ROSA'S STORY

Rosa Galicia's parents, Jon and Michael Galicia, lost the story of their family's struggles and triumphs in their new book, "An American Family," as their life is shared to present a son's perspective on his unique family, created through adoption, in this interview with Rosa herself.

JFU: Why did you want to be adopted by the Galicia family so close to turning 18?
Rosa: I wanted to have the papers that said, "You are part of the Galicia family," that no one can ever take that away. I was able to choose the adoption, I spoke for myself. Nobody made the decision for me.

JFU: "You were eight months pregnant with Maryanana at that time. How did your pregnancy affect your relationship with your new parents?"
Rosa: I was starting talked about the adoption more seriously. They were very upset. They were concerned about my future. Giving birth really, really changed our relationship. It has made us grow closer and become more of a family. My parents got to experience Maryanana's delivery. I've never been closer to them than when my child was born.

JFU: How did you and the Galicia find each other? Rosa: When my sister Madison, went to live with them, Jon and Michael got information about her whole family, including me. I was living in a group home. When I heard, "you're little sister is a foster home," I was afraid for her safety. And when I heard that she was with people.

JFU: Why did you want to stay in the Galicia family?" Rosa: My parents got to experience Maryanana's delivery. I've never been closer to them than when my child was born.

ROSA'S STORY

A little background: Rosa is 18. She lives in Peter, New Jersey with her dad Jon, father Michael; 5-year-old brother Adam; four-year-old sister Madison; and her new baby daughter Maryanana, who was born in November. Rosa will be graduating soon from Ridgewood High School and attending college, where she plans to study to be a bilingual special education teacher. Rosa was officially adopted by Jon and Michael last year, four days before her 18th birthday.

INSIDE SPECIAL FEATURES

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ROSA'S STORY

Rosa, top left, and her family

CONGRATULATIONS 2000 LEO DUBIN SCHOLARSHIP WINNERS!

The Leo Dubin Scholarship is awarded outstanding college students. Congratulations to the winners.

Katie Hennessy-Tiske, 21, Brown University

Graduating in less than a year, Katie will soon be heading out for a job in a public high school. For the past five summers, Katie has worked full time as an assistant teacher at the Jowowo School, where she was once a student. Through her experiences...
LETTER FROM THE DIRECTOR

Dear Reader,

Welcome to Spring, and to the Spring Issue of Just For Us. This issue contains some special features, including a reader survey and a focus on issues of adoption and our families. I encourage you to take a few moments out of your hectic schedule to fill out the survey. At COLAGE we strive to serve our members and participants to the best of our abilities at all times. In order for us to make Just For Us as good as it can be, we would like to find out who is reading it and what your favorite/least favorite parts are. So please take a moment to give us some feedback. Thank you for contributing to the improvement of COLAGE!

Adoption is ever more popular among lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) people who are becoming parents. While it is impossible to get numbers about how many adoptions take place every year, let alone how many of those are by LGBT people who still almost always have to remain in the closet in order to secure their adoption, at COLAGE we are seeing more and more kids participating in our programs who have been adopted. The oldest of these (and of course there are exceptions to this) average 13 years old, the majority seem to be under five. Each of these children and their/her family has a truly unique story and experience. Children come from and join families of all colors, national origins, religious backgrounds, genders, economic statuses, geographic regions, and more.

COLAGE is an organization that is led by our constituents. As COLAGE is who we are from adoptive families come of age we are bringing their perspectives and leadership to our work. In fact, we recently welcomed a new youth member to our Board of Directors who was adopted by two moms. Because the majority of our constituents in adoptive families are so young, we are striving to understand their experiences of their family lives and accurately represent their voices.

Today we are adoption by gays and lesbians under attack in many states. COLAGE has worked actively in Utah, Mississippi, and Arkansas opposing anti- adoption legislation. While we lost in Utah and Mississippi, we have held on to Arkansas thanks to key lobbying efforts by an Arkansas-based COLAGE volunteer and Board member. I am very concerned about this trend, which ultimately deprives services in kids of loving and nurturing homes which they desperately need.

While we fight these urgent external battles, it can be easy to lose sight of the important work we must do internally. As a community that includes many transgender and trans-national adoptive families we must work together at societal, community, and individual levels to address not only the homophobia that young people face, but also the racism. It is critical our community mobilized the same expertise and sensitivity about racism in schools and society that we are developing about homophobia. It is imperative we develop an LGBT family community that is as proactive and adept at handling matters of race as it is with sexual orientation issues.

At COLAGE we are exploring the multi-layered nature of the experiences of our participants growing up with one or more tight parent as well as cross-racially or in a majority white community. We would like to hear from young people and from families about your experiences. We want to serve you as well as we can in our role as supporters of COLAGE’s and as advocates for social change. Please write or call me about your experiences, thoughts, or get involved. I hope you enjoy the Issue of Just For Us, and I hope you and your families have fabulous Spring.

Respectfully Yours,

Felicia Park-Rogers, Executive Director

SPEAK OUT!

Each month, SpeakOut! asks COLAGE’s about a different aspect of their lives and shares those thoughts with our readers. As people with LGBT parents, we have unique perspectives on the way LGBT people and their families are depicted in the media. This month, we asks COLAGE’s to share their opinions on music, movies and TV featuring LGBT characters or relating to families with LGBT parents. Here are some of your thoughts:

Kate, 16, WA, on the 1996 movie The Taking I think the biggest issue I had was the fact that the son tried to make his parents forget about the movie. I would’ve liked more. The movie was just about the same. I really wanted to see a movie like that again.

Alicia, 16, VA, on the new movie Snatch I didn’t particularly like the movie, but it did have a gay couple at its center. I thought that was great because they don’t make a big deal about their relationship. I also think lesbian and gay people are just like any straight couple. Not that that is a good thing considering almost everyone in this movie got shot or arrested in the end.

Anna, 23, CA, on What Makes a Family? Lifetime’s original movie: I thought this was one was well-done. I really admired Lifetime’s commitment to lesbian and gay issues. However, it is important to understand that even though your parent did not come out until they were married and with children (like my father) it took a lot of courage for them to own up to their true identity. Your parent has chosen to embrace their heritage, rather than living a lie. They should receive credit for this, especially since they have opened their doors to the ones they love. I understand how much hurt that the family can go through, but it is important to remember that there is no blame, shame, innocence, or guilt involved in sexuality. Take a look at what is making you uncomfortable. Take with your parents about it. It would be a lot easier to not hide to truth, but accept and love your parent for who they are than hide from the truth.

Sincerely,

Katie Hempel, Intern
WHAT ARE YOU DOING?

What COLAGEs are around the world are doing to make the world a better place by doing what they do best - being themselves!

Breana Dickson, 12, of San Francisco, traveled to Washington DC, accompanied by her dads, Gregg and David, to help present a special White House screening of the educational video “That’s a Family” over the Fall 2000 issue of Just For Us, a review. More than 100 national children’s, family, education and civil rights organizations were in the House to watch and discuss the video. After the screening, several groups, including the Girl Scouts of America, the National Education Association, and the National PTA, laid out their plans to use the video in their upcoming programs promoting tolerance, respect and family diversity.

While in Washington, Breana and her family met well-known - and openly gay - Congressman Barney Frank, and took a tour of the White House. (Let’s hope that our families continue to be as “welcome” in the White House now that George W. has moved in). Congratulations, Breana, for being a terrific spokesperson for our families in a film that is sure to get kids, teachers and parents all across America talking about who and what makes a family!

So what are you doing? Just for Us wants to hear about it! Write, call or e-mail us about your adventures! Big, small or personal, or all of us have something special to contribute.

Rosa’s Story

and I opened a bedroom door and the whole bedroom had been re-done - my bedroom. It was something I had always wanted, but it was a year from that point still until I came to live with them fully.

JFU: What about Jon and Michael’s being gay?
Rosa: I just accepted it. I met them and I saw that they were good people, and that was it, after that I was 100% comfortable.

JFU: How do your friends and people at your school react to your family?
Rosa: No one at my school will say the word “**** around me, they know I’ll be, “Excuse me, do you like people to call you ****? I’ve never had anyone make fun of my parents. Everyone knows my parents. None of my friends have had a problem with it. I only had one boy friend that had a problem that my parents were gay. And I left him right away. It bothered me that anyone could be so rude. I said a few words to him.

Some kids in my school have come up to me and told me, “Because of your parents, I went to my parents and told them that I was gay.”

JFU: Was that strange?
Rosa: We’re the same, a little. I’m happy that it helps them. Everyone knows me at school.

JFU: If you could change one thing about your family, what would you change?
Rosa: I wouldn’t change anything. I could go through our times, but I wouldn’t switch my parents with anyone. If someone said, “I’ll trade you, you’ll give you straight parents,” I don’t care. I love my parents. Even though they can be strict sometimes. For example, they won’t let me go to clubs until 11. Before I was pregnant, I used to have a problem with that.

I never thought I’d be living with a family. But things happen for a reason, that’s my life saying. Getting a new family was very important to me. Moving in changed my life completely around.

JFU: In what way?
Rosa: My goals are different. And I completely changed - the way I dress, the way I speak to people, the way I approach people. I was always rude, always in trouble.

When I moved in I saw that everyone in this family had things going for them. Whether it was Dad finding better medication for Adam to control his ADHD, or teaching Madison to walk, or Father working hard at work, to make us all happy - everyone was making their lives better, going forward in their life. I was so sick of giving my parents headaches, sick of getting in trouble. I thought, “Why don’t I have to be so dumb anymore. I don’t have to be depressed at all the time.” I said, “I need to change.” It makes life easier. It took over a year though, skill to this day here times.

JFU: What’s the very best thing about your family?
Rosa: We’re always there for each other, kids and adults. We’re all so different from another one, but, things happen for a reason, that’s my life saying. Getting a new family was very important to me. Moving in changed my life completely around.

JFU: In what way?
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JFU: That’s so straight!” - HETEROPHOBIA IN OUR FAMILIES

A COLAGE friend of mine was feeling sad about breaking up with her boyfriend. She turned to her moms for support. With only the best intentions, her parents tried to be supportive by reassuring her that the problems in her relationship had nothing to do with her. Her mothers said that MEN were the problem. Their daughter interrupted them to say that male-bashing was anything but helpful. “I’m straight,” she reminded them, “and someday, I will love one of those people.”

Her parents were acting on their “heterophobia.” I first heard this word last summer at family week in Provinceton when a panel of teen COLAGEs were asked what they don’t like about growing up in gay culture. A couple of the teens said they didn’t like dealing with heterophobic attitudes - especially from their parents.

Even though the word was new to me, I understood what it meant. Heterophobia is exactly what it sounds like: fear and suspicion of heterosexuals, as well as a belief that being heterosexual is less desirable than being LGBT.

I have my share of internalized heterophobia. Growing up with a gay dad, I absorbed the idea that heterosexual society was this huge, overwhelming, collective enemy that was a threat to the safety of my family. My “coming out” as hetero was involved a mourning process. My sexual orientation meant that by default, I would automatically be associated with "those people" - straight people. It felt like I was being forced to become a traitor.

My internalized heterophobia developed from very subtle messages. For other families, the messages can be much more blatant. For example, last year there was a study released from England about gay dads. Some of the findings suggested that gay men seem to have fewer limitations of traditional parenting roles based on gender, and are therefore more emotionally accessible than straight dads.

In casual conversations with gay and lesbian parents, I found that some of them interpreted the research in extreme ways in order to affirm their own experiences. I was in several conversations with LGBT parents who said smug comments like, “It only proves that we are all gay! Gay dads are better than straight dads.”

BEETTER than straight dads? It made me wonder what kind of impact this conclusion would have on their kids who overhear their parents’ comments. Sons who might one day be straight dads. If heterophobic attitudes within our families and our communities are not taken seriously, we are not moving toward a future of equality. We’re only justifying the transfer of prejudice from one group to another. I am pleased to see so many children being raised in families where LGBT pride can be openly celebrated. I hope more families will make sure their pride includes acceptance and celebration of EVERYONE, including daughters and sons who turn out to be straight.

Abigail Garner, 29, lives in Minneapolis. She is the creator of a website for LGBT families: www.familieslikemen.com.

SPAWN TALK

by Jaiy Garner

THE ADVENTURES OF SEBASTIAN COLE

By Michael Bishop


The Adventures of Sebastian Cole is an unusual movie. Sebastian Cole is a talented high school student living in the suburbs on the outside of New York trying to find who he is and his path in life. His parents have split and his stepfather seems very strict. Add to that, high school seems to be a drag as does everything in the area. Life is not made any easier by his family on his mother’s side who is humorously snobby. The film opens up with Sebastian in a pasture with blood in his hair and down the front of his shirt. The mother of the family that owns the farm he is bleeding - takes him in and asks him questions about how he got there. As he recalls, we are taken into his life in the past year. The whole rest of the movie is spent recouping everything that has happened to up to this point in the film.

One of the issues in the family that the movie tackles gracefully is the great change that occurs in Sebastian’s household when his stepfather, Hank, comes out to the immediate family that he has wanted to become a woman for quite some time and is preparing to make that transition. This is quite a change for Sebastian and the rest of the family. Sebastian’s mother decides to separate from Hank (now Henrietta) and move back to England. Sebastian initially goes to live with her, but after spending some time there, decides that he really wants to go back to Buffalo to be with his Dad and his high school.

Throughout the movie, we are treated to a look at how one can explore in which a parent has decided to change genders. As we grow through the movie, we start to see how Henrietta is really the only person who is solid in Sebastian’s life and that she is really the only one Sebastian can count on. Henrietta is neither a savaş nor a pushover, she quietly advances from sweet elder mother, because she is still married to Sebastian’s mother and respects the commitment she made. Henrietta’s firm and caring of Sebastian and it isn’t until the end of the movie that Sebastian really sees how much Henrietta has to offer and what she has given him.

The Adventures of Sebastian Cole successfully tackles the difficulties of going to high school where one can be misunderstood, not fully knowing oneself, and handling the relationship between family members in times of change. The film itself is beautiful. The talented cast, intelligent writing, and unusual subject matter make this one of the must-see films for COLAGEs.
MAKE CHANGE HAPPEN
The State of Adoption Laws Near You

For LGBT adults, the decision to adopt children is often complicated by legal barriers. Last year alone, 12 different states proposed anti-LGBT adoption legislation or regulations. These proposed laws try to prevent LGBT adults from adopting children by claiming that a parent’s sexual orientation poses a threat to children. A lot of anti-LGBT adoption laws try to prevent legal same-sex marriage in order to promote the heterosexual family structure. Many COLAGEs have been adopted and many of us have hope for an adopted sibling. Also, many COLAGEs would benefit from being adopted by their non-biological parent for legal security. There has been progress towards equality for our families, including court decisions favoring adoption by LGBT adults.

Several states have passed regulations or legislation restricting lesbians and gays from adopting based on their sexual orientation; these include Florida, Arkansas, Mississippi, and Utah. Regarding the ban in Mississippi, Senator Ron Farris (R) said, “Morally, we did the right thing. A homosexual relationship implies the exercise of illegal activities, and no child should be permitted to enter that type of setting” (Alternative Family March 2001: 15).

Even in the ‘liberal’ state of California, there are only three counties that routinely allow second parent adoption by gays and lesbians. Currently there is pending anti-LGBT legislation in Arkansas, Indiana, and Maine. It is likely that we will see a similar measure proposed for the jurisdiction of Washington, DC.

We have witnessed victories for LGBT adoption, too. In 1997, following a class action suit filed by the American Civil Liberties Union, New Jersey passed a policy that allows gay and lesbian couples to adopt jointly. The ACLU has now brought suit against the state of Florida for violating their ban on lesbian and gay adoption. The ban in New Hampshire was overturned in 2000. The Child Welfare League of America, The North American Council on Adoption Children and other important child welfare organizations have supported the movement to secure equal adoption rights for LGBT adults.

By the time this article is distributed, the states of laws and court decisions will most likely have shifted. There may be adoption legislation proposed in your state. Keep on top of what’s going on in your state by connecting with your statewide LGBT organization or find it through the National Gay and Lesbian Task Force: www.ngtf.org. They will be able to give current information on pending legislation. In order to fight the negative trend around adoption in alternative families, it is important to remember that court decisions vary from county to county, from judge to judge. Courts in 21 states have approved second-parent adoptions by gays and lesbians.

It’s vital that we work together to keep anti-affirmative family legislation off the books. Felicia Park-Rogers, the Director of COLAGE, informs us that laws prohibiting gays and lesbians from adopting are a popular type of legislation and that “it’s really important that it is fought back in states that it comes up in” because protestors send a message to other states that this anti-family trend is not acceptable. Unfortunately, the negative trend of banning adoption for gays and lesbians is bound to get worse in the next few years. This crucial for us to come out in protest to anti-LGBT adoption propositions.

WHAT YOU CAN DO

1 LETTER TO YOUR EDITOR: A terrific way to educate the community about important issues is by writing a Letter to the Editor. In your letter, be sure to introduce yourself and tell readers who may not know LGBT families about your life. An example might look like: “I am a sixth grader at William Middle School, like ceramics the most and am on the soccer team. I have a gay dad and it is very important to me that LGBT alternative families have the same rights as heterosexual couples.”

2 INSPIRE YOUR ALLIES: If you are a member of an organization, like the Girl Scouts, ask them to take a stand and advocate for the rights of LGBT adults to adopt. Ask your teachers or doctor to make a public statement against discrimination against our families.

3 LETTER TO YOUR REPRESENTATIVE: If there is a law pending in your state, write a letter to your representative or testify. Write your representative and express your feelings about the importance of protecting equal rights for LGBT families. You can get your legislator’s and governor’s contact information on your state’s home page or by calling your state capital. A sample letter might look like this: “I strongly encourage you to fight for equal rights for Lesbian/Gay/Bisexual/transgender families. I am writing today about legislation that determines the rights of gays and lesbians to adopt children. It is important for the state to allow both single and partnered LGBT adults to adopt and to permit second parent adoption. I have a lesbian mom and know that a person’s sexual orientation is irrelevant to their parenting skills. Please protect families like mine and honor equality.” Include in your letter your family situation, your age, your full name and address at the end of your letter. In your letter mention that your parents (or you) are registered voters and talk about how the issue will affect you. Urge your representative or governor to publicly support or oppose the measure being voted on.

4 NETNEWS: Subscribe to and check out COLAGE NetNews, where you can find information about current events and legislation concerning these matters. You can sign up for COLAGE NetNews on our homepage: www.colage.org

5 BE OUT: This is the #1 prevention tool against homophobia and bad legislation, because people who know other people who are out about being gay or being part of a LGBT family are less likely to vote against us.

FAMILY WEEK 2001
Sponsored by COLAGE and Family Pride Coalition

2nd Annual Saugatuck, MI
Family Week July 14-20th, 2001
6th Provincetown, MA
Family Week August 4-10th, 2001

Our gift levels are:
- Local/Local Income
- 35 Household Membership
- 50 Family Membership
- (includes a membership with the Family Pride Coalition)
- 55 Gay Godmother
- 100 Community Hero
- Other

All funds must be in American dollars
Additional Name to be included in membership:

Ages of children:
Name:
Date of Birth:
Street:
City, State, Zip:
Country:

Checks payable to COLAGE
We accept Visa Mastercard Am Express
Signature:
Expiration Date:
Card number:

Place Stamp Here

COLAGE
3543 18th St, #1
San Francisco, CA 94110

www.colage.org

& Activities
Infre, Sand Castle Building & Dance, Bagel Brunch, tests, and more.
Workshop Topics
Schools, Activism, Media
& others about having school and friends, Shar
Involving with COLAGE:
Raising our other families.

Town, MA
Cape Cod, a 70 mile MA. The town is be-
line and scrub oak forests, seashore
20 miles of beaches. The LGBT vacation spot to
out of things to do:
dh, art galleries; are all

Accommodation Tips
Provincetown Visitors Bureau, Accommodations & Campign Info.
Website: www.provincetown.com
Provincetown Inn, Special rates for family Week participants.
Tel: 508-487-9500
Email: reservations@pww.com
Website: www.pww.com
Provincetown Inns, Rates & Rentals, Coccos & apartments.
Tel: 800-PTOWN999

About us & details contact:
And Gay Everywhere
Website: www.colage.org

Tel: 617.296.0199 Email: programs@familypride.org
Website: www.familypride.org

www.colage.org

Website: www.colage.org
For LGBT adults, the decision to adopt children is legal barriers. Last states proposed anti-LI or regulations. These prevent LGBT adults from claiming that a purely threat to child adoption laws try to marry in order to preserves family structure. Man adopted and many of adopted sibling. Also, benefit from being a biological parent if they have been present in the family, including adoption by LGBT adults.

Several states have legislation restricting adoption based on that include Florida, and Utah. Regarding Senator Ron Farris (R) the right thing. A biologically child be permitted to settling (Alternative f)

WHY

1 LETTER A very important issue.
Editor: In your first person yourself and tell your LGBT families might look like: Bellingham Middle school and on time and it is very different families heterosexual couple.

2. INSPIRE YOU member of an organization. Ask them to take a stand against rights of LGBT adults.

Ask your teachers a statement against discrimination against our families.

MAKE CHANGE HAPPEN
The State of Adoption Laws Near You

FAMILY WEEK 2001
Sponsored by COLAGE and Family Pride Coalition

What is Family Week?
Family Week is a special gathering for lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) parents and youth & adults of all ages with LGBT parents. Individuals and families join us from all over the US, some people have come from as far as Sweden & China. It’s a fabulous opportunity to meet & hang out, workshop & discuss with hundreds of other folks with similar families!

WHERE

2nd Annual Saugatuck, MI
Family Week July 14-20th, 2001

6th Provincetown, MA
Family Week August 4-10th, 2000

Events, Workshops, & Activities
Beach BBQ, Whalewatching, Teen Bonfire, Sand Castle Building Contest, Provincetown Family Dinner & Dance, Bagel Brunch, Hikes, Movies, Crafts, and Special Guests, and more.

Sample Discussion & Workshop Topics
For Teens: Spirituality, Religion, Schools, Activism, Media Work, Multiracial Issues, Coming Out to others about having LGBT parents.
For 9-12 year-olds: Dealing with school and friends, Sharing stories about our families, Getting involved with COLAGE.
For Parents: Advocacy for family issues, Raising our children, Building community with other families.

About Provincetown, MA
Provincetown is located at the very tip of Cape Cod, a 70 mile peninsula off the south coast of Boston, MA. The town is bordered by vast stretches of open dunes, pine and scrub oak forests, beaches and the open sea. Within the National Seashore in Provincetown there are, in fact, more than 30 miles of beach. Things to do: P-Town has been a charming LGBT vacation spot for many families. You will never run out of things to do: museums, historic sites, shops, theaters, and art galleries, are all easily within walking distance. Outdoor activities include: whale and bird watching, hiking & kids’ nature walks to Long Point or Pilgrim Hills, and check out the pirate ship, The Whydah!

About Saugatuck, MI
Home to our 2nd Annual Family Week, Saugatuck, MI, nestled among towering sand dunes, is bordered by the winding Kalamazoo River on its way to Lake Michigan. Things to do: This quaint, small-town has a long history of being a popular LGBT resort and features scenic beauty and a unique collection of shops, restaurants and art galleries. Fun activities for the whole family are abundant: climb Mt. Baldhead sand dune, tour the S.S. Kewatin steamship, hike through Saugatuck Dunes State Park and the Allegan State Forest, choose from over 30 art galleries to explore, or enjoy a leisurely boat ride by hopping aboard North America’s only hand-cranked chain ferry for a trip across the river!

Accommodation Tips
Saugatuck/Douglas Convention and Visitors Bureau Accommodations & Camping Info
Tel: 616.857.1700 Website: www.saugatuck.com
Campground
LGBTmembers, welcome Family Week participants.
Tel: 877-CAMP1-1 Website: www.campitcampground.com
Shareholder Realtors
Rental cottage, condo and house.
Tel: 800-770-1237 Email: sales@shareholderrealtors.com
Website: www.shareholderrealtors.com

Accommodation Tips
Provincetown Visitor's Bureau Accommodations & Camping Info Website: www.provincetown.com
Provincetown Inn, Special rates for Family Week participants.
Tel: 508-487-9500
Email: reservations@poinw.com
Website: www.poinw.com
Provincetown Sales & Rentals Condos & apartments.
Tel: 800-FTOWN99

To Register: Fill out the form on reverse.
For questions, updates, & details contact: COLAGE (Children Of Lesbians And Gays Everywhere) Tel: 415.861 KIDS Email: colage@colage.org Website: www.colage.org
Family Pride Coalition Tel: 619.296.0199 Email: program@familypride.org Website: www.familypride.org

www.colage.org
Dear Friend,

What do you think about Just For Us? COLAGE values your opinion, and that’s why we need your feedback about what you think about our newsletter. It’s time for a spring cleaning of Just For Us, help us make changes to better reflect what you want. **SPEAK OUT, AND TELL US WHAT YOU LIKE, DISLIKE, AND WANT TO SEE MORE OF!** Fill the survey below out soon and you will be entered in a raffle to win a COLAGE T-Shirt!

It’s as easy as ①-②-③! Print out this form, fill it out, and send it to COLAGE.
Fax: 415-255-8345 or Send to: COLAGE 3543 18th St. #1 San Francisco, CA 94110

**Just For Us Reader Survey**

*Please circle where applicable. Feel free to attach another piece of paper for additional comments.*

1. **Who in your household reads the newsletter?**
   - Parent(s)
   - Children under 14
   - Teens 14-18
   - Other:

2. **What do you read in it?**
   - Everything
   - Articles that look interesting
   - Other:

3. **How does this describe the way you feel about the newsletter?**
   - Answer below:

   1. I love it
   2. It’s okay
   3. I don’t really care
   4. I hate it

4. **It makes me feel like I am less alone.**
   - Answer below:

   1. Very Little
   2. Little
   3. Some
   4. A Lot
   5. Very Much

5. **It suggests ways that I can get involved in fighting for the rights of LGBT families.**
   - Answer below:

   1. Very Little
   2. Little
   3. Some
   4. A Lot
   5. Very Much

6. **It keeps me up to date with COLAGE events, activities, programs, and groups.**
   - Answer below:

   1. Very Little
   2. Little
   3. Some
   4. A Lot
   5. Very Much

7. **How helpful, fun, or interesting do you think the following sections are?**
   - Answer below:

   - Personal Stories
   - Photos
   - The comic, Adventures With Alex
   - Fun Pages/Kids Pages
   - Reviews of books & videos
   - Second Generation
   - Speak Out/Question of the Month

8. **Total Enclosed $**

9. **Payment Method:**
   - Check, money order, or cashiers check enclosed, made payable to Family Pride Coalition
   - Visa
   - Mastercard
   - *No debit cards please*

10. **Refunds:** This token registration fee is used to defray our mailing, catering, and space rental costs. If you are unable to attend and wish to return your registration to the scholarship fund, please notify us.

11. **ND TO:** (Make yourself a copy!)

Family Pride Coalition PO Box 34337 San Diego, CA 92163 or Fax: 619-296-0699

*CONTINUED ON REVERSE*
What do you like about the newsletter? Please explain.

What do you dislike about the newsletter? Please explain.

Do you want to continue to receive Just For Us?

If the newsletter were only available to members, would you pay the $35 annual COLAGE membership fee?

Optional Questions:
1. Name:
2. Address:
3. City:
4. State:
5. Phone:
6. Age:
7. Grade:
8. Ethnicity:
9. Parent’s Ethnicity:
10. About your parent(s): Gay Lesbian Bisexual Transgender

Other:

Are you a parent?

Do you have your own email address?

Want COLAGE email news? Tell us your email address:

Do you have access to the internet?

Thank you for participating, your feedback is very important to us.

Please send the survey to COLAGE:
Send to: COLAGE 3543 18th St. #1 San Francisco, CA 94110
OR Fax: 415-255-8345

2nd Generation
A SPECIAL SECTION FOR QUEER AND QUESTIONING KIDS OF LGBTQ PARENTS

BY JESSI HEMPEL

I came out to my parents in a car on the way home from college. It seemed safe - everyone was wearing a seatbelt. My mother cried all the way home. My father was silent. Later that night, he told me he used to think he was gay. When I asked him how he figured out he wasn’t, he shrugged, "I just met your mother and I knew I wanted to marry her. Back then, I didn’t guess that he would come out of the closet three years later.

By the time Dad told me he was gay, my family had been turned upside down. My parents stopped going to our family church. They separated and divorced, selling the house in which I’d grown up. They each moved to new towns where they made new friends and started new lives. Both were initially depressed, and they often depended on my sister's and I for support. We had to "grow up" overnight – to take care of ourselves and be there to support our parents.

My dad's coming out process has been long and sometimes painful. It took me several difficult years to accept and appreciate the fact that I was gay, a process my dad was just beginning. In my culturally queer word, I became the adult – comfortable and secure in my community – and dad was the adolescent — discovering himself for the first time. It was exciting, and emotionally exhausting, for holidays I received rainbow stickers, rainbow cards, and even rainbow wind chimes. I joked about my "rainbow phase" with my friends, but in truth, I had a hard time. I always thought of 'being gay' as something that was mine. When my parents didn’t accept me initially, I sought refuge in the queer community. Now my dad was turning to the same organizations that had offered me community when he was absent from my life. And if one more well-meaning friend asked me about whether I thought it was genetic, I’d slick them! My queerness was my own, and as far as I was concerned, it had nothing to do with Dad.

As a child, I didn’t get along with my dad. He was often gone, and I didn’t think he listened to me. When he came out, he was still the same person in many ways. Also, I was angry at him for disrupting our family and for how much my mother hurt. He changed all the rules of our relationships without asking me. As a result of his work with his therapist, he was ready to work at being close to his children, including me. But I wasn’t ready, yet, and I had trouble trusting him.

Also, my way understood his sexual orientation shifted over time, and it sometimes felt violating to my identity. As part of his coming out process, he thought at first that being gay represented something unhealthy about him. What did that mean about me? Now I’m comfortable with being gay, and my gay friends are the "healthiest" friends I’ve ever had— but this has taken a long time.

For a couple of years I remained resentful that he pushed me to be close emotionally. I didn’t share my life with him at all. But over time, I’ve learned to trust him again. We have finally started to build a strong and honest relationship, though it often feels complicated. Though we both enjoy a good Judy Garland film, our relationship is not built on our queer identities. We are friends more and more because we both write poetry, enjoy similar books, can’t stand

DATELINE DAN

A Brief History of Second Generation by Dan Chernin

Let me start off with the facts: I am the queer child of two queer parents. And I started a group called Second Generation almost 10 years ago.

Was I the first of my kind? I doubt it. Did I know anyone else in my situation? I knew other kids of lesbians, but they were all straight. Did people understand the things I went through with society at large, within the LGBTQ community, with my parents? No. So, you can say I started SG out of my own needs.

But I also did it because of what I knew was a larger need, beyond my troubles and my thoughts. I knew I couldn’t possibly be the only one. And I didn’t want others to go through what I did. Let’s just say it wasn’t easy growing up with this "double extra" facet of life.

So, did I think anything, eager, ticked off activist did. I plastered my walls with flyers. And Second Generation was born.

We got off to a bang up start. People at the first meeting, more showing up as the months went by. We marched in our First Pride Parade. I started putting out a newsletter, we got interviewed all over the world! Wow-hoo!

But for all those milestones, we had lots of obstacles. Our original description was "LGBT Children of LGBTQ Parents." (My SG business cards still say that.) And let me give you all word of advice: Putting the word children near the word LGBTQ (or combinations thereof) can cause a whole lot of problems. We got kicked off ADL, I got some nasty and scary phone calls, and we ended up on a NAMBLA contact list!

And the biggest slap in the face was from LGBTQ groups. No one wanted to be labeled a pedophile, pervvert, or "converter of youth." So no one wanted to have ANYTHING to do with SG! Never mind the youngest member of SG at that point was 23, we still had that horrible combination of words. It changed quickly to "LGBTs who have LGBTQ parents."

Even though all this

continued on page
CHAPTER UPDATE
COLAGE of Western Mass is a new chapter that is growing steadily. We are participating in a regional conference with Valuable Families where we’ll be doing a teen panel. Additionally, Western Mass COLAGEs are conducting a workshop for children of gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgender families.

Members are also assisting the director of the StraightSpouse Network in her workshop for children who have one straight parent and onegay parent. We are also very excited to all hopefully attend the COLAGE and Family Pride Coalition Family Week in P-Town this summer. In May, the group will be marching in Boston Gay & Straight Youth Pride Parade. We are looking forward to a very productive and fun first year!

Sincerely,
Heather Estan, Chapter Coordinator

Scholarship continued from page 1
Kate has realized that teaching is a profoundly political act, and it is from this that she has dealt with her own fears at recognizing and taking responsibility for its convictions. Ultimately she aspires to be an honest and perceptive teacher who is committed to promoting communication and always looking for potentially transformative moments in the classroom. Kate firmly believes her parents (lesbian mom, bisexual dad) have modeled a kind of awareness, compassion, strength, and honesty that have contributed greatly to her goals and achievements. Being a child of gay parents continues to be an essential part of her identity and she looks forward to connecting with more kids from families like hers.

Evan Kulak, 18, Pitzer College
Looking forward to his freshmen year of college, Evan Kulak is the 18-year-old son of lesbian parents. Serving as President of the Gay and Lesbian Education and Affirmation club at Bishop O’Dowd High School, Evan organized a school-wide survey to assess the level of homophobia that students experienced. Growing up in an alternative family has had a big impact on Evan, he feels responsibility for making the world a better place for people from all walks of life. He has done so by devoting a great deal of time to activist workshops including participating in a GLSEN panel and speaking at a teachers in-service training on diversity. His experience with a lesbian mother has taught him to persevere in his beliefs and to stand up against hatred and intolerance.

Jahila Nikita Osha, 19, Pitzer College
Born in Hawaii and raised in Sonoma, CA by her moms Victoria and Jean. Jahila has learned that often happiness must come from within. She is grateful for the strength that her upbringing has allowed her and plans on living life with a positive outlook, accepting of herself and others for who they are and the lives they are living. About to start her Sophomore year at Pitzer College Jahila’s current major is “undecided” but says she plans on “pursuing a socially conscious career that makes her happy”. Involved in her college’s Art Collective, Habitat for Humanity, as well as starting up a group for students and professors called Fighting all Forms of Social Disease, she feels social change happens, in little every day interactions. On a lighter note Jahila said she had to choose, she’d much rather have a lesbian mom than a “normal straight mom”. Margalo Willard, 21, Macalester College
For the first time ever, this summer Margalo marched side by side with her moms at Madison Pride holding a sign displaying “I’m proud of my lesbian mom”. Growing up in a small town outside of Madison did not foster a sense of pride in her family. Closely as a family, in her senior year she wrote an anonymous article for the student newspaper about her family. Entering college she decided she was tired of hiding her family and introduced to her new friends both her lesbian moms, no longer afraid to reveal her pride. Two years later Margalo finds herself involved in Queer Union, her campus GLBT group, as well as volunteering time at a hospice care facility for AIDS patients. Majoring in Women Studies with a minor in Gender Studies, Margalo looks forward to opportunities to teach tolerance, acceptance, and understanding. She hopes for the future, if she decides to be a mother, she will not have to make the sacrifices her mothers had to make for her.
SUMMER CAMPS FOR CHILDREN AND FAMILIES

KIDS SLEEPOVER CAMPS

Camp Ten Trees
Washington
August 19-25 age 8-13
August 26 - September 1
Age 13-17
206-568-6638
campettenes@hotmail.com
www.campettenes.org

Mountain Meadow
Summer Camp
Southern NJ
August 5-18, 9-12 y.o.
and Teen Camp 13-17 y.o.
215-772-101
mountainmeadow@yahoo.com
www.mountainmeadow.org

Camp Lavender Hill
Camp Ross Rellos
Grass Valley, CA
July 14th - 21st
7/13 y.o.
707-544-8190
cvanstone@webnet.com
www.stanford.edu/~trigon/nith/

FAMILY CAMPS

Camp Out
N. Central, MA
July 23-28
9-14 y.o.
617-68-7739
farmsofma.org
emmyhowell@aol.com
www.campoutma.com

Michigan Women's Music Festival
Hart, MI
August 8/9
Gala Girls' Camp 5 y.o. and up.
Brother Son's Boys' Camp
5-10 y.o.
Sprouts Toddlers' Camp
0-4 y.o.
231-757-4766
www.mwmf.com

Camp Common Ground
South Hero, VT
2 one-week sessions:
August 13-19 & 20-26
800-430-2667 M-Th 9-2 pm
ccg@vermontcoun.com
www.vermontcoun.com
ccg

Camp It Up!
Oakland Feather River Camp
Quincy, CA
August 19-26th
510-763-0615
redos216@eol.com

Campout
YWCA of Greater Portland
503-294-7744 503-294-7475
Email: miriam.callaghan@ywcafabric.com

Rainbow Family Camp
St. Germain, WI
Aug. 12-18
715-479-3826
mb@ucci.org
www.ucci.org

Rainbow Families Camp
Pilgrim Point Camp.
Alexandria, MN
July 21-23
Irene Greene
612-874-6442
irene@greenearlenthink.com

Spectrum Family Camp
Valle of the Moon Camp
Glen Ellen, CA
July 30-Aug 5
415-457-9115
spectrului@ao.com
www.spectrummarin.org

Camp Tawonga
Keshevel Camp
Sept 6-9th
415-543-2267
www.tawonga.org

Camp Pleiades
North Carolina
July 28 - Aug 4
888-999-3310
Starcamp@aol.com
www.starcamp.com

Rainbow Family Camp
St. Germain, WI
Aug. 12-18
715-479-3826
mb@ucci.org
www.ucci.org

SPECTRUM FAMILY CAMP

Welcome New Chapter Coordinators!

Over the past year, more than twenty people ages 13 and up have become new volunteer chapter coordinators. We warmly welcome and would like to acknowledge all of them for joining in the fight for equality for all our families. Every chapter coordinator makes a huge impact locally for children of all ages with LGBT parents. Thanks to our committed volunteers, we are looking forward to even more local community organizing than ever before.

New Coordinators:
Steve Solomon, Toronto, Canada
Emily Gold & trìinh, Los Angeles, CA
Heather Berberet, San Diego, CA
Daniel Lessen & Melanie Joy Cohen, Palm, FL
Ricky Ashburn, Orlando, FL
Tina Fakhrid-Deen, Chicago, IL
Ame D'Entierre & Heather King,
Northampton, MA
Heather Estan, Western MA
Ashley Hendrix, Minneapolis, MN
Lella Swanson, Oxnard, MD
Lisa Bostelte & Sarah Cannon, NH
Karen & Marilyn Conlon-Rissler, IL
Claire Knight, NYC & NY
Kim Ortiz & Kristi Medallo, Houston, TX
Kate Fortmüller & Lisa Tissendorf, Seattle, WA
Lorenz Cook-Daniels, Milwaukee, WI

Thank You Michael Bishop

With great address and appreciation we acknowledge Michael Bishop's resignation as a COLAGE volunteer. Three years ago Michael came to COLAGE shortly after his father came out to him. Like many of us, he quickly became overcome with feelings of connectedness to an online organization full of other people with similar families. Over time, he has selflessly dedicated his time, energy, and skills to managing our online programs, including the national/international Kids of Gay 14 years old and up email discussion list, the on-line interviews, and the on-line interactive story. In addition, he provided ongoing technical support to the COLAGE headquarters office in San Francisco, CA.

COLAGE will miss working with Michael and will especially miss his caring nature and intuitive ability to respond to and support the needs of other COLAGES like him self. We support his decision to move on in order to share his dedication to voluntarism and his interpersonal and technical skills with other organizations who are making change in the world. Our thankfulness for his commitment is tremendous and we wish him the best of luck in everything to follow.

Look for the new on-line volunteer announcement in the summer 2001! Just For Us!

Goodbye, KORINNE WATSON

Every year, COLAGE participates in an intern program with the San Francisco State University School of Social Work. This year, Korinne Watson came to us with great enthusiasm to work in the COLAGE office part-time. She became the San Francisco school’s co-facilitator and coordinator with longtime COLAGE volunteer Sam Gattiena. Korinne brought to group facilitation her ability to relate well with youth and tremendous creativity. She will be graduating and ending her COLAGE internship in May 2001. Her willingness to help share the work in the office and her dedication to the participants in the middle school group will be greatly missed.

COLAGE MEDIA APPEARANCES

We truly are everywhere! COLAGES have been telling their stories and educating millions. Some of the places you may have seen us recently include:

2000 | HRO | Cosmo Girl
Teen People Twist Magazine
Salon.com YM Magazine Lifestle
Minneapolis Star Tribune
Japanese Public Television
Alternative Family Magazine

CAGE Board of Directors on their Spring Retreat

Calling All Loudmouths!

Even if you’re not a loudmouth but just want to educate society by sharing your story with print, radio, and TV, please apply to be on the COLAGE media list. We are looking for people from all kinds of families (adoption, donor insemination, gay dads, etc.), all parts of the US and the world, all ages (including teens), and all racial and religious backgrounds. We’ll do some basic media training with you – the only requirement is that you and your family are able and willing to talk about your family publicly.

If you’re interested, contact Felicia Park-Rogers, Director, via email at director@colage.org (put “media contact list” in the subject line) or by calling her at 415.860.5437, x.401.

Colage Launches Strategic Plan & Anti-Racism/Diversity Plan

The COLAGE Board of Directors convened for their spring retreat in Half Moon Bay, CA on March 23-25, 2001. The retreat provided a great opportunity for reflection and planning. During the meeting the board launched a strategic planning process by inviting consultants who addressed anti-racism/diversity issues and organizational development. To learn more about the board, check out the COLAGE website and if you are interested in getting involved with the board or strategic planning process please contact COLAGE.

The board welcomes four new board members: Loree Cook-Daniels, Milwaukee, WI; Christian Harris, Little Rock, AR; David Jenkins-Cain; Ypsilanti, MI; and Cynthia Thompson, Oakland.