



THE NEWSLETTER

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WELCOME, HRC



Please join us for our general meeting on **Monday, September 22** at 7:00 pm at Jewish Family Service (JFS), 8804 Balboa Avenue, San Diego. Our guest speaker is Josh Tucker from the Human Rights Campaign (HRC). HRC is the largest civil rights organization working to achieve equality for lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender Americans. The Campaign represents a force of more than 1.5 million members and

supporters nationwide—all committed to making HRC's vision a reality. HRC was founded in 1980; they help to mobilize grassroots actions in diverse communities, invests strategically to elect fair-minded individuals to office, and educates the public about LGBT issues. The symbol for marriage equality was created by HRC.

Please join us for our support groups, then our cookie social, followed by Josh's presentation.



YOU CAN STILL REGISTER FOR THE AIDS WALK

Lace up those tennies and walk with PFLAG on **Saturday, September 27** for the 25th Annual AIDS Walk San Diego. This event is San Diego's largest one-day HIV/AIDS fundraiser and the biggest non-governmental financial provider for HIV/AIDS in San Diego County. Dozens of agencies, serving thousands of clients, rely on funds raised at the annual Walk to help provide essential prevention and care programs to thousands of men, women, and children living with HIV/AIDS.

The 5K Walk starts at 8:15 am and begins at Normal Street and University Avenue (new starting location this year). The registration fee is \$35 (\$25 for 17 & under and 60+). While we do

have 10 walkers so far (hooray), we are not anywhere near our financial goal of \$1000. Even if you can't walk, we hope you are able to donate.

To register, go to www.AIDSwalksd.org and select Register at the top of the page, then Join an Existing Team. Either enter PFLAG San Diego or Search for a Team and find PFLAG San Diego. Click on the Join button and follow the instructions.

As you can see from last year's photo, there were only four walkers. We would love to go back to the big numbers we had in previous years. For questions, please contact Sherry Cohen-Richards, scohenrichards@pflag.com or call 858-349-6269.



North County LGBTQ Resource Center presents Pride by the Beach on **Saturday, October 11** from **11:00 am-6:00 pm**. The name has changed since last year; the event is now taking place on the streets of downtown Oceanside. The event is free and offers a full day of fun: big time entertainment, music, dancing, an Art

Alley, educational presentations, kids' garden, food, as well as other vendors! The entertainment includes headliner, Mike Munich, Candye Kane, Miranda Wrights and drag performers Lucky Madison, Rudy RamRod and Razzle Dazzle Richards.

The location is downtown Oceanside and BY the beach on Pier View Street and City Hall. Parking is located in the parking garage on the corner of Ditmar

LADY VALOR

Many of our members were fortunate to watch the documentary *Lady Valor: The Kristin Beck Story* which aired on September 4 on CNN. It is Former U.S. Navy SEAL Christopher Beck's personal journey to become Kristin Beck. She was in the Navy for 20 years and was deployed 13 times. She retired in 2011 and then she felt safe to transition from male to female.

Ms Beck wrote a book about her experience, *Warrior Princess: A U.S. Navy SEAL's Journey to Coming out Transgender*.



Most likely, CNN will rebroadcast this important documentary.

MMC VANDALIZED

Vandal(s) spray painted anti-gay words and an anti-gay slogan at the Metropolitan Community Church in San Diego. In addition, they damaged two church banners. It seemed it was purposely done on a Saturday night so that church-goers would see it when they attended church services on Sunday. However, the police were there early enough to take photos so that the graffiti could be painted over. City Council President Todd Gloria, who was told of the vandalism, spoke briefly to the congregation to tell them not to take it personally. Easier said than done!

and Civic Center.

Funds raised go toward North County LGBTQ Resource Center's Annual GSA (Gay-Straight Alliance) Awards. These awards go directly to North County Gay-Straight Alliance clubs in the middle schools and high schools. The Center feels this is a great way to give back to the community.

For more info, visit: northcountypride.com.

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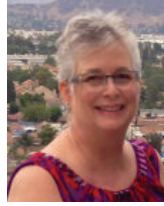
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MADAM SECRETARY



We are pleased that Linda joined the Board in May, 2014 as Recording Secretary.

“Hi! It's my turn to introduce myself. I'm **Linda Espinoza**, Secretary. I've been a member of PFLAG since my daughter, Kristi, came out in January, 2002. We had been watching a Lifetime movie, "The Truth About Jane" on a rather cold Sunday afternoon when I turned to her and asked if she had anything she wanted to talk about. Needless to say she was kind of startled but, thankfully, that moment opened the door for her to come out. This was a rather big deal for her as her dad was still on active duty with the USMC, deployed in Iraq, we lived in base housing on Camp Pendleton, and she attended Fallbrook High School. None of these were LGBTQ friendly.

Although I kind of knew, I was still surprised. You see, my cousin whose father was a retired Army officer, came out and was thrown out of his home. His parents disowned him so he left and hasn't been heard from in over 30 years now. This shaped my reaction to Kristi's coming out because I wasn't about to lose my daughter! The movie mentioned PFLAG as a great resource so we, Kristi and I, called and went to a meeting which happened to be the very next day! At the meeting we were given the name and meeting for the youth group in Oceanside. She was able to attend the group weekly and made some good friends. I was able to meet other parents through PFLAG and was able to process this new path on our family life. Kristi and I went to the San Diego LGBT Pride Parade and Festival that year. I don't know who learned more, my daughter or me! She marched with the youth group and I can honestly say that I was so very proud of her! When she graduated high school and her dad retired from the USMC, we moved to downtown San Diego so that Kristi could be closer to the Hillcrest Youth Center. She was so happy to be able to be involved with the youth center. Kristi has grown into a wonderful young lady whom we are super proud of!

I have always been supportive of LBGTQ rights but, I'm sorry to say, that until it became personal, I wasn't as strongly supportive as I now am. Kristi volunteered at the Storefront and taught us about the huge problem of homeless LGBTQ youth. I have volunteered yearly for the Point In Time Count that is mandated by the government to count the homeless one day every in January throughout the country which includes LGBTQ youth. I have volunteered yearly for the San Diego LGBT Pride Festival, at the LGBT Center, and now with PFLAG. I look forward to giving back to PFLAG because they were there for my daughter and me!"

National PFLAG, Washington, DC
(202) 647-8180, www.pflag.org

NEXT ON THE HIT PARADE



The recipient of the **San Diego Chapter of Raytheon GLBTA LGBT STEM Scholarship** is **Estevan Fernandez**. Estevan graduated

from Southwest High School and will be attending the University of California, San Diego shortly. The criteria for this scholarship is that the student have an interest in the STEM (science, technology, engineering, or math) field. Eventually, Estevan would like to obtain his Ph.D. in Structural Engineering. Estevan was not able to attend the ceremony due to a last minute emergency. His counselor, Stephanie Cruz, accepted the award on his behalf from Raytheon San Diego GLBTA President, Lily Glueck.



While in high school, Estevan would prepare himself for college by participating in the Upward Bound program at SDSU. He was able to gain experience by working and studying in rigorous college courses there. This demonstrated his passion for education. Estevan is a true leader. He was involved in ASB, was president of both the Gay-Straight Alliance and California Federation Club, was a Safe School Ambassador, and an active member of M.E.Ch.A., a Chicano organization focused on education, activism, and community, among other ideals. This is the short list!!

“As years went by and I reached high school, the fear that people would feel disgusted by my sexual orientation grew in my mind. Being raised in a Mexican household where the role of men is to be dominant, added to the strong Catholic belief that homosexuality is a sin punishable with going to hell, were the thoughts that bothered me the most. My fears made me become silent, anxious, and depressed. However, although it took me time to realize that the one

thing I had to fear was fear itself, my experience ‘coming out’ as a gay individual made me a better, more educated young man with higher morals and values, and with greater enthusiasm for life itself.

Since I was too scared to come out to my family, I learned to keep myself hidden with the excuse that I was always too busy in school to have a girlfriend. I idealized education as a haven for my insecurities, and began focusing in school to keep myself busy and to keep my family content. However, as my grades rose, the suspicions of my family followed. As a result, I found myself forced to join my first sport – not for my own enjoyment, but for my family to see me as a ‘man’.

After being ‘in the closet’ for such a long time, exhaustion began to take over me. Every day my dad would pick me up from school and we would drive home in silence. At home, all my mom would do was watch Mexican soap operas, and although I knew she never did it with the purpose of hurting me, hearing her criticize the gay and effeminate male characters with such disgust made me tear up frequently. Although by that time I had already come out to my closest friends, I could not stand the thought of telling my parents about my sexuality. I became so pessimistic about life; it was as if I was a poison destroying my own family. However, coming out to my parents was not as bad as I expected. When I told my mom she cried, but said nothing; when I told my dad he simply said he loved me.

By senior year, I noticed that I could influence the perspective of those with ignorant views of homosexuality. Since I hid any effeminate mannerisms for so long, I grew without the stereotypical characteristics of a gay guy. In sports, I would perform as well as my teammates, and in school I would excel in all of my classes. As I gained respect from those surrounding me, I decided that the best way for me

to make a meaningful change, was through the Gay-Straight Alliance club in my school. I was chosen to be the president of the club, and so far my efforts have all been worth it.

Although being gay felt like a curse at first, I have to say that now I consider it a blessing. I remember crying myself to sleep and feeling that my life was not worth the struggle, that it would be better to take it away because I was convinced that my pain would never end. However, even though I suffered a lot, if I could change my past to avoid all those conflicts, I would not choose to do it... Being gay might have caused me a lot of troubles, but it is due to all those troubles that I am who I am today. I learned that I did not have to live under the shadow of a stereotype, and I understood Nelson Mandela’s words – that it is better for my choices to reflect my hopes, rather than my fears.

Serving as the president for GSA is the biggest commitment that I have as a student. Looking back at my early years of high school and remembering the roller coaster of emotions that I felt back then, encourages me to help other LGBT students become more involved and aware of the support that is around them. It might not be realistic for a single person to stop all the bullying, bigotry, and homophobic ideas of students all around the world, but I am willing to do as much as possible to make a change in it, even if it means doing it at the local level.

Although my future as an advocate for the LGBT community is not yet clear, I do not plan on ending my involvement any time soon. Once I enroll in a university, I want to join the local GSA club and become familiar with its activities. I want to contribute to the LGBT movement at an institution of higher learning. I wish to gain experience in external outreach programs, and hopefully direct projects or events as an officer as I do now.”

UPCOMING MEETINGS

October 6, 13, 20

Mi Familia Support Grp
Patti: 619-227-6092

October 13:

East County Support Grp
Bob: 619-334-8214

October 6:

North County Coastal
Support Group
Larry: 760-224-2178

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THANKS!

General Fund Donation
Dianna Amsel

Providing Refreshments for our Meeting

A big thank you to all the members who brought food for our August pot luck meeting. There was more than enough to eat and a great variety of food.

Luan D. Andrews, M.A.

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