Denver Board Members Attend National Convention

By Dustin Krier

Board members Blanca Leos and Dustin Krier attended the biannual PFLAG national convention, held this year on October 20-22 in Portland, Oregon. Both were able to make connections with PFLAG National’s new Executive Director Jamie Grant, as well as with leaders from other chapters across the United States. Through networking, connections were made and ideas were formed and shared as they brainstormed with like-minded PFLAGers.

The theme of this year’s convention was “We Are The Change,” inspired by the notion that change starts with us. PFLAG has become recognized worldwide as a leader in providing support for parents, friends, families, and allies of lesbians and gays. Organizations are being formed in Asia, Australia, the Middle East, Canada, and Mexico, all based on the PFLAG model, each aiming to provide support for those in need.

The convention focused on a broad array of learning topics. It included sessions on diversity and inclusion, technology, understanding intersexuality, and parenting for trans and non-binary youth, to name a few.

Jamie Grant, new national executive director, brought to the convention a re-energized commitment to moving the organization forward. Her goals include embracing new technology, tackling diversity within our own organization, and continuing to model PFLAG’s vision and mission.

Guest speakers included Rashad Robinson, Executive Director of Color of Change, the online racial justice organization that moves decision-makers in corporations and government to create a more human and less hostile work for black people and all people; Evan Wolfson, founder and president of Freedom to Marry, the organization widely considered to be the architect of the movement that led to marriage equality in 2015; and Jeff Sheng, author of FEARLESS: Portraits of LGBT Student Athletes, a photography book and personal memoir containing portraits of 202 lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender high school and college athletes from the United States and Canada.

An estimated 400 people were in attendance at this...
The Denver Gay Men’s Chorus will present its holiday program, “Do You Hear What I Hear? Laughter and Light,” on November 30, December 1 and 2 at Central Presbyterian Church in Denver; on December 8 at Boulder First United Methodist Church in Boulder; and on December 10 at St. Andrew United Methodist Church in Highlands Ranch. For times and church addresses, go to rmarts.org or call 303-325-3959.

PFLAG’s new Jeffco Support Group is scheduled to hold its first meeting today, November 1. Let’s spread the word!

The Transgender Community Circle will hold a potluck at its Dec. 13 meeting, which will start earlier than usual (~ 5 p.m.). Be sure to put the date of the Scholarship Fundraiser — Feb. 10, 2018 — on your calendar!

Don’t forget PFLAG Denver on Colorado Gives Day, December 5. The mission of Colorado Gives Day is to drive online donations for nonprofit organizations across the state of Colorado, and PFLAG Denver is registered. In 2016 we collected nearly $2,500, and this year’s goal is $4,500!

In honor of LGBT History Month, the newsletter of the National Trust for Historic Preservation included an article on Denver’s First Unitarian Church in its October issue. This church achieved historic landmark status for its importance to the gay rights movement.

PFLAG National has announced the winners of the 2017 PFLAG Chapter Awards, and they were honored at the national convention on October 22. They are:
- PFLAG Charlotte (NC) – For the exemplary work being done by Transparents of PFLAG Charlotte to provide support, education, and advocacy for people who are transgender and gender creative and their families in Mecklenburg County.
- PFLAG Orlando (FL) – For springing into action in the aftermath of the Pulse Nightclub shooting that took the lives of 49 young men and women and continuing to support, educate, and advocate in the face of tragedy.
- PFLAG San Gabriel Valley – Asian & Pacific Islander (CA) – For adapting PFLAG’s model of support, education, and advocacy to meet the culture-specific needs of Asian-American, Pacific Islander, East Asian and South Asian LGBTQ people and their families.

KEEPING UP WITH CHAPTER
Support – Education – Advocacy

SPEAKERS’ BUREAU – No speaking engagements in September.

HELPLINE – The office and Helpline received 10 calls this past month.

SUPPORT GROUPS – Four persons attended the October 5 New Families Support Group, and there were six participants in the Transgender Community Circle on Oct. 11, facilitated by Jules Tybor and Crow Carag.

EVENTS – Matthew Shepard Gala; Diversity planning meeting at Denver Museum of Nature and Science.