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P. 6 for details inside

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GLOBAL

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



JUST FOR US

FOCUS ON PRIDE

Vol. 18 #2
2006

FOR PEOPLE WITH LESBIAN, GAY, BISEXUAL AND/OR TRANSGENDER PARENTS

PRIDE IS STANDING UP FOR YOURSELF

by Maureen Weiser

During my first semester at Gonzaga University, a Jesuit school in Washington state, I enrolled in a political science class. The second day, my professor had the class write a paper discussing our unique historical past and the contributions it has made in developing our individuality as well as our political views. I wrote about my history, beginning when I was three months old and was adopted from Brazil. My mother, a Catholic lesbian, and her Buddhist partner taught me to understand and accept the diversity of humankind.



They were married in Canada, and I grew up in the small conservative town of Canby, Oregon. I included my experiences in third grade hearing my friends call objects "gay." I remember telling them that the word was inappropriate, but I did not give them the reasons why I was so uncomfortable with the language. I discussed how my parents' changed my peers' views on homosexuality. Like many young children raised in lesbian homes, I wasn't always entirely comfortable with my mothers' sexuality. I remember trying to understand it myself, before I was ready to tell my friends about it.

Before the following class, my professor asked me to read my paper aloud to the rest of the class. His mission, he stated, was not only to start a debate, but to also show a present-day example of a liberal lifestyle in a predominantly conservative class. Professor

Herald communicated that Shelby, an avid Republican in my class, was prepared to go first, and that I was to follow her. Shelby spoke of her hatred towards homosexuality and her love of family values. When she finished, Professor Herald motioned for her to sit next to me. I stood before my peers, 60% of them right-wing Republicans and the others a mix of democrats and liberals; and read my paper.

When I finished, Professor Herald asked Shelby to look me in the eye and tell me why my parents were in the wrong. She refused for fear of hurting my feelings. I told her that I respected her thoughts, but that I could not make sense of why she disliked my parents since she had never met them. After that, more debate ensued. More than half of the students sided with Shelby, telling me that the marriage between my parents was analogous to the marriage between a man and a dog. This initially

continued on page 3

JOIN US! ACT OUT: THE NATIONAL LGBT FAMILY CONFERENCE

COLAGE is thrilled to announce our partnership with Family Pride on ACT OUT: The National LGBT Family Conference. This fall, hundreds of youth and adults with LGBT parents, and LGBT parents will come together in Dallas for a weekend of education, empowerment, and celebration.

COLAGE will offer two exciting tracks of programming during act OUT. COLAGE Crew will be a series of activities and workshops for youth ages 9-13 with one or more lesbian, gay, bisexual and/or transgender parent that will use art, games, discussions, movies, and lots of fun to allow youth to share their experiences and family backgrounds while meeting new friends. The COLAGE Leadership Track will be a full track of workshops for young adult and adults with LGBT parents focusing on how we can use our voices and our actions to make a difference, educate communities, schools, politicians and the media about people with LGBT parents, and strengthen our skills as activists and leaders.

COLAGErs of ALL ages are welcome and encouraged to attend Act OUT! If you have ever thought about getting involved in the COLAGE community or wished you could meet others with LGBT parent, THIS event is the must-attend opportunity of the year.

OCT. 27-29, 2006 FAIRMONT HOTEL DALLAS, TEXAS Register today to ensure your family will have a space at one of the most transformative family gatherings Family Pride and COLAGE will host this year. Hundreds of other LGBT-headed families will be attending, and space is limited, so register today! Other highlights include

a huge Halloween-themed Family Dance, Ice Cream Socials, and exciting keynote events.

COLAGE is also pleased to announce the FIRST-EVER COLAGE Chapter Leadership Institute on Friday, October 27th before the start of Act OUT. Arrive in Dallas on Thursday night so you do not miss the first ever national gathering of COLAGE Chapter Leaders.

FRIDAY, OCTOBER 27, 11AM- 4 PM For more information get in touch with Meredith Fenton, COLAGE Program Director at meredith@colage.org

For information about this event, travel scholarships to participate, and presenting workshops for the COLAGE tracks, please contact Meredith Fenton, COLAGE Program Director at meredith@colage.org or 415-861-5437.

INSIDE SPECIAL FEATURES

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- Support Our Community p. 6
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LETTER FROM THE DIRECTOR

Dear Friends,

June is always an exciting time for COLAGE. The regular San Francisco pride parade, which attracts upwards of half a million people,

is just one of several celebrations in the area. COLAGE oversees youth and family space during the Tranny March, where children with trans parents can connect and play with each other. We march in the Dyke March, fitting our COLAGE banner in behind the Dykes on Bikes, carrying signs proclaiming our love for our many moms. On Pride day itself, we help create the Family Garden, a fun space for families to gather, and a youth-friendly alternative to the often adult-themed activities that occur throughout the day. By the time Pride is over, we have thoroughly exhausted our staff and volunteers, many of whom joke that they hope to never see another rainbow, or hear another Village People song, ever again (or at least not until next year's Pride...) I am always excited to hear about the creative and exciting ways that COLAGE members and groups celebrate Pride in their home communities from Boston to Minneapolis, from Tampa Bay to Washington DC.

With all of the activity and excitement of Pride month, it's important to take a moment to reflect on what pride is, and explore the value of pride for children, youth, and adults with one or more lesbian, gay, bisexual, and/or transgender parent(s). Pride was originally a memorial, organized to commemorate the Stonewall riots, a multiracial uprising of trans

folks, cross-dressers, gays, lesbians, and "queers" of all kinds. (You can read more about the history of Stonewall and Pride on the next page). Even today, no matter how fun and care-free Pride may seem, we are never more than a few dance steps away from the political and personal struggles that come with living in a deeply homophobic culture. It's exciting to come together as a community because usually all signs of our existence are erased or ignored. It's fun to dress up, put on drag, and bring out the feather boas and rainbow pins because usually expressing these aspects of our personality makes us vulnerable to hostility and harassment. It's deeply meaningful to attend Pride as a family, because usually we are made to hide our relationships and the love we have for one another.

As you celebrate Pride, reflect on what you personally have been proud about for yourself and your family this year. Rejoice that despite threats from the religious right, not a single anti-gay family piece of legislation passed during the most recent legislative session. Revel in the fact that children, youth and adults with LGBT parents continue to make strides against homophobia in schools, congresses, courthouses and communities when we courageously and proudly speak the truth of our own experiences.

Of course, not everyone goes to Pride, either because they don't want to, don't feel the need to, or in a lot of cases, because they can't. Although there are people with LGBT parents in every state and over 95% of U.S. counties, unfortunately the same cannot be said for Pride celebrations. Many COLAGE members and supporters live in areas

where there is no Pride celebration to speak of - but that doesn't mean we can't take advantage of this month to create a sense of pride within ourselves. We can be proud of ourselves, and proud of the families we come from even if we are far away from other people with LGBT parents. We can reject shame, pride ourselves on our skills as leaders and advocates, and celebrate the right to be different. We can reflect on what makes our family strong, and how we can continue to build trust, support, and healthy relationships with each other. We can visualize the world as a place where all people and their families are welcomed, respected, and celebrated. We can invite our closest friends and allies to come together for a private celebration of Pride, and bask in the support of our community, no matter how big or small that community is.

The contributors to this issue of *Just For Us* each bring their own perspective on Pride. Some are recalling particular experiences at Pride events, while others are simply reflecting on qualities and experiences they've had that make them feel proud of themselves or their families. We hope that you will leave this issue with a sense of self-worth, dignity, and connection. When we love ourselves, it is harder for someone else to make us or our families feel less-than. COLAGE is committed to ensuring that children, youth, and adults with LGBT parents feel this kind of self-love all the time, not just in June. We thank you for your support and look forward to the day when every month is Pride month.

Beth Teper

COLAGE

MISSION

COLAGE ENGAGES, CONNECTS, AND EMPOWERS PEOPLE TO MAKE THE WORLD A BETTER PLACE FOR CHILDREN OF LESBIAN, GAY, BISEXUAL, AND/OR TRANSGENDER PARENTS AND FAMILIES.

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WHAT IS PRIDE?

pride (prd) n.

1. A sense of one's own proper dignity or value; self-respect.
2. Pleasure or satisfaction taken in an achievement, possession, or association.
3. a. A cause or source of pleasure or satisfaction; the best of a group or class.
b. The most successful or thriving condition; prime.
4. A company of lions.
5. A flamboyant or impressive group.

Synonyms:

delight, dignity, ego, gratification, happiness, honor, joy, pleasure, satisfaction, self-admiration, self-confidence, self-love, self-regard, self-respect, self-satisfaction, self-sufficiency, self-trust, self-worth

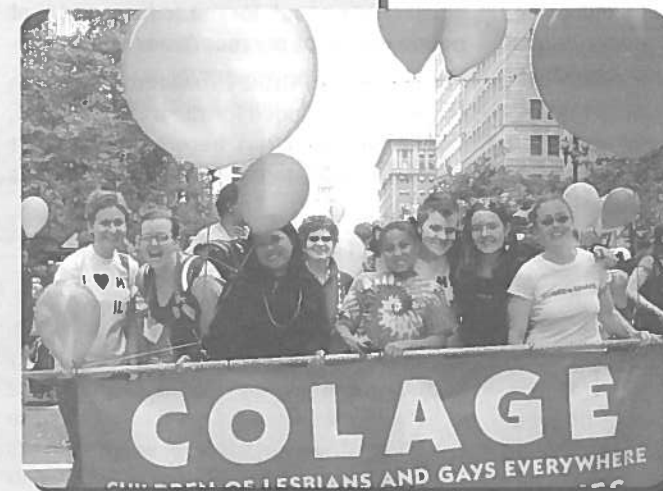
The gay pride or simply pride campaign of the gay rights movement has two main premises: that people should be proud of what they are, and that sexual diversity is a gift. Marches celebrating Pride (pride parades) are celebrated worldwide. Symbols of gay pride include the rainbow flag and also the pink and black triangles reclaimed from their past use.

The LGBT community of a city will typically present an annual parade, sometimes in the context of a longer celebration including performances, dances, street parties, and the like. Most gay pride parades take place in the summer, particularly in June, to commemorate the Stonewall riots. The first pride parade was organized by the Gay Liberation Front on the one-year anniversary of the Stonewall Riots in June of 1970. Between 5,000 and 10,000 men and women attended the march which went from Greenwich Village to Central Park

Pride parades evolved from protest marches held by gay people to fight for their rights. Many parades still have this political or activist character, especially in less gay-positive settings. However, in more gay-positive cities, the parades take on a festive or even Mardi Gras-like character. Large parades often involve floats, dancers, drag queens, and amplified music; but, even such celebratory parades usually include political and educational contingents, such as local politicians and marching groups from LGBT and queer institutions of various kinds.

Even the most festive parades often offer some aspect dedicated to remembering victims of AIDS, hate crimes, and other injustices facing the LGBTQ community. Some particularly important pride parades are funded by governments and corporate sponsors, and promoted as major tourist attractions for the cities that host them. In some countries, some pride parades are now also called Pride Festivals. Some of these festivals provide a carnival-like atmosphere in a nearby park or city-provided closed-off street, with information booths, music concerts, barbecues, beer stands, contests, sports, and games.

Historically these events were named *Gay* but have evolved over the years. First to *Lesbian and Gay* then to today's *Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender* (LGBT). Some of these changes met with initial resistance in their own communities.



COLAGErs celebrate pride in San Francisco

Pride, continued from page 1

made me laugh. I would have never thought anyone would compare my mom's love for another woman with the love between a human and an animal. I asked them to give me a better excuse. One classmate's comment was that homosexuality was just for the tax write-off and (for women) was an excuse for those who could not find a man but wanted a tax reduction. I challenged them to sit with my mom and tell her she is married to the equivalent of a dog, and that her love for this dog is just for a tax reduction. Another classmate's excuse was that homosexuality was against God. I told them that I could not figure out why the fact that my mother loved another woman was "breaking their God's rules" [borrowing a line from a Melissa Etheridge song].

When class ended, I left with a feeling of pride. It was a new experience to tell people that I did not agree with their views. This was the first time I really stood up for what I believed in and it felt fantastic. I called my mom right after class, and she was in tears by the end of our conversation. She thanked me for sticking up for her and her love for another woman. Because of this experience I will be participating in "The Day of Silence," and next year I plan

on being a member of the Gay-Straight Alliance Club at Gonzaga University.

Both of my parents are strong, proud lesbian women. They greatly influenced my reaction towards my peers. If my parents did not have strong senses of self-worth and identity, I might not have had the strength to stand up for them. I grew up in a conservative town, which allowed me to experience views that differed far from mine. I feel that being adopted from a foreign

country, being immersed into the American Culture, and living in a small town with two lesbian parents, whose last names are different from mine, and who have different religious beliefs, has shaped me into a very strong and unique human being. My social and physical environment provided me with a special individuality.

Baby steps are the way to solve the problems in the world; once you affect one person to change, a domino effect occurs, and the change grows exponentially I hope that one day children of LGBT parents will have enough pride for themselves and their parents to stand up when faced with opposition.

Maureen Wieser is 20 years old and grew up in Woodburn, Oregon with her two moms. She is currently attending Gonzaga University in Spokane, Washington, where she plans to study Biology and Psychology.

FROM TEARS TO ELATION AT PRIDE By Tasha Jackson

As I stood in the rare San Francisco sun, I watched many floats go by at the PRIDE parade. One float of families passed and I noticed my boyfriend, put his hand on my lower, small part of my back. More and more families passed. I suddenly stopped cheering and waving—something hit me. Parents, strollers, and smiling children shouting and holding posters with titles like “Dykes and Tykes”. These gay parents are out of the closet, their children are proud of having gay parents and then people cheering for this—what kind of a world is this?



Then it suddenly hit me, my boyfriend is putting his hand on my back to comfort me. This could be my family marching! (However, I can not see my moms in pink boas doing pelvic thrusts to crowds of people.)

A sudden jolt of painful memories hit me. I hid my teary eyes and thought

about my painful past. How living with a closeted mom during puberty was very hard. People looked at me different, during a time when all I wanted to do was belong. While I was trying to understand my own changing body and new sexual urges -- other children were verbally questioning my sexual identity because of my mom's. It was difficult having to hear the whispers behind my back and realize that other girls never really wanted to get very close to me; in fear of them being associated as gay. However, the worst part about the situation was that I could not speak to anyone including my family because my

mom was closeted from everyone. I had to grow up pretending the whispers were never loud enough for me to hear and that nobody knew of my mom's sexuality.

Yet, today at PRIDE I realized how much society has changed for the better. Overall, I think our world has become much more accepting and open. Granted my view is

skewed, due to living in San Francisco, one of the most accepting cities in the world; yet, I truly feel the world has changed. I see changes in the media, schools, and an overall social acceptance. Today, I saw something I never even dreamt of seeing—openly gay parents accepted by their children and society. These children from the PRIDE parade will go home and talk about their experience with their friends and have PRIDE in their parents—this brings tears to my eyes.

My brief moment in painful reflection turned to such happiness. I now feel such elation, excitement, and happiness for the future generations of gay families. Also, I only believe things will change for the better with laws and further acceptance worldwide. In addition, today forced me to personalize PRIDE and not just to observe it like a spectator but truly embrace the meaning—PRIDE is about everyone, everyday."

Tasha Jackson is an adult COLAGE'r and psychotherapist specializing in issues facing LGBTQ individuals and families.

DATELINE DAN

By Dan Cherubin



This time of year begins the celebration of "Pride." I could make a list of all the things I'm proud about both as a gay man and a Second Generation guy, but

that sounds a lot like some of my older columns. What I do want to address are things that others do in my life which make me proud.

I'm proud of my workplace for not giving a damn about me. I work for a Dutch company. The Netherlands is a pretty LGBT positive place that even has legalized same-sex marriage. As such, my company doesn't make a deal about my being gay. This sounds almost trivial, especially in New York City, but I can honestly say I've never worked in a place where there hasn't been some nervousness when asking me about

my life. (As if I would say, "Oh, my partner and I had great gay sex this weekend!") When I'm at work, nobody puts on that weird false smile of "tolerance." Everyone accepts me. And acceptance is whole lot better than tolerance. I am really proud to see a large corporation act like this. Now maybe they can teach something to American companies!

I'm proud of my synagogue for knowing who I am. I belong to the Reform movement of Judaism which has been accepting of LGBT congregants for decades. I'm not saying that every member of every congregation is thoroughly enlightened, but the Union for Reform Judaism (www.urj.org) actually has a documented platform supporting LGBT rights. I'm a regular attendee of my local synagogue, although my partner is not. Still, they're used to seeing him there and often get our names mixed up. I could be insulted but I'm actually happy they don't get flustered by the gay thing. Too often in the past, I was put in the "bachelor"

section of membership. Now, they make an attempt to include us as a couple in all their events, even if they get us confused. It's a long way from my childhood.

I'm proud of younger SG folks for forgetting I'm around. I'm actually far too self-absorbed to notice if they do notice me, but I'm proud the work continues with more folks. This was hard going when SG was started. I'm glad I can look around and see all this work growing the movement and gathering more people. I always said that 15 years after SG started, there would be a flood of members. Yes, I am proud of myself for starting it, but I'm prouder still of everyone who makes it what it is today. Bless you all!

I'm proud of the New York Rangers for making the playoffs. It certainly took them long enough!

Happy Pride to everyone!

Dan Cherubin is a gay man with multiple moms. He lives in New York City where he is spearheading his synagogue's first Pride march.

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SPAWN TALK

by Abigail Garner

Look for Me at Pride

For most of the year, we sons and daughters of GLBT parents -- especially the adult children -- are nearly impossible to pick out of a crowd. And often when we are in queer space, our identities get misread by the people who should be the most conscious of our existence. When I am present at various activities for GLBT families, it is not uncommon for parents to ask if my partner is with me or ask how many children I have.

When a woman in Provincetown asked me how my kids were enjoying Family Week, I replied, "Actually, I'm not a mom. I'm a daughter. A grown up daughter."

"Oh," her eyes grew wide, "Way grown up!"

That's right. Way grown up. While parents handle the day-to-day logistics of raising kids -- like changing diapers and chasing

away bad dreams—it's easy for them to avoid thinking about the fact that someday their children will grow up.

Pride is a time for me to have fun and relax with other "children" of all ages. I feel a mix of joy and relief when we get together. For a rare moment we don't have to defend our personal or political definitions of "family" or "community." We are among friends who get it.

But first, we have to find each other.

COLAGErs were all around me when I was growing up—I just didn't know it. In the years since I launched my website, many of my high school classmates have contacted me and said they also have LGBT parents. One was in my science class. Two were on my soccer team. One former classmate who has a lesbian mom told me she heard rumors about my family when we were teenagers, but she didn't know how to start a conversation with me. In her email message she explained, "Going up to someone you don't know that well and just saying, 'Hi, I have a gay

parent, too' just wasn't a normal thing to do."

Reconnecting with classmates who have GLBT parents always makes me wonder how many more of us are out there. It's not like we walk around every day carrying signs that say things like, "This is what a child of gay parents looks like." But Pride events are opportunities to do exactly that.

I realize there are COLAGErs who decide to not come to Pride at all. Some have closeted parents who prefer to remain that way. Some have yet to accept their parents' sexuality. Some are totally out about the families, but are now dealing with their own activist burn-out. Still, too many COLAGErs do not even know a growing network exists to minimize the isolation that can make all of us think we are alone. If you go to Pride this year, bring a sign or wear a T-shirt that will open the conversation for someone else to say "Hi. I have a gay parent, too."▲

Abigail Garner, 34, is the author of Families Like Mine. Her blog, "Damn Straight" is online at www.AbigailGarner.net.

PRIDE IS EMBRACING DIVERSITY By Jeffrey DeGroot

My whole life I have been brought up as an only child by my biological mother and her partner. This is an experience that has given me personality traits that most males my age often lack, such as knowing and understanding how I am feeling and being able to express those feelings. I have benefited from being in a family that has always taught me to discuss and deal with my feelings rather than suppress them and that has shown me how important it is to value differences in all areas of life.

I have always prided myself on keeping an open mind when it comes to new and different situations and people to whom I am exposed. One example of this is spending time with my good friend who is bisexual, and being comfortable around her. She knows that I will not ridicule her for those with whom she chooses to have relationships. Another example is my friend who is Chinese. When I go to her house she speaks Cantonese with her parents. This does not make me feel uneasy -- instead, I feel lucky to have a friend who is different from me and can open my eyes to a new culture.

Over the past two years I have invested myself in a number of different exploits to further the cause of gay rights on the political level. My senior year in high school I took part in the Oregon Youth in Government Program. This is a chance for high school students from around Oregon to take part in a mock

legislative process where students write bills and work to get them passes. The bill I wrote proposed to make gay marriage legal in Oregon. I was fortunate enough to advance my bill to the Youth Governor, and it was the second bill he signed.



I have also worked extensively for political candidates who support gay rights. In the spring of 2004 I worked as an organizer on the Dennis Kucinich for President Campaign. One of the main reasons I got involved in this campaign was the fact that Representative Kucinich was the only major candidate to support gay marriage. Due to my involvement in the campaign I was elected as a delegate to represent Mr.

Kucinich at the Democratic National Convention.

There is no doubt that I am the person I am today because of the experience of having two women as my parents. It has given me traits that most of my peers lack. I feel very lucky. Being raised in this unique family has shown me how wonderful diversity is and why it should be embraced. I am very proud of my parents and the way they choose to live their lives.

Jeffrey hails from Corvallis, OR, and is the son of two lesbian moms. He is currently a sophomore at Whitman College in Walla Walla, WA. He will turn 21 this July.



Join the 2nd Annual Support Our Community Campaign!



Theme: Strength in Numbers

Goal: Raise \$10,000 for COLAGE

Dates: Mothers' Day - Fathers' Day
(Start between May 14th - June 18th, 2006, finish when the goal has been met)

Who: Youth, families, leaders, and people like YOU!



THERE ARE 8 TO 14 MILLION YOUTH AND ADULTS WITH LGBT PARENTS IN THE UNITED STATES

We live in every state and more than 95% of U.S. counties.
It's time to show the strength of our numbers!

** Find 15 people to donate at least \$15 to COLAGE ** Receive special recognition in the Just For Us newsletter ** Contact the COLAGE office for a detailed campaigner packet -- or see below to get started raising money online today! **

To Get Started: Go To www.colage.kintera.org/strength

REGISTER!

Click on **Campaign Registration** and fill in all required information to start raising money for COLAGE! COLAGE members or supporters who want to become a campaigner should click on **Join as an Individual**.

DONATE!

You can donate to the campaign without registering! When you click on **General Donation**, your donation goes towards the overall \$10,000 goal but is not credited to any particular campaigner. When you click on **Donate to Campaign**, you can choose a team or campaigner to get credit for your donation.

SPREAD THE WORD!

Once you're registered, you will be directed towards your Headquarters (HQ) where you can customize a personal web-page, send emails to your friends and family members, and track your progress towards your fundraising goal. You can always come back to your page by returning to www.colage.kintera.org/strength and clicking on **Main Login** under **My HQ**. If you are having any trouble using the website, please call the COLAGE office so that our staff can assist you:
415-861-5437 or email support@colage.org

THANK YOU!

On behalf of the children, youth and families whose lives have been touched by your contributions, COLAGE thanks all our members, donors, funders and supporters. We couldn't do it without you!

Donors and funders listed below made gifts between March 1, 2006, and May 15, 2006.

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Every effort has been made to ensure the accuracy of this list. Please contact Jesse at 415-861-5437 ext. 105 or jcarr@colage.org if we've listed you incorrectly.

We look forward to acknowledging the many gifts we receive in our next issue of *Just For Us*. To make a donation in support of COLAGE's ongoing work for equality and justice, please use the enclosed envelope or donate on-line at www.colage.org/support

FUNDRAISING EXTRAS

Special Thanks to Everyone Who Helps Keep COLAGE Strong

Special Thanks to everyone who has already joined the Support Our Community Campaign. As of Memorial Day, the Campaign has already raised \$3000! To get involved, see p. 8

Special thanks to everyone who attended our recent house party in Arizona. More than \$3,500 was raised to benefit COLAGE and PFLAG Phoenix. The evening featured remarks by COLAGE Program Coordinator, Ember Cook, who lived in Phoenix with her gay dad before moving to San Francisco, and a special viewing of COLAGE's youth-produced documentary, *In My Shoes*.

EXTRA SPECIAL THANKS TO OUR NEW MONTHLY DONORS:

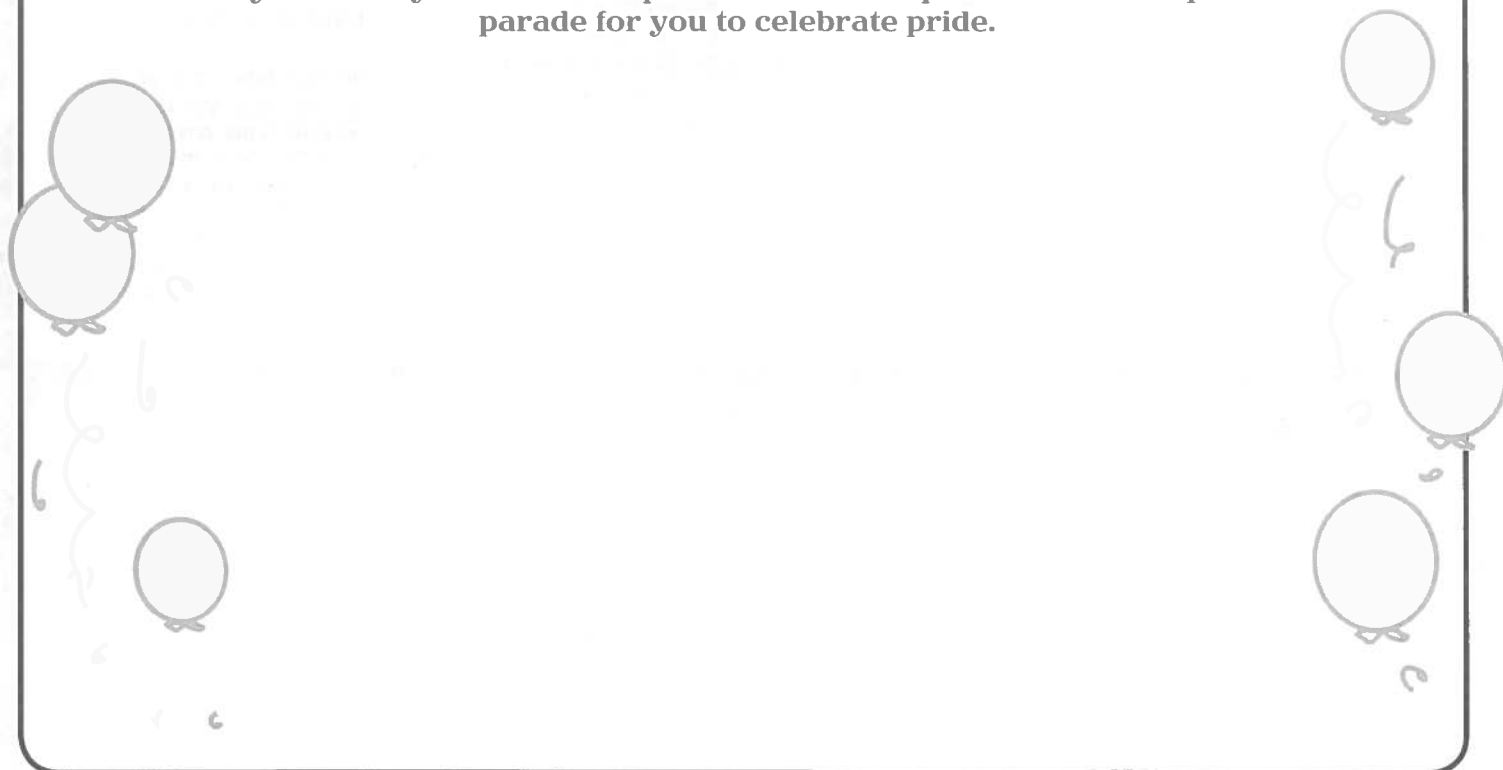
Felicia Park-Rogers and Rachel Timoner
Paula and Lorna Rodriguez-Rust
Elizabeth Adams
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Teryl George

To become a monthly donor to COLAGE, use the enclosed envelope or log on to www.colage.org/support



Your Pride Parade

Who will march in your parade? What costumes will they wear? Will your family march in the parade? Use this space to draw the perfect parade for you to celebrate pride.



PRIDE PHOTO ALBUM

Each year in June, COLAGE joins adults, children, youth, and families around the country in celebration of Pride! With balloons, music, dancing, and love, we show our commitment to ourselves, each other, and the community.



SPEAK OUT

What makes you proud about your family?
What is one way that you show this pride?

I am proud about my family because I can talk to them about anything and they are very cool parents. When I meet a new friend the first thing about my family I tell them is that I have two moms, no dad and a donor—and if they don't think that's cool they'll have to deal with it because it can't change. I show my pride for my parents because I am not scared to take them out into public or about what people might say behind their backs.

Kassandra La Giusa-Riedeman, AGE: 9, Santa Clarita, California

I'm proud of my family because we're out. It must have taken my parents a lot of bravery to come out into a world like ours. I try to be out about this sort of thing at school, I want to show people that it's not something horribly wrong. I want to be active in fighting for rights, I want people to know that I couldn't care less that my gay dad and straight mom are still married, that my dad is gay. He shouldn't have had to hide it in the first place!

Cassandra Burgdorf, Age 12, Omaha, NE

My family has taught me about awareness, understanding, and unconditional love. Last year I proudly marched in the Christmas parade with the PFLAG float. I realized how far our little community is coming by even having a float in the parade!

Cody Newton, age 17, Bend, OR

CHAPTER UPDATE - COLAGE Connecticut by Becca Lazarus

Many people wonder why COLAGE chapters are started, and they can be started for many reasons. COLAGE Connecticut was started because I needed to find a place where kids like me didn't feel alone. After going to my first Family Week in Provincetown, Massachusetts, I realized that there were many other kids like me, and I wanted to keep that feeling of community alive in Connecticut when I went home.

COLAGE Connecticut has been around for two and a half years. We have gone through many changes in membership, but we have a core group of about 10-12 kids who try their best to be involved. There are over 40 kids between the ages of 5 and 17 years on the membership list, so it makes for a very diverse group.

We decided in its inception that this was going to be a group that was going to tackle the issues of our community through fun and enjoyable activities. We formed the chapter so we could have kids like us to do things with, and talk about our families and troubles we have encountered at school and other places.

Our first meeting was a potluck picnic that was held at our house in Windsor (outside of Hartford). The weather did not want to cooperate with the picnic activities we had planned, but luckily we were able to have fun in our game room, and got to meet everyone from around the state. Since our first get-together we have had other fun events like bowling, more bowling, and other potluck activities.

The toughest part back then was, and still is, getting the word out about our group and getting the families to commit to coming. At first I thought of many ways to get the word out about us. Some of the ways that we used were: putting fliers up at Coffee Houses, the LGBT Center in Hartford, sending electronic copies of the flier to schools, and to corporate LGBT groups. Our most creative, and somewhat successful way of getting some members was by looking for cars with Family or HRC stickers on them, and putting a flier under their windshield wiper. It was interesting to hear how many responses we received from that approach.

Some obstacles that I have encountered, which I am sure many have, is just trying to get the flier in the hands of the school that I attend. I am now in middle school, and the red tape that you have to go through just for the



COLAGE CT at a recent bowling party

guidance counselors to hand out the flier to interested students is never-ending. It always seems like just when you are about to get the approval to be able to give this to the guidance counselors, someone stops the process. But we are trying to work through this.

One big success was the showing of COLAGE's new documentary, *In My Shoes*, at the high school's GSA in town. They were very receptive, and kept my Dads and I there for over an hour asking questions. They said that they would like us to come again some time.

Though we have had very limited response, our next COLAGE event is to march in the Northampton Massachusetts Pride parade. It is the 25th anniversary of pride up there, and the pride committee would really like to see us represented. We are planning a poster/banner-making afternoon the Sunday before, and that should be a lot of fun. We are also very lucky that some Family Week friends who attend college in Western Massachusetts will be able to march with us in the parade.

Also, later that month we are having a hiking/picnic for the group. The weather around here has been so nice, and to get out with everyone and have some fun hiking will be a great way for all of us to connect with each other before Family Week this summer.

Becca Lazarus, age 12, is the founder and facilitator of COLAGE Connecticut, along with her two dads Jason and Eric. Becca is fun, smart, likes sports and American Girl dolls, and has attended Family Week in Provincetown for the past three years.

THE FAMILY WE ALL BELONG TO by Monica Canfield-Lenfest

I remember before my dad came out - I must have been in high school - sitting at a sidewalk café in Burlington, Vermont, when I witnessed my first Pride parade. At the time, I felt this strange joy seeing all the people out and proud in the streets. It never occurred to me that one day I would be in the parade myself.

My experiences with COLAGE have really taught me about Pride. Before my first Family Week, I had come to accept and admire my father as a transwoman. A sweet lesbian roommate had the most positive reaction to my story. She actually thought it was cool that my dad was transgender. It wasn't until I made my first journey to Provincetown that I felt just how cool being a COLAGER can be. Let's face it, Ptown is a very special place, a town where LGBT pride is a part of daily life. Working with other adults and youth with LGBT parents at Family Week gave me a community - a family - that I never knew I had. With so many youth in the Boston area, I was determined to bring that connection back home with

us to the Boston chapter.

Last June, a small group of us marched in the Boston Pride parade. I felt that same sense of joy I had felt years before, only this time I was a part of the march. We held our COLAGE banner proudly and waved at the smiling kids' faces in the crowd. Many people cheered as we marched past, recognizing what COLAGE has done for our community. When I say our community, I really mean it now and thank goodness I found COLAGE to realize the family we all belong to.

COLAGE Boston will be marching again on June 10 and would love to have you join us. For more information email boston@colage.org. To join our mailing list, email greaterbostoncolage-subscribe@yahoo.com.

Monica has served as the organizer of the Greater Boston COLAGE chapter. She is 25 years old and has a straight mom, transgender dad, and younger sister. Monica will return as staff at Family Week in Provincetown this year for the fourth summer.

COLAGE NOTES

COME WORK IN COLAGE HEADQUARTERS THIS FALL!

COLAGE engages, connects and empowers people to make the world a better place for children of lesbian, gay, bisexual, and/or transgender (LGBT) parents and families.

THE FELICIA PARK-ROGERS INTERNSHIP PROGRAM

The COLAGE Internship Program is named for our visionary former director Felicia Park-Rogers who started a summer internship program during her leadership of COLAGE. We honor her commitment to people with LGBT parents, creativity, energy and years of leadership through internships that promote development of young leadership, allow participants a hands-on look at the non-profit field, teach interns about LGBT families issues, and promise to be a lot of fun!

COLAGE is the only national organization serving people with LGBT parents, therefore presenting a unique perspective on LGBT issues, and providing a once in a lifetime opportunity for interns. This is a hands-on job: you won't just be filing, you'll get to use your creativity and initiative. We are looking for team players who are motivated to learn, share, play, and work hard in support of COLAGE's mission. Interns will assist the staff on current or new projects, with both local and national events, and with office management.

Preferred qualifications

- Computer literate (especially on PC's), knowledge of Office 2000, FileMaker Pro, HTML, and desktop publishing programs a plus.
- Experience and comfort with email and phone-based organizing and networking.
- Experience and comfort working with youth and families
- Self-motivated, flexible, and full of initiative

- People with LGBT parent/s

Requirements

Interns receive a modest stipend (DOE \$1500-2500) for a ten-week, full time or 20 week part-time internship including some evenings and weekends.

- Must be 18 or over if not from the Bay Area, 15 or over from the Bay Area.
- Must be LGBT-friendly

COLAGE is an equal opportunity and affirmative action employer

- People of color, people with disabilities, and people with LGBT parents especially encouraged to apply.

How to Apply for Fall Internships

Deadline: Friday, August 4th, 2006

Postmark by August 4th or fax by midnight on August 4th

Please mail, email, or fax us the following information:

1. Your resume;
2. A cover letter sharing your interest in working for COLAGE and qualifications;
3. Contact information for two people who will serve as references and can attest to your experience and skills.

Select applicants will be invited to participate in an interview during August. Internships will begin in September or October in accordance with the COLAGE's needs and intern's availability.

COLAGE also has spring and summer work-study internships; if you are interested contact us for more information.

Need more info? Want to apply?

COLAGE
1550 Bryant St. Ste. 830,
San Francisco, CA 94103
phone: 415-861-5437
fax (415) 255-8345,
www.colage.org

UPDATE YOUR RECORDS! COLAGE HAS A NEW HOME

On May 5th COLAGE spent its last day in The Women's Building, a historic San Francisco building famous for the beautiful murals covering the entire four-story structure. The COLAGE office spent nearly 11 years in the Women's Building, sharing the space with numerous community organizations in the heart of San Francisco's Mission District. Leaving The Women's Building was a sad occasion, but the time had come. COLAGE's growing staff could no longer fit in our tiny space.

Luckily, we were able to find office space in the Hamm's Building, a mere ten blocks from our old office, and a five minute walk to the old neighborhood. As this issue of JFU goes to print, the boxes are still piled high, but we are confident we will soon be settled in completely. In the meantime, planning continues for Family Weeks, the premiere of a new youth-written play, and a long summer of making friends and making change.

We will keep our old mailbox at the Women's Building for several months, so if you've sent us mail recently, don't worry! In the meantime, update your address books, rolodexes, and databases - or just add a new post-it to your wall. As of May 8, 2006, COLAGE's new address is:

**1550 Bryant Street Suite 830
San Francisco, CA 94103**

Our phone number (415-861-5437), web address (www.colage.org) and email address (colage@colage.org) will all remain the same.

Drop us a note at our new space, and if you're ever in San Francisco feel free to drop by for a visit!