

COLAGE NOTES



An irregular publication of COLAGE/San Francisco Bay Area

Fall 1997

Say Goodbye to Summer, Hello To Fall

By Felicia Park-Rogers



Felicia Park-Rogers, Director

It's that time of year again. Fall. For those of us in school, it's a mad rush to find our favorite note-books, catch up on our summer reading list, and get ready to meet our new classmates and teacher(s). For those of us who aren't in school any longer, it still seems like the new year, all those years of school have instilled a pattern we can't escape.

Hopefully, we're all returning from a summer of fun and are now preparing for the Fall season, putting away the sandals and battering down the hatches preparing for winter.

COLAGE has certainly had a summer of fun. We had a great picnic in Golden Gate Park in June to end our groups season, there were about 25 folks there, and we had fun sharing food and stories and playing some great games. This was soon followed by our first transgender family event, a picnic and gathering in Golden Gate Park. This event was co-sponsored by the Alternative Family Project's Transgender Parent Support Group. The afternoon was a very special one for all of the families present and for COLAGE. Many thanks to the organizers of the day and all the families for their on-going work.

Then there was Pride weekend. We had a great booth for both days, Saturday and Sunday, thanks to all the folks who made that possible. We had an enthusiastic contingent of about 100 people and we marched together with several other lesbian, gay, bi, and trans (lgbt) family groups. Pride was soon followed by our annual conference, this year in Philadelphia. There were about ten teenaged and young adult COLAGERS from the Bay Area. We had lots of good workshops, intense connections, and a great dance, among many other events.

August has been an active month as we get ready for groups to start in October: training new group leaders and finding spaces for the groups to meet. We have also been planning our other Fall activities, such as Halloween trick or treating, our Second Annual Bowl--

A-Thon, the Castro Street Fair, and participating in Family Day with the All Our Families Coalition.

This is just a short summary of the local events COLAGE has been involved with this summer locally in the Bay Area. A key project we've been working on is starting a Bay Area chapter of COLAGE that is distinct from the national office. Please see page four for more info about how you can get involved. The office has also been busy working on a host of things at national and international levels on the programming, advocacy, and education fronts. For more details, please give us a call or check out our newly renovated web site which has tons of great stuff on it.

Cris Bermudez, Summer Intern at SF Pride

COLAGE did hire a new Director in January, Felicia Park-Rogers. And we had three fabulous interns over the summer. But, truth be told, we continue to exist because of our members and volunteers. Without your donations of your time, expertise, and money our doors would close. So please keep in touch, stay involved, and give generously. Children of lesbians, gays, bisexuals, and transgenders everywhere are counting on you.



P.S.

On a slightly unrelated, but important note, some of you work in places that do workplace giving campaigns. You can write COLAGE in on your United Way form, or we're members of the ProgressiveWay if your workplace uses them. Please consider making a donation.

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Fall Groups Information Check It Out!

The new groups will be starting in October.

If you (or if you're a parent, your child) is interested in participating, now is the time to sign up. We have a wide range



Margya and Chrissy at the COLAGE groups picnic.

of groups available this year. The group cycle goes from October through June. They meet once a month for two hours and require ongoing attendance. If you know you will miss more than two groups during that time, please consider the impact of that carefully on the other participants. The group leaders work hard to build a sense of community among the participants, it is hard to do that when people are not consistently there.

Sadly, the fabulous Liz Haas who has been coordinating the groups for the last three years moved to Boston in June, so bear with us as we work out the rough spots. Remember, the groups are an all volunteer effort, if you want to improve them, roll up your sleeves, give the office a call, and get involved.

The groups do activities and have discussions that create a safe environment for kids to be free and open about their families and provide a space for them to build connections and friendships with other kids. They are primarily led by two older (twentysomething) COLAGErS (there are a few supporters here and there who are sensitive and experienced with regard to our family issues, but don't have an lgbt parent) who are trained in the basics of peer counseling and group facilitation.

For more information about a group you (or your child) are interested in please call the contact name given. If not enough people sign up in advance the group will be canceled so call now, don't delay.

Marin

This group will happen in conjunction with the monthly family/parent gathering one Friday evening a month at Spectrum, the lgbt community center in San Anselmo. It is open to a broad age range, 6-11. The group leader is named Katie and we need a second group leader to work with her, any takers? Leave a message for Katie at 461-5272 to sign up.

San Francisco

We're offering a broad range of groups, we hope you'll find one that fits you and your family. If you don't give us a call and we'll see what we can do.

Pre-School Group: a new group for us. This would be a play group for two to five year olds with lgbt parents, parents want to hang out and talk to each other next door? Call Michael for more info: 285-5429

It's Elementary: a group for 6-10 year olds. Sounds like fun. Call the office to sign up and/or if you're interested in being a group leader for this group, 861-5437.

It's All About ME: a group for the creative, introspective, inquisitive, or just plain old interested COLAGEr. The group will be project-oriented, focused on making autobiographical art. The group leaders' areas of expertise include creative writing, bookmaking, improvisation, movement/dance, music, and visual art. By the end you will have a strong connection to the other participants and three beautiful projects about your life and your history. Call Hallie for the full scoop, 641-8424. Recommended for 11-14, open to other interested folks.

Continued on page four...

Bowl-A-Rama

The second annual COLAGE Bowl-A-Thon is around the corner. Mark it in your calendar now: November 9, 1997, 2-6 pm, Japantown Bowl, 1790 Post Street, San Francisco.

Last year's was a huge success with about 30 people in attendance and over \$1,000 raised for COLAGE. We had a whole lot fun with kids of all ages and a lot of families present.

This year promises to be even more fun and raise even more money to support the important work of COLAGE. So take your pledge form today, go get those pledges, and get ready to bowl.

To help produce the event or volunteer the day of call the office and leave a message for Rachel Hulstein. Call with any questions too.

Projects In The Works

A chat room for kids with lgbt parents though Planet Out.

A local group in St. Louis, Missouri

A comprehensive resource guide for kids with lgbt parents and our parents.

A fact packet with information about our families and about COLAGE.

The Second Annual COLAGE Bowl-A-Thon.

A series of local game nights.

A new section for our publication "Just For Us" by and for our second generation members.

Leadership development weekend for the new international Steering Committee.

Monthly press releases about COLAGE and our members' issues to the media.

Coalition building and collaborative efforts with other lgbt family groups, locally, nationally, and internationally.

And more...

Anything you want to help with? Any project you'd like to start? Just give us a call.

Wish List

Can you help us with:

Things

A 600 dpi printer
Reams of plain white copy paper
Highlighter pens and other office supplies
Extra .32 and .20 stamps
Snack foods for volunteer night
Pentium (586) computer(s)
Scanner
Frequent Flier miles
Blank VHS and Hi8 Tapes

Volunteers

Computer assistance and trouble shooting for Windows 95 Network using Office 97, PageMaker, FileMaker Pro
Group leaders
Help with information requests, answering phones, other office work
Help with special events, planning and the day of
Help with fundraising, grants, events, personal ask
Help with publications, editing, design, production, mailings
Bookkeeping

San Francisco/ Bay Area COLAGE Chapter

There is so much going on these days around the country and the Bay Area having to do with lesbian, gay, bi, and trans families. Kids with lgbt parents play a key role in shaping the tenor of the events and discussions happening about our families. From marriage in Hawaii to adoption in Iowa to custody in Florida, our families are making headline news.

As we become more visible there are more kids with lgbt parents, and our supporters, looking for ways to get involved. One of the best ways is right here in our own backyard. The COLAGE office handles hundreds of requests for information every month. We work to support COLAGE groups across the US and Canada. We work with the media, the courts, and government to make our voices heard.

With all of this going on we need more help. The Bay Area is our stronghold. One third of our members are located in the Bay Area, and we are sounding the call for you to get involved and active. Because of the growing demands on the organization, we have less time to organize locally, but we know kids and families still need support, fun, and activism on a local level.

So, this year we've been working on starting a local San Francisco Bay Area Chapter. Some great leaders, organizers, and members have already stepped up to the plate, but they need more help. To get involved please call the office and leave a message for Lisi. She can connect you to all kinds of stuff according to your interests whether it's tabling at events like Family Day or the Castro St. Fair, organizing letter writing campaigns to the California Legislature, helping run a group, or anything else. So give us a call and get involved with your local community.



Groups participant and his mom prepare for a three legged race at the groups picnic

... "Groups" Continued from page two

All A That's Alright, But I Need Support: If enough people are interested we will do a formal support group co-led by an experienced lgbt family therapist and a COLAGER with lots of counseling experience. This group would be co-sponsored by New Leaf Services (formerly Operation Concern). Call Sara Lei Pennington at 626-7000. Recommended ages, 13-18.

Crunch and Brunch: An informal support and social gathering for COLAGERS 18 and older. The second Saturday of every month at Josie's Juice Joint and Cabaret, 16th and Market, 11 am.

Transgender Families: A group for kids with trans or questioning parents. This group is co-sponsored by the Alternative Family Project and will be led in conjunction with their parents support group. It meets every other Monday from six to eight pm at 425 Divisadero St, suite 203. Call Lisi to sign up, 863-7945.

East Bay

An activity and support group for kids around the ages of 7-12. We're still looking for leaders for this group too, you know what to do, call if you want to sign up or be a group leader. 415-861-5437.