Weage

Meeting

Our monthly chapter meetings are on the **second Tuesday of each month** from 7:00 – 9:30 P.M. at Mt. Auburn Presbyterian Church (link for directions <http://www.mtauburnpresby.org/location.shtml>) located at 103 William Howard Taft Rd, 45219. The monthly **chapter meeting is open to everyone**, including parents, friends and family of gays, lesbians, bisexuals and transgender persons, as well as to gays, lesbians, bisexuals and transgender

persons or anyone interested in learning more about the topic. Meetings are completely confidential. What is said there stays there. Confidentiality is important to most of us for one reason or another, and at all time we respect the rights of others.

The chapter also has a monthly board meeting that is held before the monthly chapter meeting, starting at 6:00 P.M. at 103 William Howard Taft Rd, 45219. Paid up members of the

chapter are welcome to attend the monthly board meeting.

Please send an email to info@pflagcinci.org or call the PFLAG Help Line at 211 or 513-721-7900 and ask for the PFLAG contact number if you need more information about the monthly chapter meeting or information about attending the chapter board meeting.

Committee Chairs

Advocacy Chair:
Lynne Lefebvre

Hotline:
Marie Jenkins

Email Liaison/Webmaster:
Tom Jenkins

Library:
Connie Hopkins

Membership:
Tom Jenkins

Newsletter:
Michael Cotrell
newsletter@pflagcinci.org

Programs:
OPEN

Refreshments:
Lauren Grosser

Speaker's Bureau:
Lynne Lefebvre
Tom Jenkins

Scholarship:
Dan Ley
scholarship@pflagcinci.org

Newsletter

This newsletter is published quarterly (usually sometime in the first month of the quarter). The chapter would benefit greatly from your involvement in the creation of this newsletter. Send an email

to the editor at newsletter@pflagcinci.org if you have an announcement that should be included, an idea for an article, or even better, would be interested in writing an article. Also, feel free to

send an email to the editor if you have any suggestions or comments regarding your chapter's quarterly newsletter's content or design.



In the Cards

By Jane Biddinger

I'm part of a dying breed. With each passing year, it becomes more apparent. I send Christmas cards.

I am not, nor ever have I been, employed by Hallmark or American Greeting Cards. I own no stock in either company. I send cards because I enjoy them. I enjoy the process of writing them and the pleasure of receiving them. And now that the holidays are officially over, I enjoy reading them.

The tree is stripped of its ornaments, deposed from the living room window, taking refuge in our basement. The crib, baby Jesus, and his entourage are tucked safely away, sleeping in peace on the shelf nearby. I've broken two of my New Year's resolutions.

Other than the additional pounds I've yet to lose (see broken resolution above), one tangible reminder of the season is the stack of greeting cards sent to us by family, friends, and insurance companies. Our household has regained some sense of normalcy so I now find time to read them. Really read them.

I have my routine. I settle into my chair at the kitchen table, make myself a cup of hot chocolate, and separate the cards into three major groups and one sub-group.

The first are the official Christmas letters. I do

not personally send this type, but find that next to Chevy Chase's *Christmas Vacation*, these are the most entertaining and creative artistic expressions of the season. They condense the family's past year into a page or two. They're packed with stellar accomplishments of each and every family member; sometimes even the dog has excelled at some feat or other. Hamsters must be underachievers as they are seldom mentioned. I question the credibility of these letters, as they are noticeably absent of any screw-ups. Does no one else spread a can of frosting over a tray of lasagna mistaking it for a tub of ricotta, and serve it to guests?

I refill my cup, add a dollop of whipped cream, and focus my attention to the second group—the cards from friends. Some we see often, some we only hear from this time of year. These cards require more time and attention. Most of them are of the boxed variety as are the ones I send. There are a few handmade ones—the kind I swear I'll make this summer when I have some spare time. When I purchase ours, I scour through shelves, and rummage through box after box until I find the one with just the right message. I prefer themes of peace, tranquility and hope. Perhaps because I wish that for myself, my family, and the world at large.

As I read them, the cards our friends sent give me an insight into their feelings and hopes as well. The younger ones, a generation or so removed, send cards with snowmen frolicking, Santa and his reindeer gliding through the sky, stockings hung by the chimney with care. The cards from our more mature friends focus on family and home. Most all of them contain handwritten messages bringing us up to date with their goings-on and those of their family. Credible notes that wish us joyous times, good health, and the promise of a time together soon.

With each card, I recall a lifetime of experiences with these people. I look back on the times we've shared. The good ones and the sad ones. The times we reached out to help. The times we've been the ones in need.

As the years pass by, the list of names penned to the cards has become shorter and shorter as children have left home. Most are back to the original two. Occasionally, a name is dropped due to divorce. This year, we received a card from Florida with only one name and a note that her husband has passed. Her jagged handwriting attested to her pain.

Continued next page



In the Cards

By Jane Biddinger *continued*

The third and final group comes from family. Another cup of hot chocolate, another dollop of whipped cream, and a bagel topped with cream cheese. I'm in this for the duration.

There are those who say the family is not as important as it once was. A trip to the local Hallmark will prove otherwise. The most real estate is devoted to this select group. The carpet is the most worn in this aisle. The choices often the most difficult.

In my case, I divide the family into two camps.

First come my husband, our children, their spouses, and our grandchildren. As I select cards for them, I realize that the ones for immediate family go beyond extending glad tidings. They express appreciation tinged with expectations.

To my Husband, my best friend, my support, my love...

To our daughter who is so willing to be there for others...

To our son and his husband, family is a treasured gift, (this one I order online)

To our son and his family who bring joy to our lives...

The cards from my husband and children follow suit.

To My wife, I'm so thankful for the life we've built together...

To my Mother, God couldn't be everywhere, so He created Mothers...

To our Mother, though we don't often take time to tell you...

To Mother who keeps the family together...

This year, I wonder had someone had sent a card to Leelah Alcorn, might she still be with us today? A simple card. A card saying, *To My Child, no matter what...*

The subset of family is for those who are family in the genealogical sense of the word, but not in the *blood is thicker than water* way of thinking.

I divide the family cards because my family of origin is divided.

There is a family rift. An 18 year-old-rift. It's a chasm really. Working its way to a canyon between me and my two sisters. The cause of the rift? My son's sexuality While the Pope says he will not sit in judgment, my sisters do.

It's not unusual for me to make more than one trip to purchase cards for them. Years ago it was simple. The cards changed to adjust to their life stages. *To My Sister*, became *To My Sister and her husband*, which became *To My Sister and her Family*.

Now my sisters' lives have circled back to *Sister and Her Husband*, but the greetings in those cards are hardly appropriate. Sentiments expressing the importance of family, the acceptance of family, and the love of family are insincere at best. Downright lies if the truth be told.

Finding cards for these siblings is difficult. I've never seen a card *To My Sister and Brother-in-Law who forbid my gay son to enter their house, to have contact with their children, or to take a place at the holiday dinner*. Or *To My Sister and Brother-in-Law who support the Sister and Brother-in-Law...*

Some tell me to write them off as a lost cause.

Eighteen years ago, the first year of division, I found a box of cards. On its front, four children of different skin colors lie in the snow, arms and legs outstretched as they make snow angels. The card reads,

May the time be close at hand

when all may live in harmony,

a peaceful world of kindred hearts

united as a family.

That year I sent the card only to my sisters. I bought a second box after the holidays. Each of the past eighteen years, I've sent that same card—a prayer for peace, a plea for understanding, and so far a failed attempt at reconciliation. But I send them nonetheless. And I will do the same again next year. And the year after that. For as long as it takes.



Cause for Celebration

By Jane Biddinger

Marian Weage is the mother of three gay children out of four. When her son came out to her in 1978 she was searching for information and was introduced to a PFLAG chapter in Michigan where she was living at the time. When she moved back to Cincinnati area, she was told that

there was no chapter here, and that is how PFLAG came to Cincinnati. Marian and three gay men worked together to find a place to meet and get the word out. Now we are approaching 30 years in 2015. Marian works as a church secretary, organist and choir director in addition to any acting jobs

that may come her way. She also earned her BFA in Musical Theatre Performance at Northern Kentucky University in 2008.

Marian is always available to speak at any time to anyone about accepting their gay children, as she considers her children her greatest accomplishment

PFLAG CELEBRATES 30 YEARS!

In August of 1985 PFLAG of Greater Cincinnati planted its foot in the heart of the city, One of the founders Marian Weage started the group with several other families to make sure our kids were safe and parents had the correct information to make healthy decisions.

In 1992 PFLAG established the scholarship foundation for high school students and those furthering their education. Our Scholarships have been given to a Cincinnati Councilman, teachers, those working for marriage equality and other top notch professionals.

Over the 30 years we have seen a change from those who consider themselves gay and lesbian to transgender youth and those who don't have a specific label as part of our spectrum. We have seen families walk in with such uncertainty to wanting to help us host fundraisers and starting dialogue with their co-workers. We have helped to bridge the gap with our public speaking events, working our booth at several festivals and speaking to companies diversity groups.

We celebrated Marriage Equality on June 25, 2015 with the Supreme Court decision to allow all people to marry and we celebrated the victory along with several other LGBT groups such as GLSEN, and HRC. PFLAG both local and national have been in the forefront to make sure our families are healthy and happy.

We know that PFLAG is needed and that families look to us for guidance and information. We will be here until we are not needed anymore. Please remember when you no longer need PFLAG...PFLAG needs YOU!



PFLAG NEWS

PFLAG Awards Scholarships!

On Tuesday, June 9 at the PFLAG monthly meeting, three deserving students received \$1,000 scholarships for their college education. This is the twenty-fourth year that PFLAG has awarded scholarships. This year's recipients were Tess Balsley, Aaron Broughton, and Jason Long.

The 2015 Scholarship Committee, chaired by Dan Ley, selected the winning students. The Committee based its selections on the applicants' academic record, activities, future plans, and references. Special emphasis was placed on students who help to fulfill the PFLAG missions of providing support, education, and advocacy in the community.

The scholarship winners demonstrated a wide range of accomplishments in support of the LGBT community, such as serving as president of the school's Gay-Straight Alliance, volunteering with Planned Parenthood and Caracole, and working to end the exclusion of LGBTQ individuals in the Boy Scouts of America. The continued work by students such as these will certainly make the world a better place.

Funds for the PFLAG scholarships came from the Imperial Sovereign Queen City Court of the Buckeye Empire (ISQCCBE), Paul Delph Scholarship Fund, and the generosity of many other donors and members. PFLAG thanks these organizations and individuals for their contributions and looks forward to continuing success in supporting deserving students.

Here is a brief introduction to the recipients:

Tess Balsley graduated from Clark Montessori High School and will attend Ohio University in the fall. She plans to major in Sociology and work in the social services field to increase awareness, foster understanding, and provide support for all people in our communities. She has volunteered with Planned Parenthood and Caracole in high school and was a member of the Cincinnati Junior Rollergirls team. As an ally, Tess continues to learn and grow while also educating and standing up for the rights of LGBTQ individuals.

Aaron Broughton is a printmaking major at the Art Academy of Cincinnati. Aaron was an Eagle Scout and leader in the Boy Scouts until he was asked to leave due to his sexual orientation. He is now a member of Scouting for Equality, an organization that works to end the Boy Scouts of America's ban on gay members and leaders. He is working with the administration at the Art Academy to start a LGBT organization on campus. Aaron is a strong, spirited leader, and through his interactions with others, he is making a difference.

Jason Long graduated from Madeira High School and will attend the University of Cincinnati-College Conservatory of Music in the fall. He will major in Electronic Media to prepare him for a career in a media-related field. Jason served as President of his school's Gay-Straight Alliance and has worked to raise awareness and acceptance of the LGBTQ community in his school. He demonstrates strong leadership and people skills, which enable him to work with others to have a strong, supportive voice for the LGBTQ community.

THANK YOU TO THE SCHOLARSHIP COMMITTEE AND CONGRATS TO OUR WINNERS!



Resources

GLSEN of Greater Cincinnati

www.glsencincinnati.org

Youth Group meets every Monday from 6:30pm – 8:30pm at Mt. Auburn Pres. Church in the Social Room (103 William Howard Taft Rd)

Human Rights Campaign

www.hrc.org

American Foundation for Suicide Prevention

513-281-CARE

Trevor Project

866-488-7386

BRAVO (Buckeye Region Anti-Violence Organization) – Ohio www.bravo-ohio.org

(866)86-BRAVO (866)862-7286

Heatland Trans* Wellness Group

www.transwellness.org

info@transwellness.org

513-549-4447

Cincinnati Children's Hospital Transgender Clinic

513-636-4681

TransYouth Family Advocates (888)462-8932 or www.imatyfa.org providing support for children with gender variant and gender questioning identities and their families.

Youth Guardian Services www.youth-guardian.org

DiverseCity Youth Chorus <http://divercityusa.org>

Like us on Facebook @ PFLAG Cincinnati or
check us out on the web @ www.pflagcinci.org



PFLAG Cincinnati 2015-16 Membership Application

Name _____

Address _____

Phone _____

Email _____

P.O. Box 19634
Cincinnati OH 45219-0634.

Membership Category

- Individual \$30
- Household \$40
- Supporting \$50
- Contributing \$100
- Sponsoring \$500
- Lifetime \$1000
- Other \$_____

**“Remember,
when you no
longer need
PFLAG,
PFLAG needs
you”**

Memberships run from October 1 to September 30.
Newsletters are sent by email. If you wish to receive a paper copy, check this box .

Mail membership application & dues to
PFLAG Cincinnati

THANKS TO ONE OF OUR SUPPORTERS!

The past few years we have been honored to be a designated charity for the ISQCCBE. The ISQCCBE is a local charity that raises money for several different charities in the Greater Cincinnati area. We have been chosen to receive funds from them this past year and the funds we received helped to purchase literature, operate booths for different festivals and help students further their education. We want to thank the ISQCCBE for their continued support of PFLAG of Greater Cincinnati. Please check out their website at www.isqccbe.org or their Facebook page and say Thanks!



General Chapter Information & Resources

Advocacy: Understanding and participating in advocacy for GLBT concerns at a local, state, national and international level is addressed by our Advocacy committee. If you have anything concerning awareness or participation in advocacy for GLBT concerns please contact our Advocacy chairperson at info@pflagcinci.org

Hotline/Email: Throughout this section and the entire newsletter you will see references to the hotline and various email addresses. If you ever get confused about whom to contact, you can just use the chapter Hotline or general email address. The chapter hotline can be reached by calling 211 or 513-721-7900 and ask for the PFLAG number. The general email address for the chapter is info@pflagcinci.org. Feel free to use these as your single point of contact for anything related to the chapter. Just keep in mind that depending on your request, the operator/email monitor may need to contact someone else in order to properly address your questions/comments.

Library: Your chapter has a mobile library that is open for business at every monthly meeting. The library is an excellent resource that contains many great books and videos that address topics such as homosexuali-

ty, homosexuality and religion, coming out and GLBT issues for children and families. You are welcome to borrow any of the books or videos.

Membership: PFLAG Cincinnati values your support and interest in the chapter. Your membership supports the activities of the chapter which include purchasing publications for distribution at meetings and events where we are represented, books for the library, dues to National PFLAG and the printing and mailing of this newsletter. The scholarship program is funded primarily through our fund raising events and donations. The membership year runs October 1 to September 30.

Programs: Periodically throughout the year at the monthly meetings, a guest speaker will be included in the agenda. In the past we have had religious leaders, doctors, lawyers, financial advisors and GLBT non profit health and support leaders as guest speakers. If you have an idea or would be interested in being a guest speaker send an email to info@pflagcinci.org.

Scholarships: Each year your chapter funds its own scholarship program. The scholarships are awarded annually to deserving members of the community. More infor-

mation can be found at the chapter website, www.pflagcinci.org in the Scholarship Info section or by sending an email to info@pflagcinci.org. If you are interested in donating to the scholarship fund, send a check to P.O. Box 19634, Cincinnati Ohio 45219-0634 made out to PFLAG Cincinnati, noting in the memo that the check is for the scholarship fund; PFLAG Cincinnati is a non-profit organization with a 501(c)3 status. Your contribution may be tax deductible – seek advice from your tax preparer.

Speakers: If you ever need anyone to speak to a group, organization, business, school or church, your chapter has experienced members that have volunteered to speak on behalf of the chapter. Send an email to info@pflagcinci.org to make a request or to volunteer to be on the speakers bureau.

Website: The chapter has an excellent website (www.pflagcinci.org). There is up to date information about the chapter including things like monthly meetings, information about events and volunteer opportunities. If you have any feedback on the website send an email to webmaster@pflagcinci.org Also, find us on [Facebook](#) PFLAG Cincinnati

Want to get involved in the chapter contact a board member for volunteer opportunities

PO BOX 19634

Cincinnati, Ohio 45219-0634

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED