Accomplishments and Plans Cited at Annual Meeting

Attendance at the annual meeting was sparse (only eight members were present on that cold first day of February), but it proved to be an evening well spent.

First, two new Board members — Brett James and Lisa Telk — were officially elected, and the Annual Report was distributed (it is posted on our website).

Then President Blanca Leos presented a summary of the year’s accomplishments and a preview of upcoming projects and events.

In 2017 the chapter:
- Added the new Online and Jeffco support groups
- Updated the website to make it more user-friendly and modern
- Staged an Orlando United memorial, which over 200 people attended, on the first anniversary of the Pulse Nightclub massacre
- Put on the Scholarship Fundraiser that raised $40,000 and was attended by 120 people
- Gave out $20,000 in scholarships to six students
- Updated the scholarship application process, putting it now all online
- Cleaned and organized the office and in the process sent many PFLAG historical documents to the Denver Public Library archives
- Attended the biannual PFLAG National Convention, held in Portland, OR
- Plans for 2018 include:
  - Reorganize and improve the volunteer program, to be headed by Lisa Telk
  - Update our logo, get new signs for Pride and new info cards
  - List events on our website and on social media for the full year
  - Continue growing the Scholarship Program, by inviting donors, creating sponsorship levels, and sending a special letter to our membership for contributions
  - Offer support groups in two new ways: coffee dates, and virtual outreach through google chat with a calendar on our website
  - Add a questions link on our website that links directly to our email
  - Add additional infinity groups: API, starting with a program on April 28
  - Arrange speaking events with past members or leaders of PFLAG to give history in October
  - List new google emails for all Board members, now listed on the website
  - Add two additional Board members.

Editor’s Note: What a job well done!

Scholarship Program Gears Up for May Awards

By Brett James, Scholarship Committee Chairman

High school and college students are feverishly finishing their scholarship applications as the February 28th deadline approaches. We have some very impressive applicants already this year.

This year the special Scholarship Awards ceremony will be held on Thursday, May 17, from 7:00 to 9:00 p.m. at the Artwork Network Gallery, 878 Santa Fe Drive, Denver. It is fitting that May 17 happens to be the birthday of Elinor Lewallen!

Please consider making a generous donation to the scholarship fund to help our future LGBTQ and straight ally leaders attend college.

The donation link is https://www.pflagdenver.org/scholarship.

Alternatively, you can write a check to PFLAG Scholarship Fund and send to P.O. Box 18901, Denver 80218.

Human Rights Watch Report: All We Want Is Equality

On February 19 the Human Rights Watch released a 41-page report, All We Want Is Equality: Religious Exemptions and Discrimination against LGBT People in the United States.

The report notes that in recent years and most likely since 2015 (when the US Supreme Court ruled in favor of marriage equality), numerous states have considered and at least eight states have enacted new laws that permit people to infringe on the rights of LGBT individuals and their families to the extent they believe that discriminating against them is necessary to uphold their own religious or moral beliefs. In 2018, lawmakers in at least six other states will consider similar legislation.

“Describing these laws as ‘exemptions’ is misleading,” said Ryan Thoreson, a researcher in the LGBT rights program at Human Rights Watch. “Given the dearth of laws that protect LGBT people from discrimination in the first place, legislators are getting it exactly backwards and creating exceptions before they’ve ever established the rule.”

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We are saddened to report the passing of PFLAGer Katherine Palmer in January of this year. She had been very active in the Gender Identity Center as well as PFLAG Denver prior to moving to Albuquerque, where she continued her activism on behalf of LGBTQs.

Join the Denver Gay Men’s Chorus on March 16 or 17 as they return to the Ellie Caulkins Opera House of the Denver Performing Arts Complex this March for BRITISH INVASION! Performances are on March 16 at 7:30 p.m. and on March 17 at 2:00 p.m. and 7:30 p.m. Tickets at www.DGMC.org.

The February performances of Bayard Rustin: The Man Behind the Dream, a new work composed by Steve Milloy, sung by Harmony: A Colorado Chorale, narrated by Mark Boykins and Hazel Miller, and directed by Bill Loper, were superb. This was the Rocky Mountain regional premiere of this work honoring the life and work of gay civil rights activist Bayard Rustin.

HRW Report  (Continued from p. 1)  
While these laws are framed as protecting religious liberty, they are first and foremost a response to the advancement of LGBT equality — particularly the right to marry for same-sex couples. In several instances, lawmakers rejected amendments that would have ensured the laws could not be used to discriminate against LGBT people.

The freedom of religion is a significant rights issue, and proponents of these laws argue that they properly balance religious freedom with the rights of LGBT individuals. In fact, with few exceptions, the laws as drafted create blanket exemptions for religious believers to discriminate and do not even represent a serious attempt to strike a fair balance.


KEEPING UP WITH CHAPTER  
Support – Education – Advocacy  
SPEAKERS’ BUREAU — Mia Furtado gave two presentations on “White Privilege,” the first on Feb. 3 at Park Hill Church and the second at the United Methodist on Feb. 11.

HELPLINE — The office/Helpline received 17 calls this past month.

SUPPORT GROUPS — A total of 12 people attended the various support groups. Facilitators were Jules and Crow Carag, Debbie Gabriel, Blanca Leos, and Lisa Telk. There were 6 new participants among the 9 attendees at the Trans Community Circle on February 14.