



# JUST FOR US

Vol. 16 #3  
2004

FOR PEOPLE WITH LESBIAN, GAY, BISEXUAL AND TRANSGENDER PARENTS

## ANNIVERSARY 15 YEARS OF COLAGE EDITION



### STRONG FOUNDATIONS A CONVERSATION WITH COLAGE CO-FOUNDER MOLLY HELLER

**JFU:** *You were involved with COLAGE as one of its founders when you were 20 years old! What is your memory of how it got started, and why were you involved at that time?*

**Molly:** I was actually only 18 when we first got started in 1988. My sister [COLAGE co-founder Anna Heller] called me about attending an LGBT family conference in Boston. She said we could come for free if we did child care and other volunteering there.

**JFU:** *What happened once you arrived?*

**Molly:** Well, there were only a few of us, about three adult children and some older kids, and we just spent the whole weekend sitting and talking about so many things we had never gotten to talk about before -- secrets, hiding, homophobia, the whole bit. We left the weekend energized, and I was thinking about what this could do for other kids. It had been so cathartic and important for us, and we wanted to be able to share that.

**JFU:** *So how did it go from being a handful of kids talking during their parents' conference to a separate organization?*

**Molly:** We were still adolescents in some ways and decided we didn't need any adults. During the Boston conferences of '88 and '89, a gay dad named Ed Lamano had been helping us facilitate kids' activities during the conference. He was great, but we just decided that we needed something that was for the kids only, so we started Just For Us, which is what COLAGE was originally called.

**JFU:** *What was it like at the beginning?*

**Molly:** We drove each other crazy sometimes. I can't say that I didn't sometimes put the phone down and go have dinner and then come back and they'd still be fighting about one issue or another. There were personality clashes and we didn't always know what we were doing. Nobody

*continued on page 4*

### A TOAST TO COLAGE by Mike Beebe



**L**ike many COLAGErs who grew up in the 70's and 80's I thought I was the only kid on the planet (besides my brother) who had a gay dad. In fact, I used to tell my mother that it would be great if there was a group for kids of gay and lesbian parents. I didn't know at the time that I would have the opportunity to be part of COLAGE.

In 1992, I was attending school at the University of Colorado at Boulder when the anti-gay initiative, Amendment 2, was passed. It took legislation to wake me up to the fact that I too was an integral part of the LGBT community, and that it was critical that I speak up because to speak up for my father was to speak up for my family and ultimately myself.

In 1993, I started a research project on children of gay and lesbian parents as part of my senior honors thesis. It was at that time, that I met one of the founders of COLAGE, Megan Waterman. Megan and her sister gave me a copy of the Just For Us newsletter and I learned that indeed I was not the only kid with a gay dad but that there was a nationwide program for kids of LGBT parents. It was not long before I was on the phone regularly with Stefan Lynch comparing stories and research.

In 1994, I attended my first COLAGE conference in New York City. I immediately felt at home as five young adults crammed into a hotel room- Stefan Lynch, Beth Teper, Suzanne Pullen, Denise Connet and myself. We stayed up late every night comparing stories- amazed by our similar experiences with homophobia, intrigued by the differences in our experiences as well. About 60 of us marched in the 25th Anniversary of Stonewall celebration that weekend. We later met the famous drag queen, Ru Paul, on our way up to speak in front of tens of thousands of out and proud participants in the rally at Central Park. I went from being a relatively closeted son of a gay dad in 1992 to being on stage in front of tens of thousands of people in New York City in 1994!

From that event on, I was hooked on the work of COLAGE. I became hooked on the work of fighting oppression and working for liberation. I joined the steering committee and later became the Board Chairperson.

In early 1996, the entire steering committee flew to San Francisco to plan what would be COLAGE's first five year strategic plan! We put together the Roots and Wings campaign which was a house party fundraising strategy to allow us to pay rent on our office, hire staff, and build a stronger infrastructure to support the work of COLAGE. We also welcomed COLAGE's first paid Executive Director, Felicia Park Rogers. She was an inspiring leader who took the work of COLAGE to the next level.

So on this 15th Birthday celebration, I would like to propose a toast- a toast to the hard work COLAGE staff put in every day, the hard work of our past and present board of directors, but perhaps the biggest toast goes to all the children of LGBT parents who come out of the closet every day to fight for the rights of LGBT people and their families. Truly if our families are going to get equal rights and ultimately liberation, we as children have to be OUT as well. So be out, be proud, and don't forget to celebrate our accomplishments along the way!

*Mike Beebe, from Seattle, WA, is the 35 year old son of a gay dad and heterosexual mother.*

### INSIDE SPECIAL FEATURES

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# LETTER FROM THE DIRECTOR

**COLAGE is turning 15 - Let's Celebrate!**

Just as there are many milestones in one's life, there are milestones too in the life of an organization and the community it reflects and represents.

Over the course of 2005, COLAGE will be honoring our 15th year of existence and collective achievement. We are very excited to celebrate with you throughout the year!

To launch the celebration, within the pages of this special edition of Just For Us, we remember and honor COLAGE's founding steering committee; the articulation of our mission, vision and values; the expansion of our membership and chapter network; our increased leadership, education and advocacy programming; and growing recognition as your national organization and voice to the world -- all as a youth-led, constituent-based, social justice organization.

On pages 1, 4 & 7, COLAGE leaders Molly Heller, Hope Steinman-Iacullo and Ember Cook all share memories of COLAGE and demonstrate the personal and political impact COLAGE makes in the lives of many. Along the bottom of pages 3 - 8, we recall some of the cultural shifts and historical forces that have contributed to COLAGE's and the LGBT family movement's past and present, such as: AIDS, the 'gayby boom' of the 80's and 90's, and the growing strength and visibility of the LGBT liberation movement. The timeline also highlights several special achievements and events.

As you know, our families have been in the bull's eye of a massive and sustained attack on all marginalized people and families--especially women, single parents, poor people, people of color, immigrants, and LGBT people for much longer than the past 15 years. Yet we, the children of Stonewall, have shown pride in our diverse queer communities and influenced society through our day-to-day lives by having compassionate one-on-one conversations, engaging in grassroots direct action, providing public education, offering creative cultural expression, raising respectful visibility of LGBT families in the media, taking action and speaking out in court rooms, classrooms, and capitols in every state of this nation.

Fifteen years of engaging, connecting and empowering children, youth and adults with LGBT parents to assert and insert our perspective into legislation and public discourse is definitely a cause for celebration and pride.

Personally, I am very proud of COLAGE's success in promoting and propelling forward LGBT rights, children's rights, peace and justice over the past 15 years. As your Executive Director I wonder where we will be in 15 more years? I predict we will revolutionize not just public opinion, not just policies, regulations, and laws related to our nation's health, education, and families but our entire culture. All this is and will be done and made possible by you and me, all of us together.

As you reflect on the last 15 years and project where life might take us by 2020, we invite you to feel the pride, share your memories and help make COLAGE's vision come true by celebrating with us and supporting us with your financial and physical involvement in 2005.

Join COLAGE or renew your membership today - and celebrate! Match or double your last gift to COLAGE (the date & amount of your last donation are in upper right hand corner of the label on the last page of your Just For Us) - and celebrate! Become a COLAGE 15 Campaigner and ask 15 friends to donate \$15 to COLAGE; see p.10 for directions on how to join the campaign - and celebrate! Give every month; make a monthly donation of \$15, or give a multiple of 15 - \$30, \$45, \$60 every month - and celebrate! Are you turning 15 or celebrating an anniversary in 2005? Let's celebrate together with a joint party or activity of your design.

Happy 15th Anniversary!

Beth Teper  
Executive Director

## Special Membership Incentive

The first 25 individuals or families who contribute \$120 or more to COLAGE will receive a complimentary copy of *Families Like Mine: Children of Gay Parents Tell It Like It Is* by Just For Us contributor, Abigail Garner. This limited offer is made possible through our collaborative outreach efforts with Harper Collins and the author.

Please use the enclosed envelope or donate on-line at [www.colage.org/join.html](http://www.colage.org/join.html).

## COLAGE

### MISSION

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

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# SPEAKING TRUTH TO POWER

Testimony of COLAGEr Sol-Kelley Jones, Submitted to the Wisconsin State Senate Judiciary Committee March 18, 1998



Sol with U.S. Congressperson Tammy Baldwin, 1997

*With more than 40 states banning same-sex marriage, domestic partnerships, and civil unions, COLAGEr activists and community members are used to, and exhausted by, the process of defending our families from the effects of these bills. Yet in 1997,*

*long before the marriage madness of Massachusetts, California, or even Hawaii, LGBT family activists in Wisconsin rallied to protect themselves from the early rounds of the many discriminatory marriage bills that followed. In March of that year, 10 year old Sol Kelley-Jones gave testimony to a packed room of observers - friend and foe alike - about how the so-called "Defense of Marriage" bill would hurt her and her family. The next day a description of Sol's courage in testifying was the lead story on the front page of virtually every daily newspaper throughout Wisconsin. In the days and weeks to come, Sol's story was told again and again, and inspired many who fought hard against the bill. Unfortunately, it was passed 77 - 21, a deep and painful irony in the state that was the first to prohibit discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation back in 1982. At the time, the lopsided nature of the vote felt like a crushing defeat to members of the LGBT community. Yet, in a remarkable show of endurance and commitment that many of us could learn from in the marriage battles of today, Sol Kelley-Jones and her family went on to testify for state and federal congressional leaders six times, in addition to their tireless local activism on behalf of LGBT communities. What follows is the second testimony Sol provided Wisconsin legislators in support of domestic partner health benefits. Six years later, her words are a good reminder for those of us determined to raise our voices in today's political climate.*

I am eleven years old and live with my two lesbian moms who love me and each other very much. My moms have lived together in a committed relationship for 19 years.

I wanted to be here today to testify but my parents were worried about the kind of things I might hear again. You see, a year ago when I testified in Wausau, Representative Seratti introduced a group of speakers who compared my parents wanting legal marriage and family civil rights to humans and animals wanting to get married, and someone even said that my parents and all gay and lesbian people should be put to death. It was really hard to hear those mean and sick things being said by the people who supported this bill. I felt sad about all that hate.

But I reminded my moms about how many testimonies I heard full of love. Like the testimonies they gave and the words of all the other families who spoke. I felt really proud when my minister spoke in support of families like mine.

After Wausau, there was a legislative debate in Madison. At that debate there were more hurtful things said. In the Capitol, Representative Seratti said that gays and lesbians aren't necessary to society but that marriage is.

Well, I would like to speak to you about these hurtful words. I want people to know that my parents are necessary to me and a lot of other people, too. And our family is part of society. Our life is pretty much the same as most families. For example, on the day of the debate on AB 104, when Representative Seratti said that gays and lesbians aren't necessary to society, one of my moms was there in the Assembly. She had to leave the debate a little early to hurry to my school to help me with a classroom project. Then she took my grandma to the doctor's because she was sick. After that she made all of us dinner and took me to my school open house. My other mom had exams--she's studying to get her master's degree so that she can help make our environment better. After her exams, she too hurried to my open house. I hope this helps you

understand that my parents are necessary to me, to my grandparents and a lot of other people, too.

People who support this bill saying my parents and all gay and lesbian people should be gotten rid of really scares families like mine. I cried a lot when I heard that so many legislators voted to support AB 104. And, that they were silent about this hate and fear. Wisconsin didn't feel as safe to me after that. My moms kept reminding me of the 20 legislators that had the courage to say no to AB 104. So I try to think of that. I'm glad I'm in a family and a religion that teaches me to speak out against hatred and fear--like when people say racist things or mean things about people who are poor.

The last thing I want to say is that I still believe in the Constitution that says that all people are created equal and have the right to the pursuit of happiness and equal protection under law. Like I said in my testimony at Wausau, the Constitution does not say all people except for gays and lesbians and their children. It says all people. I wonder how people can be in government if they don't believe that part of the Constitution?

In Sunday school, we sing a song about God's rainbow of love. It's a rainbow that includes trees, birds, animals, people of different races, gays and straights -- all created with a spark of God's love. I believe that my family deserves civil rights just like other families. And no matter what legislators say who support this bill we are a real family full of lots of love.

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*Sol, now a senior in high school, was a member of COLAGE's first board of directors from 1999 - 2001 and has coordinated the Madison, WI, COLAGE chapter for almost 6 years. This summer she joined COLAGE's P-Town Family Week staff, sharing her political engagement and spoken word talent with fellow queerspawn youth. While she's best known for her activism on behalf of lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender families, Sol has been a community leader speaking out on behalf of countless interconnected issues--including racial justice, civil liberties, peace, and eco-justice, to name a few.*

## TIMELINE OF COLAGE MILESTONES



### ● PART I: Early LGBT Family History

● **1979:** At the first National March on Washington for Gay and Lesbian Rights, a group of gay parents forms a national network called the Gay Fathers Coalition.

● **1981:** The Moral Majority announces a \$3 million fund for fighting the gay agenda, which they define primarily as the attempt to control and recruit children to homosexual lifestyles.

● **1986:** The Gay Fathers Coalition is re-named Gay and Lesbian Parents Coalition International (GLPCI) and lesbian parents join this increasingly active group.

First openly lesbian couple is granted legal joint adoption in California.

## Strong Foundations, from p1

was getting paid and there was no formal structure - we were trying to make one, but it was difficult for awhile.

Our basic mission was to reach out to kids and let them know that they're not alone and there's nothing wrong with their families. We were very small at the time and there were no other voices. We started having steering committee meetings and conference calls. There was no office, and people were always coming and going. We had really intense times with so many strong personalities working together. We also had some really fun times. It was an ever-changing bunch so we always had to get used to working closely with new people. It was always an adjustment. But there was always a strong bond because at the end of the day we were all there for the same reasons.

**JFU:** *It's been 15 years since those first conference calls. How do you think COLAGE has changed in that time?*

**Molly:** Stefan Lynch helped grow the organization like it hadn't before. He devoted a big chunk of his life to make it grow. I remember that we thought it was the biggest

thing when we got rainbow colored pencils that said JFU - we said, "Wow! We're big!" Now it's unbelievable to see how it's grown. It blows me away. It's reaching out to thousands and thousands of families all over the country, giving kids an outlet to express themselves, to know they're not alone. I went to P-town last summer and it was amazing to see again that all kids need is to be around other kids like them and they're so much lighter and happier. It's a shame that kids feel alone or feel ashamed of their families. I was 18 and now I'm 34 and to watch it still happening is really great. Hopefully, many years from now, we won't have to do this work, but for now it's important that we still have people out there.

**JFU:** *Do you have any birthday or anniversary wishes for COLAGE? Where do you see us in 15 more years?*

**Molly:** I went to the state house in Massachusetts during the marriage debates this past spring, and was shocked - pleasantly - that it went through. We still have a lot of pavement to pound. It hit me when Bush was elected that we're in the minority. Even though we've worked so hard

to be accepted by people in our country and around us and even though we've done so much great work and have come so far, there's been a setback. We need to keep fighting. Keep having our voices heard. That's what's important. I'm so thankful that there are so many more voices out there to represent our gay families. It's good to have more families, spread out through the whole country. There's a lot of work to do.

**JFU:** *What has COLAGE taught you?*

**Molly:** I could go on and on about what COLAGE has taught me! Leadership, organizing, activism, all of it! It has taught me that a few people can make a difference in the world. And it's taught me that there's nothing more important than to fight for what you believe in.

*Molly Heller is as active with kids and families today as she was during the birth of COLAGE 15 years ago. Married in P-Town in October, Molly and her husband will soon buy a house in Providence, RI. A social worker by profession, Molly has worked as a school counselor, and with LGBT youth and families. She is passionate about continuing this work in the future.*



## EVERYONE NEEDS A PASSION

Hope Steinman-Iacullo

Everyone needs something to be passionate about in life, something to care deeply about. For me, this is politics and social justice issues. This is natural because of the family in which I grew up. Adopted by two gay men as an infant, I was always around activism. Being raised by two fathers, who are of two different faiths, as well as being in an interracial family, helped make me socially conscious at a young age. However, it was not until the summer of 2003 that I truly discovered my own voice.

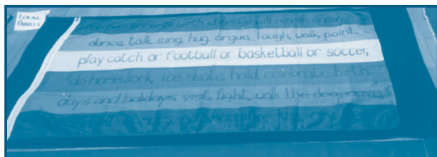
Every summer for the past 7 years, I have attended Family Week in P-Town. Two summers ago, however, I resented going. At the time, I would have preferred to remain home to be with my friends. But I was dragged off on vacation anyway. The week began just as every other year, catching up with friends I'd seen every summer, going to workshops and events planned by COLAGE. It wasn't until that summer that I realized just what a role the organization has played in my life. I suddenly became aware of the fact that because of the people I met through

COLAGE, I was given positive role models as a child, and many good friends as well. I learned to ignore the negative comments and opinions about my family and become confident that we are equal to any so-called "nuclear" or "normal" family. I also learned to know that I was not alone in dealing with prejudice. This resource left me feeling empowered.

At the end of that Family Week, I decided that I wanted to give back to the organization that has given me so much. I volunteered and joined the Board of Directors shortly after. Being on the Board of Directors allows me to see another side of COLAGE. I can now better appreciate the hard work of our only two staff members who devote almost all their time to running the website, newsletter, pen pal program, discussion groups, and big events like Family Week. I also get to share in the responsibility by participating in board meetings, conference calls, events planning, fundraising, correspondence with the media, and outreach to the community and to members. Being on the board even made me want to be more involved by volunteering to speak with the media both on behalf of the

*continued on next page*

**1987:** Several years into the epidemic, President Reagan mentions AIDS for first time in public, during an address to the 3rd International AIDS conference. At least 5,636 people have died from AIDS-related complications by this time, many of them parents.



Quilt panel memorializing parents who have died of AIDS. The panel reads, "For our parents with whom we will never again dance, talk, sing, hug, argue, laugh, walk, paint, play catch or football or basketball or soccer, do homework, ice skate, hold, celebrate birthdays and holidays, visit, fight, walk the dog, make food, tell stories, go shopping, kiss, cry, see."

**1988:** GLPFI's annual conference is held in Boston. 6 young adults are brought (somewhat unwillingly) by their parents, and find themselves meeting other kids with lesbian and gay parents for the first time in their lives!

A Burst of Light by Audre Lorde is published and includes an early essay on lesbian motherhood: "The strongest lesson I can teach my son is the same lesson I teach my daughter: how to be who he wishes to be for himself. And the best way I can do this is to be who I am and hope that he will learn from this not how to be me, which is not possible, but how to be himself. And this means how to move to that voice from within himself, rather than to those raucous, persuasive, or threatening voices from outside, pressuring him to be what the world wants him to be. And that is hard enough.

Artie Wallace, a gay man with AIDS, won a child-custody battle with his wife in California in June, becoming the first person with AIDS to be granted full custody of a child.

**1989:** During GLPFI's annual conference in Boston, workshops for youth and adults with gay and lesbian parents are held for the first time.

*Heather Has Two Mommies*, self-published by Leslea Newman, becomes the target of thousands of censorship attempts.



## SPAWN TALK

by Abigail Garner

A Space of Our Own

"My mom is gay," were words I was barely able to decipher through the teenager's sobs.

"But you all are so carefree. I'll never be so happy about it."

I had just finished moderating a panel of adult children with LGBT parents. When the event coordinators had asked us to talk about "what it was like," what I heard was, "Help us quell our fears."

My orchestrated pep rally for queer parenting glossed over the challenges we had dealt with to get from point A (that first time a peer delivers a mean zinger about our family) to point Z (ready to stand up with a microphone in front of an audience of strangers). It was the uplifting program parents and prospective parents wanted, but for the handful of teen queerspawns in the audience, my well-intentioned strategy backfired.

I had let myself reshuffle my priorities, putting the emotional needs of the parents in the audience ahead of those of any queerspawns. Now, this sobbing teen was worried that if she wasn't ready to go up front with the microphone right now, people

would think there was something really wrong with her - and her lesbian mom would be blamed. Or worse, her mom and everyone else would think she was a big homophobe for not waving the proverbial rainbow flag.

I'm so glad that teen came to talk to me privately, because that's what we both needed to have our conversation: privacy away from the politics and the presentation. COLAGE-only space is where we are released from pressure to be a certain way in front of media or parents - ours or anyone else's. I am continually astonished by the parents, researchers and journalists who ask to "sit in" on COLAGE-only conversations so they can gain insight into our lives. When I tell them it is against the policy, they assure me they should be the exception; they will just sit quietly and not disrupt anything. They don't comprehend how their mere presence hinders our freedom to be fully authentic with each other.

Attending one of our local COLAGE meetings was a twenty-something single-by-choice mother-to-be. "My mom's a dyke and I'm a dyke," she said in her introduction. Then she patted her very pregnant stomach saying, "I'm working on the third generation right here."

Where else would it be comfortable for her to joke like that? It was one of the countless moments when I realized how much I cherish COLAGE-only space. I

cherish the chance to cheer up a sobbing teen and laugh with a pregnant second-gen dyke and not feel like I have to look over my shoulder, preoccupied with what other people think of us.

There is something about the queerspawns identity that is uniquely ours. I have yet to figure out how to articulate exactly what it is, but the founding members of COLAGE summed it up with the name of the original steering committee: "Just For Us."

Sometimes queerspawns join in the Pride celebrations. Sometimes queerspawns are involved in their school's GSA. Sometimes they choose to be spokespeople for their families. But between those moments of being labeled "ally" or "advocate" or "activist" I want to re-group with the people who "get" me even when I'm not filling a role. That is what I find in the space we carve out for ourselves. That magical space that is just for us.

*Abigail Garner was spawned from a closeted gay dad and a straight mom in 1972. She is the author of "Families Like Mine: Children of Gay Parents Tell It Like It Is." In 1995 Abigail began facilitating a group for teens with LGBT parents in the Twin Cities area, before having ever heard of COLAGE! In 1999, she met then-executive director Felicia ark Rogers when Felicia visited Minnesota for the annual Rainbow Families conference. They quickly connected and Abigail continued to coordinate queerspawns activism as the COLAGE Twin Cities chapter coordinator until 2001.*

organization and as a child of gay parents. Because of my newfound confidence in my own capabilities, I have participated in interviews with The Advocate, and on the PBS show Religion and Ethics News Weekly. I also took that same enthusiasm and applied it to working with my school's Gay-Straight Alliance.

In the summer of 2004, I returned to Provincetown for another Family Week. This time, however, I participated as staff for the week. Throughout the week, I did such things as take the younger kids on a scavenger hunt and lead discussions among the 13 and older group on topics such as race and our families, gay marriage, and dealing with homophobia and bullying in middle school. My new level of involvement in COLAGE during Family Week was extremely meaningful. It gave me the opportunity to watch kids flourish in an environment where they felt truly safe. I watched as kids were transformed over the week, becoming more outspoken and comfortable. Working with youth, I saw myself reflected in them. They were exactly like I had been, finding a community and being inspired by it.

Ultimately, I am extremely thankful for both my unique family and the community that COLAGE offers me. To be exposed to diversity throughout my life and to have to overcome adversity in the face of hate is something that is extremely valuable. It has enabled me to grow into a strong and independent person with a strong sense of self. My experiences have taught me tolerance and respect for all those who have fought and are still fighting for the principles of justice and equality. If it hadn't been for my unique family, I might not have realized how natural advocacy is for me, advocacy on behalf of justice for all people.



"Baby Hope" Steinman-lacullo hangs out with COLAGE co-founder "Big Hope" Berry-Manley

*Hope Steinman-lacullo is 17 and hails from Staten Island, NY, where she lives with her two dads. As the co-founder and secretary of her high school's Gay Straight Alliance and as a COLAGE youth leader and board member, Hope speaks publicly, educating peers, parents, teachers and health professionals. She is passionately interested in political and social matters.*

## PART II: COLAGE is born

**1990:** During GLPCI's conference in Washington DC, adult children in attendance decide to form a separate organization called Just For Us. They wanted a group that was for them and others like them. Ed Lamano, a gay father who had been coordinating kids' activities and workshops at previous conferences, graciously agreed to hand over the reigns to a newly elected steering committee - Hope Berry, Emily Gmerek, Donna Ippolito, Ali Dubin, Molly Heller, and Megan Waterman. During it's first year of operation, the original JFU mailing list had fewer than 200 people.

Crime Against Nature by Minnie Bruce Pratt is published. The book of poetry revolves around Pratt's relationship to her two sons as a lesbian mother. The collection takes its title from the Alabama statute under which Pratt would have faced criminal prosecution as a lesbian had she fought for legal custody of her children. The book centers on the poet's painful decision to give up her two young sons: "I paid for my freedom with my children."

Queerspawns Meredith Sterling from Concord Academy in MA starts the first Gay-Straight Alliance.

**1991:** GLPCI/JFU's annual conference is held in Houston. Houston's JFU is one of the original COLAGE chapters.

Dan Cherubin independently starts Second Generation, a group for LGBTQ-identified kids with LGBTQ identified parents (see Dateline Dan on p 8).

**1992:** GLPCI/ JFU's annual conference is held in Indianapolis. As of 1992, COLAGE has 6 chapters.

JFU/COLAGE steering committee meets in CT and adopts the organization's first mission statement: To foster the growth of daughters and sons of lesbian and gay parents by providing education, support, and community on local and international levels, to advocate for our rights and those of our families, and to promote acceptance and awareness in society that love makes a family.



*The first JFUs were 2-4 pages long, photocopied & stapled by hand.*



# SPEAK OUT

As COLAGE becomes 15 years old, please tell us-  
What does COLAGE mean to you? Why is COLAGE important to you?

To me, COLAGE doesn't just mean becoming aware of the Gay and Lesbian community, it also means hanging out with my friends and having fun together! COLAGE is important to me because without it I would not have been very aware of what LGBT means or any of the issues that it brings up in politics or every day life.

*Meredith, age 11, Esopus, NY*

To me COLAGE is what helped me realize that I was not the only person in the world with gay parents. It's a fun, friendly organization that introduced me to a whole bunch of new, amazing friends who share a special thing in common with me. For the first time I was encouraged to celebrate my family with kids who were just like me. That is what makes COLAGE so awesome.

*Emily, age 15, Georgetown, MA*

When someone says COLAGE I think about all of the amazing people I've met who judge me for who I am, not who my parents are. COLAGE is important to me because I can just be myself! Sometimes at school I hide my parents from friends because I am afraid that they will hurt my parents' and my feelings, but hiding stuff just hurts more. When I'm e-mailing people at COLAGE I don't need to get hurt at all.

*Maddy, age 12, London, England*

To me COLAGE means friends, family, and being accepted no matter what. It means that you can say what's on your mind and people will respect you even if they don't agree. COLAGE is important to me because I have so many of my closest friends because of it. Also, because of the support and care that I would probably not get anywhere else. I LOVE COLAGE !!!!

*Kyle, age 15, Cedar Park, TX*

I have been going to COLAGE for three years and it has been amazing!! I like it because it is a place to meet kids that have LGBT parents or families like mime. COLAGE, to me, is a place to be open and not have to hide or be ashamed that you have LGBT parents!!

*Marissa, age 11, Poughkeepsie, NY*

To me COLAGE means family and unity. COLAGE is about accepting people for who they are and not judging anyone. COLAGE is like a home away from home and all you feel there is love from everybody. COLAGE is just plain AWESOME!!!

*Isabel, age 18, Monroe, NY*

COLAGE gives me a great way to safely meet other kids my age with LGBT parents. It's a great way to work out any problems there may be at home, and it's an awesome way to make friends. It also gives us

a place to be completely open about our families, and meet kids who maybe have gone through the same thing before, and can offer advice or support.

*Caroline, age 14, Newton, MA*

COLAGE is important to me, because it is a place where I can go where I don't have to worry about whether people will care that I have 2 dads. It is also a place where I can tell stories of how hearing insults like "fag" and "gay" really hurt my feelings without having people tell me "oh my god, Sarah! stop being so dramatic! It was just a word. It's not like they meant it or anything!"

*Sarah, age 13, San Francisco, CA*

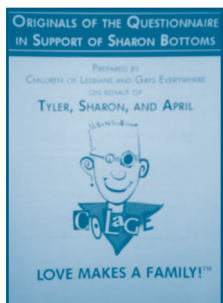
COLAGE is a place where I can express my feelings freely. It's a place where I can talk about stuff, and people will know what I'm talking about. No one will make fun of me having a gay dad

*Cassandra, age 11, Omaha, NE.*



Youth speak out at Family Week

1993: GLPCI/COLAGE's annual conference is held in Orlando



JFU changes its name to COLAGE: Children of Lesbians and Gays Everywhere, although the newsletter remains JFU.

Sharon Bottoms, a lesbian mother, lost custody of her son to her own mother after Sharon came out of the closet. As the custody case winds its way through state and federal courts, more than 30 COLAGErs from the South provide testimony in an historic amicus brief. Ultimately, Sharon loses custody of her son - the courts cite Virginia's anti-sodomy law in their decision.

1994: GLPCI/COLAGE's annual conference is held in New York City, scheduled for the same time as the celebrations of the 25th anniversary of Stonewall. To mark the event, COLAGE produces a play by COLAGEr Suzanne Pullen titled, "Out of My Parents' Closet: Children of Stonewall Speak Out", and a group of COLAGErs addresses hundreds of thousands of people from the Stonewall 25 stage in Central Park.



Stefan Lynch becomes the first executive director of COLAGE. Lynch had been active in LGBT family issues in Toronto, CA for many years before meeting Hope (Berry) Manley during the early stages of JFU/COLAGE's formation. After his father died of AIDS in 1991, Stefan was able to use the money from his inheritance to live and work full-time as a COLAGE volunteer, working as the editor for the JFU newsletter, board member, and author of educational materials such as

"AIDS and Our Families: A Guide for Teenagers with Lesbian and Gay Parents," before assuming directorship of the organization.

Dan Cherubin's Second Generation merges with COLAGE. Asked Dan, "Why duplicate each other's efforts when you can join forces instead?"

1995: GLPCI/COLAGE's annual conference held in Los Angeles.

COLAGE national speaker's bureau is organized.

COLAGE opens an office in San Francisco.

COLAGE adds children of bisexual and transgender parents to its mission statement.

COLAGE Steering Committee adopts the organization's first 5 year strategic plan.

# MAKING CHANGE ONE GENERATION AT A TIME

## Ember Cook

When Ember first came to the 1996 conference, COLAGE was only six years old. In this excerpt from a speech given at Affirmations - a conference for LGBT Mormons - Ember recalls her first meeting with COLAGE. Cook remains involved with COLAGE to this day.

When I was in 5th grade my father walked me to my first day at a new school in Glendale Arizona. The walk to school had been filled with a heavy silence. The night before Dad moved out.

It wasn't until several months after moving out that my father took me for "the talk". I remember we had just passed a bus stop with a homeless man muttering to himself when dad said, "I'm a homosexual." I think the only thing I heard was homosexual and it echoed in my ear. Dad asked if I understood what that meant. I answered yes although that was a lie. The last thing I wanted was Dad explaining to me in gory detail what that word meant.

One summer Dad took us to a LGBT family conference. This was going to be one of those great family vacations that I loved to hate. I did not want to go and talk about my feelings or my issues regarding my gay father. It was something I had never talked to anyone about without feeling worse afterwards then I had before. Dad of course made it sound like the huge party with all these kids and we were gonna have so much fun. All I heard was gay families and I could see all these weird people asking private questions and I instantly felt sick to my stomach.

When my dad, sister, and I entered the hotel we were bombarded by a sea of rainbows. I knew this was gonna be a long weekend. But, unlike the PFLAG meetings I went to or the Gay/Straight Alliance at school, this family week had something completely unique, COLAGE, Children Of Lesbians And Gays Everywhere. I walked into the first workshop and the room was full of kids around my age. Many of them were talking to other kids they knew and some were sitting with the same look of dread on their faces that I had. We went around the room and told our stories. I was blown away. Every single kid in the room had a gay parent! I was finally able to talk about feelings I had never been able to before and with people who really understood.

I came back from that conference with a posse of queerspawn kids that had my back. My world had completely changed. I knew what I was feeling wasn't unique to only me. I had friends that I could call and talk to. I knew that there were even adults who knew what it was like to have a gay parent. I cared less about what people thought because I knew that there were people out there like me, who felt like me. I wasn't alone and I wasn't wrong.

I have learned a lot of pivotal life lessons through my experiences as a child of a gay father. These lessons I continually apply to my present life. I have learned a lot about the power this world has, and how people feel as though they can use it against you. Through my involvement with COLAGE I have been able to deal with the negative and learn how to turn it into a positive. I have been blessed with the power to change the world and the knowledge that I can. As a

recent COLAGE intern I was able to able to work with kids of gays from the perspective of mentor. I

have grown more then ever in this role. It has given me a profound sense of purpose. It is one thing to stand up for yourself but it is entirely different to stand up for an entire community. Being able to see generation after generation create change for everyone who has come before and for everyone who will come after is inspiring. I will never forget the girl I was at 10 yrs old and what it felt like to hear "I'm a homosexual" come from my father's lips. Then I thought that I was the only kid in the world who had a gay dad. To see how much the world has changed and how much I have changed since I was 10 is exciting, but also has set a standard for what we can do in the future. As COLAGers we are continually fighting for a world where we are no different and every single day we get closer to that world. I am immensely proud to be apart of that movement. Thanks, COLAGE! And here's to another world-changing 15 years!!!!!!



*Ember Cook loves working in theatre, babysitting, and going on fun dates. If you have leads in any of these areas, please get in touch. She is 22 years old, lives in San Francisco, and works at the COLAGE office.*

**1996:** GLPCI/COLAGE's annual conference held in Minneapolis.

Bailey Jean Cypher is born to celebrity lesbian couple Melissa Etheridge and Julie Cypher, amidst much speculation as to the identity of the child's father. Two years later, Cypher and Etheridge have another child, Beckett. Says Etheridge, "I do not believe that my children will be wanting in any way because they didn't have a father in the home every single day. What they have in the home is two loving parents. I think that puts them ahead of the game."

U.S. Congress passes, then-President Clinton signs the Defense of Marriage Act (DOMA).

**1997:** GLPCI/COLAGE's annual conference is held in Philadelphia.

Felicia Park-Rogers becomes the first paid director of COLAGE. Originally involved with one of San Francisco's queer youth centers as a bisexual activist, Felicia was recruited by Stefan Lynch after an article mentioned her queer parentage (Felicia is a "bothie" - she has a gay dad and a lesbian mom!) Felicia started out her COLAGE involvement on the Adult COLAGer Action Committee before assuming the directorship in 1997.

10 year old COLAGE board member Sol Kelley-Jones testifies before the Wisconsin State Assembly Committee on Families and Children when Wisconsin considers an anti-same-sex marriage bill. (see p.3)



Sharon Boyd, a male-to-female transsexual loses her kids in a custody case supported by James Dobson's Focus on the Family.

GLPCI and COLAGE decide to replace their annual conference with "Family Week," a week-long conference, vacation, and celebration in Provincetown, MA. Family Week has been held there every August since.

## PART III: COLAGE grows

**1999:** COLAGE becomes an independent organization, operating under its own tax-exempt status.

COLAGE focuses organizing efforts in California where proposition 22 would authorize a state version of the Defense of Marriage Act. Despite the hard work of many volunteers, and the hiring of Ryn Gluckman to coordinate COLAGer activism, the proposition passes.

COLAGE hires its first Field and Chapter Coordinator, Jude Koski

GLPCI renames itself Family Pride Coalition



*COLAGE's first board of directors*

## DATELINE DAN

By Dan Cherubin

### You Don't Look A Day Over Twelve



Happy Birthday, COLAGE! Fifteen years....how time flies. I can't say I was here for all 15 years, but I have been on board for most of them! I was already involved in my own group when COLAGE found me. It was way back in '91 or so when I started Second Generation. I remember it quite vividly. It was around Pride time and I was getting tired of hearing the usual spiel from every other queer person I knew: "You mean you and your mom are both gay? Wow, you must have had it SO EASY!" And I thought, "I don't want to hear that anymore. I cannot possibly be the only one in this country...I better start a group. And alert the media."

After a few years, one of our newsletters made it into the hands of the man who I will always think of as Mr. COLAGE, Stefan Lynch. Out of the blue, he offered to distribute the SG newsletter and sent me a bunch of COLAGE business cards with my name on them. But he didn't stop there. He made sure that every pertinent person had my phone number. From questioning queerspawn to regional and national media types, they all called.

Those early years were full of great people whose support, sharing and activism meant a lot for me. I remember Tara Rose cheering me on during a queer academic conference where some lesbian mother called me her "worst nightmare." I remember Hope

Berry walking me around San Francisco when I was experiencing severe culture shock. Felicia Park-Rogers buying me beers. And there's the image of Stefan, bounding into the library where I worked, clad in his tennis whites, on his way to participate in the Gay Games in 1994. He came out of his way just to say hi.

Out of all my memories of COLAGE, I have one very important one. I made a prediction over ten years ago, which I had hoped would come true. Let me say that when I first found COLAGE, I was in my mid-20s and there were a slew of members under the age of 8. My prediction was that all those little toddlers that I met over a decade ago would become involved and take over as the proper activists they should be, making COLAGE continue to support their changing demographic needs.

As I approach my 40's (ouch!), I'm now as old as many of the parents of COLAGE members. And I'd like to think my prediction has come true.

So, happy birthday again, old pal. Don't forget about us "charter members!"

*Dan Cherubin lives in New York City. He still has some of those COLAGE business cards.*

*Editor's note: Dan's wishes for the slew of toddlers he knew ten years ago have come true! Today one third of COLAGE's board members are under age 18, and many more COLAGE youth are active as chapter coordinators, media spokespersons, Family Week staff, and JFU contributors. COLAGE has more than fulfilled Dan's prediction, remaining true to our commitment to being and staying youth-led and constituent-based.*

## MEMORY LANE by Ali Nickel-Dubin

It still astounds me how far COLAGE has come since we "the kids" took it over in 1990. Back then I was 19 years old, had founded and been running JFU-LA since 1984 when my Dad came out, and was just beginning to come out of the closet myself. Hope (Berry) Manley and I excitedly became the co-directors along with four other amazing team players! I vividly recall our impromptu AIDS forum that first weekend.

I remember the long hours sitting at my typewriter and word processor for a couple of years editing the JFU newsletter. Back then the kids DREW the artwork, and we BEGGED for submissions. We had a zero budget. Now it has photographs, is several pages long and is printed professionally!! It blows my mind when a PAID staff member of COLAGE emails or phones me from their OFFICE. Even though I live in Los Angeles I am still in regular contact with my good friend Hope Manley and her beautiful family. Last week I was in a Diversity meeting at my daughter's school and looking through a book the school had out. Inside was a gorgeous photo of the Heller family. It brought me to tears. I miss my dear friend and fellow COLAGE "founder" Molly. Some day I hope we can swing a trip to Provincetown to join COLAGE for Family Week. I get pangs of jealousy every August wishing we could be a part of it. I am so proud to have been a part of what has become an amazing organization that benefits so many!

*Ali Nickel-Dubin lives in the Los Angeles area with Kim, her partner of 12 years and their daughters Jordan (7) and Kelly (3 1/2). She does a variety of freelance work such as professional portrait photography, tie-dye infants and kids clothes, and teaching sign language at Jordan's school.*

**2000:** During the Millenium March for LGBT Rights, COLAGE co-sponsors the Family Garden with the Family Pride Coalition (formerly GLPCI.) 8,650 people attend what is the largest known gathering of L G B T children, youth and families in the U.S.



*ED Park Rogers hangs out with lesbian mom Melissa Etheridge at the Millenium March*

COLAGE staff, volunteers, and members team up with filmmaker Meema Spadola to produce the groundbreaking PBS documentary "Our House."

First anthology by/about adult COLAGErs is published: *Out of the Ordinary: Essays on Growing Up With Gay, Lesbian, and Transgender Parents*, by Noelle Howey and Ellen Samuels.

**2001:** After working for months with producers, editors at 20/20 tell COLAGE they will be cutting a Barbara Walters interview of the Black son of a white lesbian mom because, "it's too complicated."

**2002:** Rosie O'Donnel comes out on national television when she speaks against laws in Florida that prevent LGBT people from adopting children. Herself an adoptive lesbian mother, O'Donnel hoped to educate viewers on this subject.

COLAGE board adopts a new strategic plan, including an anti-racist platform to inform its mission and organizational development.

*Dress Codes: Of Three Girlhoods - My Mother's, My Father's and Mine*, is published by COLAGEr Noelle Howey. The book explores the author's experiences and relationship growing up with a transgender father.

**2003:** Beth Teper becomes the 3rd Executive Director of COLAGE. A native of San Francisco, Beth has worked on a variety of progressive issues promoting economic, racial, and environmental justice. After becoming involved with COLAGE in 1994, Beth spent several years as a board member and then joined as staff before assuming the directorship of the organization.

COLAGE initiates the Youth Leadership and Action Program (YLAP) under the direction of Program Director Meredith Fenton. In YLAP, high school students worked to create the "Respect All Families" poster series, the "That's So Gay" photo-text art show, and most recently "Focus on MY Family: A Queerspawn Anthology." Each tool is accompanied by curricula for activists and educators.

The Unites States Supreme Court rules that laws prohibiting sodomy between consenting adults are unconstitutional, in violation of individuals' right to privacy. This removes any legal justification for discriminating against LGBT parents in custody cases.

**2004:** Abigail Garner's book *Families Like Mine: Children of Gay Parents Tell It Like It Is* is published by Harper Collins. Garner, a longtime speaker, writer, and activist on behalf of LGBT families had been previously featured in NewsWeek, The Advocate, and NPR. (See column on p. 5)



The COLAGE office is inundated with calls of joy as marriage madness sweeps the nation.

In San Francisco, COLAGE staff travel to city hall to congratulate and support families seeking legal recognition. In Massachussets, the state supreme court affirmed their ruling in favor of marriage equality, making MA the only state where gay and lesbian couples can be legally married.

**2005:** COLAGE celebrates its 15th anniversary!



# FUNPAGE



## TRIVIA QUIZ

SEE HOW MUCH YOU KNOW ABOUT COLAGE'S FIRST 15 YEARS!



**1** What historic San Francisco building is the home of COLAGE's national office?

- A. San Francisco LGBT Center
- B. The Women's Building
- C. Fort Mason
- D. Queer Cultural Center

**2** In what year did COLAGE become an independent non-profit organization?

**3** For the past several years COLAGE provided has youth programming at two Family Week events- where are they held?

**4** Who is the scholarship that COLAGE and Family Pride Coalition offer named after?

**5** Which of the following are current COLAGE chapters?

- A. COLAGE Central Illinois
- B. COLAGE New Hampshire Seacoast
- C. COLAGE New Orleans
- D. COLAGE Tampa Bay
- E. All of the Above

**6** Who was the first full-time director of COLAGE?

**7** In 2000, PBS aired the first documentary about youth with LGBT parents which was directed by an adult COLAGER. What is the name of the film and who is the director?

**8** Which former director of COLAGE is the COLAGE Summer Internship Program named after?

**9** Where and when was the first meeting of the COLAGE Steering Committee independent of the annual lesbian and gay family conferences? (NOTE: it was at this committee meeting that COLAGE first adopted a mission statement)

**10** What was the original name of COLAGE?

Answers: 1. B 2. 1999 3. Saugatuck, MI and Provincetown, MA 4. Lee Dublin 5. E. 6. Stefan Lynch 7. Our House 8. Felicia Park-Rogers 9. 1992 in Connecticut 10. Just For Us

## Anniversary Cake!

One of the best parts about celebrating special occasions is that they are perfect excuses to make a cake! To celebrate the upcoming 15th anniversary of COLAGE, try this cake recipe out at home. Ask for help from a parent, guardian or adult friend. Take photos of your creation and send them to COLAGE!

### RECIPE

#### INGREDIENTS:

2 2/3 cups sifted cake flour  
3 teaspoons baking powder  
1 teaspoon salt  
5 egg whites  
1 3/4 cups sugar  
2/3 cup butter / margarine  
2 cups milk / soy milk  
1 teaspoon vanilla  
or grated lemon rind

#### SUPPLIES:

2 pans  
2 bowls  
egg beater  
spoon  
spatula  
measuring cups  
measuring spoons  
a sifter  
your favorite icing  
candles

**1.** Preheat oven to 375 degrees F (190 degrees C). Line the bottom of two 9 inch round pans, two 9 inch square pans, or one 10 x 16 inch pan.

**2.** Combine sifted flour, baking powder, and salt; sift together three times.

**3.** Beat egg whites until foamy. Add 1/2 cup of the sugar gradually, and continue beating only until meringue will hold up in soft peaks.

**4.** Cream shortening. Add remaining 1-1/4 cups sugar gradually, and cream together until light and fluffy. Add flour alternately with milk, a small amount at a time; beat after each addition until smooth. Stir in flavoring. Add meringue, and beat thoroughly into batter. Spoon the batter into the prepared pan or pans.

**5.** Bake cake in 9 inch round pans or 10 x 16 inch pan for about 30 minutes. The baking time for the square pans is 25 minutes. Cool. Spread your favorite flavor of icing between layers, and over top and sides of cake.

**6.** Decorate the cake with colored icing to spell out a Happy Anniversary COLAGE message. Or get creative- using gummy candies, small cookies, plastic figures and more.



# 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 September 1 through November 16, 2004**

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Heller, Ehrman, White, and McAuliffe  
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*Every effort has been made to ensure the accuracy of this list. Please contact Beth at 415-861-5437 Ext. 101 or [director@colage.org](mailto:director@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/join](http://www.colage.org/join).*

## 15th Anniversary Wish List

It's COLAGE's anniversary, and we sure would LOVE to get some anniversary presents. COLAGE really needs the following items to do better programming and outreach. We need 15 people - one for each year of our existence - to help us purchase these items for our office. Use the enclosed remittance envelope to send us the indicated amount, and what you'd like us to spend it on! Or if you already own an item from this list and it is in good condition, call us about making an in-kind donation.

**If 3 people send us \$1000 we can get the following:**

digital camera  
laptop computer  
color laser printer

**If 5 people send us \$500 we can get the following:**

video camera  
Adobe Pagemaker  
Photoshop  
Windows upgrade  
VCR and DVD players

**If 7 people send us \$100 we can get the following:**

35 mm camera  
TV  
CD burner  
Scanner  
Large suitcase  
Photo storage boxes  
Increased memory for our computers

## HELP COLAGE RAISE \$15,000!

### We need you!

In honor of our 15th Anniversary, COLAGE is launching a grass-roots fundraising campaign. We need 100 dedicated people to ask 10 friends/neighbors/co-workers/family members to support the important work that COLAGE does by giving a birthday gift of \$15.

We'll make it easy for you. COLAGE will supply sample letters, sample phone scripts and tons of information to why an individual would want to support our organization.

For more information or to become a COLAGE campaigner, contact COLAGE board member Troy O'Leary at [toleary@ymcasf.org](mailto:toleary@ymcasf.org), or get in touch with the office by Jan. 14th, 2005!

# COLAGE NOTES

## WELCOME TO OUR NEW BOARD MEMBERS

**Troy O'Leary** first got involved with COLAGE while facilitating a GSA at George Washington High School. They decided to participate in the COLAGE Bay Area's annual bowl-a-thon. The rest is history. Currently he is the Youth Development Specialist for the YMCA of San Francisco. He is a single gay father of a beautiful little girl named Keana and is co-parenting with two lesbian mothers. Before his busy role as new father, you might have found him volunteering his time to lead backpacking, surfing, river rafting or skiing/snowboarding trips for middle school and high school aged youth.

**Nathaniel Obler** is a 16 year old student who lives just outside of Boston, MA. The son of two lesbian moms, Nathaniel has been attending and loving Family Week in Provincetown for five years now. Nathaniel edits his school paper, is active on his school's speech and debate team, and is a co-head of GASP (Gay And Straight People.) He is passionate about all three areas: journalism, politics, and of course, advocacy and activism for the best community ever.

**Janet Stock** is the daughter of a lesbian mom and a straight dad. Janet has attended COLAGE Family Weeks in P-Town and Saugatuck and has been on Saugatuck's teen panel for three years. A high school student from Ann Arbor, MI, Janet's interests are law and politics, theater, history and english. Speaking her mind is her favorite thing to do. Janet is excited to work with COLAGE and hopes to reach isolated COLAGERS so that they know they're not alone.

**Jessie Voors** is the daughter of two lesbian moms and two gay dads. She is a Sophomore at Canterbury High School in Fort Wayne, IN, where she is involved in speech, Amnesty International, Knowledge Master, and theater. She is extremely excited to start working even more with COLAGE now that she is on the board of directors. She has attended Family Week in Saugatuck for the past 4 years, and she has also

helped to put together a list of books for youth about being a COLAGER or being a GLBT youth. Jessie would like to ultimately work with an organization like COLAGE.

**Janine Williams**, of Woodstock, NY, is a choreographer, diversity trainer, part time student, and lesbian mother. As a dance instructor she has worked with diverse youth to create high quality productions that provide positive outlets for protest and transformation. Janine and her partner Patricia are the proud parents of Makai Mercy Medina Williams, who is almost two years old. Janine became acquainted with COLAGE at Family Week in P-Town, and attended as many activities as her nursing daughter could stand.

COLAGE is lucky to welcome Troy, Nathaniel, Janet, Jessie, and Janine to our board.

## STAFF NEWS

We are pleased to announce that Meredith Fenton has been promoted to the position of Program Director. She has been a fabulous asset to COLAGE for the past 2+ years as the Program Coordinator and we look forward to her continued outstanding service with the organization.

## COLAGE IS HIRING

COLAGE is currently soliciting applications for a new full-time position - Membership Coordinator. This is a newly created position responsible for developing and managing a comprehensive membership fundraising program that will grow, support, and mobilize COLAGE's membership and donor base for COLAGE's long-term success and sustainability. This is a position for an energetic, motivated and highly-organized candidate and is an outstanding opportunity to help grow a leading youth, LGBT, family organization working for social justice. **Applications are due by January 7th, 2005.** For the full job description, qualifications and more information visit <http://www.colage.org/jobs.html>



The COLAGE board met this October in Chicago. They are pictured above, along with one of 2004's Lee Dubin Memorial Scholarship Awardees. In the back row from left to right: Gary Knoblock, Orson Morrison, Rohan Barrett (Lee Dubin Scholar), Troy O'Leary, Nathaniel Obler, Kate Kovalanka, Oren Slozberg; in the front row from left to right: Janet Stock, Jessie Voors, Beth Teper (Executive Director), Christine Bachman, Hope Steinman-Iacullo. Not pictured: Ryan LaLonde, Danielle Silber, Laurie Cicotello, Ryn Gluckman, and Janine Williams.

## CHAPTER UPDATE

Even before COLAGE was founded in 1990, people with LGBT parents have understood the importance of creating opportunities for us to meet each other, build community and enjoy activities on local levels. Groups for youth with LGBT parents sprouted up in cities big and small throughout the 70s, 80s, and 90s. Some of the earliest groups were located in San Francisco, Los Angeles, Houston, and Boston.

For the first nine years of its history, one of the standard COLAGE steering committee positions was a chapter coordinator. This person was responsible for recruiting folks to start chapters and then helping those groups get the resources they needed to thrive. The chapter coordinator also ran the pen-pal program.

In 1999, COLAGE hired Jude Koski as the Field and Chapter Coordinator. That was the first time COLAGE was able to dedicate paid staff resources to networking with folks across the country, helping to start, grow and sustain COLAGE groups.

Requests for information to help families, adult COLAGERS and others start groups in their communities continue to pour into COLAGE. As of now we have over 50 chapter contacts in 31 states as well as Canada and Europe. Chapters range from large networks of youth and adults working together to provide groups and

activities to smaller groups that provide monthly or quarterly COLAGE events. In Madison, WI, COLAGE, led by youth and parents, works closely with queer youth on a project called Proud Theater. In New Orleans a network of LGBT families coordinated by parents with young children enjoy monthly activities. In New Hampshire, a regional COLAGE group led by a mom and daughter team offers regular events including an annual Halloween party and recent exhibition of That's So Gay: Portraits of Youth with LGBT Parents. Additionally, new chapters continue to be born - some of our newest members are COLAGE Tampa Bay, COLAGE Connecticut, and COLAGE Winnipeg.

If you are not currently part of a COLAGE chapter and would like information about joining or starting a group in your community, check out COLAGE's chapter guide online ([www.colage.org/start\\_a\\_chapter.html](http://www.colage.org/start_a_chapter.html)) or contact us for a hard copy. If you are currently part of a COLAGE chapter, help celebrate COLAGE's 15th anniversary by joining the COLAGE 15 campaign (see p. 10) or hosting a house party!

As part of our anniversary celebration we salute all the children, youth and adult volunteers whose dedication, enthusiasm and generosity make it possible for COLAGE groups to exist and thrive!



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Chapters are autonomous local groups that affiliate with COLAGE and are self-run. We strive to keep updated on local contact information. If you have difficulty reaching the contact listed please let us know. Thank you.

Want to start a chapter in your community? Have questions? Please contact COLAGE at 415-861-KIDS or email [colage@colage.org](mailto:colage@colage.org).