

COLAGE GROUPS



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Need a COLAGE group in your community? To start a chapter or for more information contact Jude Koski, Program Coordinator M-F 11am-7pm Pacific Time at (415) 861-5437 or email jude@colage.org. Visit www.colage.org for chapter resources!

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Ray Koskovich
PO Box 14301
San Francisco CA 94114-0301



A PUBLICATION OF COLAGE (CHILDREN OF LESBIANS AND GAYS EVERYWHERE)



JUST FOR US

SPECIAL
HOLIDAY
ISSUE 2001

FOR THE DAUGHTERS AND SONS OF LESBIAN, GAY, BISEXUAL AND TRANSGENDER PARENTS

CHARADES AND CELEBRATIONS

By Beth Teper

It was dark when we got there at three in the afternoon after driving for an hour out of the city, across the Golden Gate Bridge, and up into the north bay hills. Rain clouds covered the sky, blocking the sun from view. The path along the side of the house and around to the other side was muddy. Tall straw-brown weeds grew so thick and high between this path and the neighbor's house I could barely see it. The air was windy and cold which made it difficult to keep the tin foil from flying off the still-hot baking pan heavy with tsimmes (a jewish/eastern european dish with yams and apples) in my hands.

When Sandy slid open the glass door, yummy smells, warmth, dogs, and the sound of music and laughter greeted me. After kicking off my shoes I noticed the long table. It was covered with soft woven table cloths, leaves and branches, decorative squash, candlesticks and mixed sets of glass, pottery-type plates and silverware. Behind the counter to my right I could feel the heat coming from the kitchen and see and hear Kay breathing hard, sweating, and giving directions to the other women helping cook and prepare the turkey.

I looked around and, again, I was the only kid there.

Many hours after the ritual drinking of wine, beer (and juice or soda for me) and eating carrots and crackers with cheese and creamy dips; several hours after women danced with each other and kissed to the tunes/albums of Holly Near, Chris Williamson, Linda Tillery, Meg Christian and Teresa Trull; a few hours after the table was set with bowls and platters of vegetarian stews, salads with seeds and flowers, wild rice, a variety of cranberry sauces; a couple hours after the 35 pound stuffed turkey was carved and piled on everyone's plates; an hour after the final dinner toasts (giving Thanks for life and feminist progress) were uttered; thirty minutes after food coma set in and subsided ... we (finally!) gathered in the living room to play.

Teams were divided, pieces of paper and pens were distributed; titles of books, movies, plays were written down. One team's entries were put into a

cowboy hat that belonged to one of the dyke-y women and the other team's were collected in a basket. There were 40 lesbians, three rules, two timers, and one girl. We played charades into the night.
One after the other, titles like *Alice B. Toklas*



80s Flashback! Beth and her mom, Thanksgiving, 1983.

Cookbook, The Poems of Sappho, Rubyfruit Jungle, and Lysistrata were acted out and guessed triumphantly. I was sure "Xanadu" would be a major stumper, but Brenda, one of the younger, cooler dykes guessed it. Nothing however beat or even compared to the time I had to act out the five word title of a book that turned my mom's cheeks flaming red when it was, at the last possible moment, yelled out - loud and proud.

I gestured and gesticulated until I heard the right words: "It's a book." "Title has five words." "First word is small." "First word is the." I nodded yes to confirm everything my team got right. "Second word, one syllable." Nod. "Second word sounds like boy? toy?" Nod. "Joy!" Nod and smile. Voices started shouting "The Joy of Cooking? The Joy of Baking?" No, I shook emphatically, and held up four fingers. "Fourth word." Yes. "Fourth word, three syllables." Yes. I pointed at my mom. "The Joy of Mothering" I hear. No. I pointed at my mom and her partner. I heard silence and saw confusion. With my hands I outlined the hour-glass figures of two women. I jumped back and forth as if I was both of them and moved my hips back and forth, kissing and

COLAGE warmly sends you a special winter holiday edition of Just For Us. We hope you enjoy the good wishes and cherished memories - including some classic photos from holidays past and present - throughout the season. Happy Holidays and Happy New Year!

humping the air. Someone timidly asked "Sex?" and a hush went over the room for five seconds. Just before time was called, three people screamed in unison "The Joy of Lesbian Sex!!!!" I nodded and the whole room busted out laughing uncontrollably.

In whatever way/s you and your family/families (however you define them) choose to spend or celebrate this year's and coming years' holidays (a.k.a. Holy Days) - whether they be religious, patriotic, queer, or otherwise culturally customary - I hope they fulfill, enrich and inspire you. This year and in all years to come, may you who have been raised or influenced by queer parents, adults or relatives, may your families and your communities find and provide for each other sources of support and nourishment, opportunities for honest loving growth and communication, and joyous exchanges of wonder, creativity and laughter.

Blessed Be. Amen. Ho. ❖❖❖

Beth is a wilderness leader/educator and advocate for social, economic and environmental justice. She has been a volunteer with COLAGE since 1994 and is currently the Chair of COLAGE's Board of Directors.



Spirit from Christmas Past: Ahkeem, Laquandra and David Jenkins-Cain - see SpeakOUT, page 3!



LETTER FROM THE DIRECTOR TRIUMPH AND TRAGEDY

The Winter season and its slew of holidays provide an excellent opportunity for reflection. This issue has a special holiday theme, with COLAGE's holiday photos and memories. Here's a photo of me with my mom and dad taken at one of my favorite childhood holidays—my birthday! Whatever your family or spiritual traditions are, all of us at COLAGE wish your family good health and many blessings.

Looking back, I see that Y2K was a year of triumph and tragedy for COLAGE and our membership. We achieved some very real gains this year: 25% more households on our mailing list, 33% increase in our annual budget, 50% more chapters, more and better run programs than ever before. There is no doubt that COLAGE serves more people, has more visibility and impact than ever before. In 2000 COLAGE staff and volunteers worked with coalition partners across the nation to effect change, bring thousands of families together, and support thousands of kids of all ages.

The issues of our families have never been more visible in the media. Whether it's on John Goodman's new show *Normal, Ohio* or the upcoming break-



Felicia and her lesbian mom and gay dad celebrating her 6th birthday.

through story about teens with lesbian and gay parents on 20/20, COLAGE's stories are everywhere. In 2000 we saw the first hour-long, nationally aired documentary by a daughter of a lesbian about our families (Meema Spadola's *Our House: A Very Real Documentary About Kids of Gays and Lesbians*), and the first anthology of essays by young adults who grew up with lgt parents (*Out of the Ordinary*, eds. Noelle Howey, Ellen Samuels). Our powerful stories are reaching millions, transforming hearts and minds. And we are creating important cultural resources for our community of people with lgt parent/s.

Perfectly encapsulating 2000's theme of triumph and tragedy was the win of California's March anti-gay ballot measure, Proposition 22. For the first time COLAGE dedicated a half-time staff position to fighting a ballot initiative. Prop 22, an anti-same sex marriage initiative, targeted and scapegoated our families. We lost, but we took every opportunity to turn this into a "teachable moment," COLAGE youth were featured in press and rallies across the state of CA telling their stories and defying stereotypes and misinformation. In the process we re-learned something we already knew: COLAGE's are fierce advocates, we changed minds and made connections everywhere we went.

This year to fight policy and legislation barring same-sex adoption in Utah, Mississippi, and Arkansas COLAGE joined team efforts with the likes of the ACLU, Lambda Legal Defense, National Center for Lesbian Rights, National Gay and Lesbian Task Force, Family Pride Coalition, HRC, PFLAG, and others. Tragically, we lost again. However, COLAGE insured that children's voices were not spoken for, but instead brought our unique perspective to these policy and legislative discussions.

This year we lost members of our community whose legacies will live on. I would like to honor the lives and memories of Marcelle Cook-Daniels, and of Nicole. Both are tragic reminders of the hardships and oppressions our communities face. Their sad deaths leave in their wake inspiration to work harder to make our society a place in which all may gloriously be ourselves, free of intolerance and discrimination.

COLAGE, as an organization and the people we work with, faces triumph and tragedy every day. Every day we greet the wounds and tragedies of homophobia in ourselves and all around us; every day we relish the triumphs our communities create anyway. Every day we work to make the lives of the generations behind us a little easier.

COLAGE is wrapping up a year of unprecedented organizational growth and achievement with the recognition that our work has never been more necessary.

I hope this holiday season provides you an opportunity to reflect on your recent tragedies and triumphs. Thank you for all you have contributed to make COLAGE's work possible. Please join us again to help our community strengthen itself from the inside out with gifts of your time and your money. *Your help is needed now more than ever.*

Triumphantly yours,

Felicia Park-Rogers
Felicia Park-Rogers, Director

PS. A convenient donation envelope has been included. Please make your 100% tax-deductible gift today.



JFU Co-Coordinator Rosanne and her brother Nick, Christmas 1995.

Survey of COLAGE Conferences

COLAGE would really appreciate your feedback about our conferences. It's easy! It's short, it'll only take 5 minutes! Thanks for your time! **COMPLETING THIS SURVEY WILL ENTER YOU IN A RAFFLE TO WIN A COLAGE T-SHIRT!** Send it by fax, email, or complete it on our website. (See Reverse for COLAGE contact information.)

Optional questions:

1. First Name _____ Last Name _____

We can't do our critical work without your support. Please help now!

COLAGE is a national and international organization run by and for daughters and sons of lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender parents. We do support, advocacy, and education.

Our gift levels are:

- 15 Student/ Low Income
- 35 Household Membership
- 50 Family Membership
(includes a membership with the Family Pride Coalition)
- 75 Fairy Godmother
- 100 Community Hero
- Other _____
- Monthly pledge of _____ \$

All funds must be in American dollars

Additional Names to be included in membership: _____

Ages of children: _____

Donors address: _____

Name: _____

Street: _____

City, State & Zip: _____

Country: _____

checks payable to COLAGE
We accept Visa Mastercard Am Express

Signature: _____

Expiration Date: _____

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It's easy! It's short, it'll only take 5 minutes! Thanks for your time!

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(See Reverse for COLAGE contact information.)

Optional questions:

1. First Name _____ Last Name _____
2. Address _____ City _____
3. State _____ Zip _____ Phone() _____
4. Email _____
5. Ethnicity _____
6. Parent(s) ethnicity _____

Please complete the following questions: (circle, check, or fill in where applicable)

7. Age _____
8. Family make up (i.e. gay dad(s), transgender parent(s), etc.): _____
9. Where do you live? City _____ State _____ Country _____
9. Have you ever attended a COLAGE Conference? Yes or No
10. Did you know that there is a COLAGE Conference? Yes or No
11. Would you be interested in going to a COLAGE Conference? Yes or No
12. How much would your family's financial situation effect your participation in a conference? 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
Not at All Very Much
13. To what extent does the location of the conference effect your participation?
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
Not at All Very Much
14. Would you recommend others your age to go?
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
Not at All Very Much
15. What other COLAGE programs have you ever participated in? (check ALL that apply)

<input type="checkbox"/> pen pal program	<input type="checkbox"/> COLAGE chapter participant
<input type="checkbox"/> receive newsletter	<input type="checkbox"/> online discussion group
<input type="checkbox"/> media work	<input type="checkbox"/> checking out the website
<input type="checkbox"/> volunteer, doing what? _____	<input type="checkbox"/> going to COLAGE events or activities

CONTINUED ON REVERSE SIDE!

16. What type of conference would you be interested in attending?

(check up to FIVE choices)

- family week
- regional conference
- state conference
- weekend conference
- conference during another conference
- kids only conference,
- other _____

17. What would you like to see at a conference:

Workshops: (check up to TEN choices)

- sexuality/gender
- spirituality/religion
- second generation
- COLAGEr speak-out how to be an activist
- dealing with school and peers
- coming out as a COLAGEr
- death or illness in your family
- non-monogamous parent(s)
- current issues for lgbt people and families
- how to start a COLAGE group
- how to get involved with COLAGE
- how to volunteer for COLAGE
- adoption and alternative insemination
- racial issues in the family/families of color
- media training
- other: _____

Activities: (check up to TEN choices)

- beach/outdoor
- rope course
- camping
- arts & crafts
- political rallies
- lobbying
- running fun things for younger kids
- sports
- talent show
- other: _____

Any other suggestions or comments about the COLAGE conference? _____

18. What is the best way for YOU to find out about COLAGE events & activities?

(check all that apply)

- Website
- Email
- Newsletter
- Local group
- Local COLAGE contact
- Calling the office
- Other: _____

(If you would like to hear about COLAGE information through the mail or email please provide us with your mailing address or email at the top of the reverse side.)

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Thanks for completing this survey!
 Please return to: COLAGE
 3543 18th Street #1
 San Francisco, CA 94110
 Website: www.colage.org Email: jude@colage.org Fax: 415-255-8345

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SPEAK OUT!

What are your favorite family holiday memories?

Quan, 17, Michigan: The holidays at the Jenkins-Cain house always began the day we purchased our tree. From that point on we spent time getting into the spirit by learning about Christ and his/her birth. We read many stories and watched all the Christmas favorites like the Grinch. Our favorite part is preparing the fire and watching the beautiful flames as we contemplate what is inside those beautifully wrapped packages around the tree that we all helped create.

Diane, 16, New Jersey: It was the first Christmas that my mom and dad were apart, and my mom was with her partner Kathy. My mom and I lived together in a small condo. She had worked so hard to make Christmas special for me. Christmas morning came and I had opened all my gifts when I noticed that my mom didn't get anything from "Santa". I started crying because my mom had not received anything. Now Kathy and I go out Christmas shopping every year and make sure something special is under the tree for my mom.

Willie, 13, New York: The best Christmas holiday I ever had was after my daddies told me they were going to adopt me and asked me come live with them. At our church's Christmas Pageant, my family had the honor of reading the story of Jesus' birth. It was very special

because my social worker and all my friends were there - we were all dressed up and my daddies were proud of me. And the next morning I was really happy with all the presents under the tree!

The Spring 2001 SpeakOUT question:

How are you affected by anti-LGBT humor, homophobic remarks, and stereotypical representations of LGBT people in the media? As someone with LGBT parents, how do you deal with it?

To contribute to SpeakOUT, contact Rosanne Johnson at COLAGE or email jfu@colage.org.



Christmas with Willie (age 10), Daddy Jeff (left) and Daddy Tim



Kids-of-Gays-14 List Moderator Michael and his dad, hanging out in Portland, OR

At Newsstands Everywhere: COLAGEr Danielle Silber of Maryland is featured in the January 2001 issue of YM magazine. Also, check out the profile of outgoing COLAGE Board of Directors member Sol Kelley-Jones in the December 2000 issue of Twist.

