Annual Holiday Party Will Be Dec. 1 – Please Come!

The annual Holiday Party will take place on Thursday, December 1, starting at 6:30 p.m., in the community room of the CHUN mansion. The chapter will provide the turkey, drinks, and table settings. Members are encouraged to bring side dishes.

There will not be a regular support group this month.

We are inviting the same group that sang last year to sing again this year. These were students from Denver School of the Arts who absolutely delighted the audience with their a cappella singing.

For the quarterly meeting on January 5, 2017, Daniel Ramos, Executive Director of One Colorado, has agreed to be our speaker.

Colorado Gives Day Will Be Dec. 6 – Please Give!

Your contribution to our chapter will help us continue to promote the health and well-being of gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender persons, their families and friends through our mission of support, education and advocacy.

Last year’s contributions helped us create a more diverse chapter by adding support groups for the transgender and Latino/a communities, and the ability to increase the scholarship awards to $10,000. We were able to participate in ten speaking events and answered 230 calls that came into the office.

Our advocacy ranged from testifying in the banning of conversion therapy to providing a safe place to mourn the losses of victims of the Pulse night club at our vigil.

By careful and astute management of your donations, we reduced our administrative costs by nearly $5,000 this past year, and increased our advertising/outreach budget by $2,600.

With your support we hope to continue the work we do in our chapter and to create equality for all.

South Africa Comes to Denver for World AIDS Day

World AIDS Day has been observed on the first day of December every year since 1988. It is dedicated to raising awareness of the AIDS pandemic, and mourning those who have died of the disease.

Sister Sheila (a longtime friend and supporter of PFLAG Denver) and Tozi Precious Mokoba, from the Kopanang community in South Africa, will be in Denver November 29 through December 4 in observance of World AIDS Day 2016. They are bringing with them “Universe Canticle,” an internationally acclaimed artwork which was commissioned for World AIDS Day in San Francisco in 2002 and created by 17 women from the Kopanang community in South Africa. The artwork has been on display in the art gallery at St. Andrew United Methodist Church, 9203 S. University Blvd., in Highlands Ranch since Nov. 16 and will remain on display through Dec. 11. Its 31 beautiful embroidered and beaded tapestry panels tell “The Sacred Story of the Universe” and have been seen in numerous cities in North America, Australia and Africa.

Founded by Sister Sheila Flynn in April 2001, the Kopanang Community Trust is a women’s development and empowerment project that enables women to make life-giving choices in a community of faith, build diverse skills, and feed their children. Living in great poverty in a resource-depleted mining area, all the families at the project are impacted by HIV/AIDS and have lost significant members. Currently, almost 70 women are involved. Together with a sister project, they support over 500 dependents, mostly children orphaned by AIDS.

Sister Sheila and Ms. Mokoba will be speaking on both the Auraria and University of Colorado Boulder campuses and at the First Unitarian Society of Denver, the Althea Center for Engaged Spirituality, and St. Andrew United Methodist Church. For specific details about these various presentations, contact Tim Wilson: 303-321-0694 or tkwdco@icloud.com.
We are delighted to announce that Deborah Henson has agreed to serve on the PFLAG Denver Board of Directors!

Deb is a Licensed Clinical Social Worker in private practice offering psychotherapy and supportive counseling to adults and young adults. She obtained her MSW from Tulane University School of Social Work in New Orleans.

Not only has she been a psychotherapist for over 30 years, Deb is also an attorney who specializes in defending mental health practitioners in licensing board grievances in Colorado. She still maintains a law practice in Louisiana where she defends clinicians, writes appellate briefs for litigators, and also handles adoptions of all types. She obtained her JD from Loyola University School of Law, New Orleans, and then her LL.M. from the University of California, Berkeley.

Deb lived for most of her adult life in the New Orleans area. Many of her clients were in the LGBTQ population, and she has been a PFLAG supporter for many years. She moved to Denver in the summer of 2015, where her therapeutic focus is on helping families and significant others of LGBTQ individuals through the emotional process of understanding and supporting their loved one. Deb currently supervises an intern at Gender Identity Colorado (GIC).

Deb is a lesbian mom of two fabulous kids, now adults – ages 19 and 23. Their co-mom also lives here in Denver. Deb lives in Lakewood and has her office in Green Mountain.

Deb is currently serving in an interim capacity and will stand for election to a full term at the annual meeting in February.

Remembering Marlene Wiske

We are greatly saddened to report the sudden death of one of our most devoted PFLAGers, Marlene Wiske, on October 31, at the age of 80. Marlene had fallen on the stairs of her home, struck her head and sustained a brain hemorrhage. She died without regaining consciousness three days later, with her family at her side.

Marlene was born and schooled in Aurora and earned undergraduate and graduate degrees in business administration from the University of Denver. She taught high school in Denver for several years, and after raising her family she worked in the purchasing departments of two medical manufacturing companies. She was married to Raymond Wiske for 45 years and they had three sons, Greg, David, and Dan.

She and Ray joined PFLAG Denver after learning that Greg was gay and came regularly to meetings until Ray’s health deteriorated. Marlene served on the PFLAG Denver Board of Directors for several years and she volunteered for the organization in many capacities.

She was active in the League of Women Voters and was president of the Colorado chapter from 1975 to 1977. Throughout her life she remained active in politics and in volunteer work of all kinds – Urban Peak for homeless youth; The Community Caring Project for new mothers; St. Paul’s overnight shelter; the 17th Judicial Review Nominating Commission; and PFLAG. For the last 15 years she was a child advocate for the National Court Appointed Special Advocates (CASA) organization. For her dedication to many of these causes, in 1995 Marlene was presented with the Minoru Yasui award for community service by then First Lady Hillary Clinton.

Throughout her life Marlene continued her education through classes, workshops, seminars and at the lifelong learning academy at the University of Denver. She spent hours researching topical issues such as current events, science, philosophy, health, religion, economics and political issues. She loved reading and her book clubs.

Marlene prioritized family, friends, personal growth and giving back. She appreciated her friendships, old and new, immensely. Her living will noted that one of the most important things for her in life was to be able to enjoy a meal with family and friends. She was an inspiration to all who knew her, and her passing leaves a hole in many hearts.

Chapter Welcomes New Board Member

BOARD SEeks TReASurer

PFLAG Denver is seeking a Treasurer for its Board of Directors. We are looking for an individual with accounting background who will hold true to the organization’s mission, help raise the necessary funds for the chapter to operate effectively, represent PFLAG in the community, and more.

If this sounds like something you would be interested in, please contact the office 303-573-5861 or pflagden@tde.com. All applicants will be considered by the current board, and those chosen for nomination will stand for election at the annual meeting on February 2, 2017.

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We send warm wishes for a speedy recovery to Deborah Stone, who suffered a stroke in late October. She was discharged from the hospital to a rehab unit, where she was soon up and about and made such good progress that she was able to return home on Nov. 9. Therapists (OT and PT) come twice a week, and Deborah says she feels stronger each day.

The Denver Gay Men’s Chorus celebrates 35 years this season and will present Merry and GAY! A DGMC Holiday Spectacular! on December 1 (7:30 p.m.), Dec. 2 (7:30 p.m.), and Dec. 3 (2:00 & 7:30 p.m.) at the Central Presbyterian Church, 1660 Sherman St., Denver. James Knapp, Artistic Director of the chorus, is excited to start the 35th season by building community through holiday music. The program will also be presented at 3:00 p.m. on December 11 at St. Andrew United Methodist Church in Highlands Ranch. Tickets are on sale at DGMC.org or RMArts.org.

Please join us on Thursday, December 8, from 4 to 8 p.m., for the annual Denver Gay & Lesbian Chamber of Commerce Holiday Party, hosted by the Double Tree Hilton. Hors d’oeuvres and refreshments will be provided. FREE ADMISSION. YOU MUST REGISTER.

The annual holiday party Holigay will take place at Rainbow Alley on Dec. 17 from 4 - 8 p.m.

NEWS FROM PFLAG NATIONAL

Jody Huckaby, PFLAG National’s Executive Director for the past 12 years, has announced that he is stepping down from the position and departing the organization. “He leaves a monumental legacy that makes the entire PFLAG family very proud,” said Jean Hodges, PFLAG National President. Jody stated, “This is a very different organization today than it was when my journey began. PFLAG’s vision and mission are more critical than ever before ... The 2016 election is a clear indicator that PFLAG’s work is far from over. Now, more than ever, this is the time for people to make an investment in PFLAG to strengthen its indispensable role.”

Note that #GivingTuesday is a global day of giving celebrated on the Tuesday following Thanksgiving and the widely recognized shopping events Black Friday and Cyber Monday. PFLAG National will once again participate in #Giving Tuesday, and announces this year’s fantastic matching gift opportunity, courtesy of Chobani. Chobani has stepped up as our very first #GivingTuesday partner for 2016: they will match every individual donation made to PFLAG National, up to $5,000! Also note that you don’t have to wait until Giving Tuesday (November 29), you can make your donation right away!

KEEPING UP WITH CHAPTER ACTIVITIES

Support – Education – Advocacy

SPEAKERS’ BUREAU – There were two speaking events in October.

HELPLINE – There were 12 calls into the office and Helpline in October.

SUPPORT GROUPS – Three people came to the New Families Support Group on November 3, facilitated by Debbie Gabriel. Twelve attended the new Transgender Community Circle on November 9, facilitated by Crow Carag and Wilma Peterson. No one attended the November Latino/a group.

Support the date! Our scholarship fundraiser will take place on February 11, 2017. The PFLAG Denver chapter has distributed $29,000 of scholarship awards since 2011 to 17 amazing students, and this year we want to provide scholarship awards to keep pace with rising college costs. Please join us!