

PFLAG Tri-Cities

PFLAG promotes the health and well-being of gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender persons, their families and friends through: support, to cope with an adverse society; education, to enlighten an ill-informed public; and advocacy, to end discrimination and to secure equal civil rights. Parents, Families and Friends of Lesbians and Gays provides opportunity for dialogue about sexual orientation and gender identity, and acts to create a society that is healthy and respectful of human diversity.



www.PFLAGTricities.org
www.PFLAG.blogspot.org

A Letter from a PFLAG Tri-Cities Member

You expect your family to love and accept you no matter what. But I know a lot of people who do not get acceptance from their families. Their families disown or otherwise reject them, there is anger, there is denial. I know people whose lifelong friends have turned their backs on them upon finding out they are not straight. I know parents who would not allow certain children to even be FRIENDS with their children, if they were to know about their orientation. My own child has been physically assaulted three times this year in school, simply because she is brave enough to be open and honest about who she is.

These kids face intolerance everywhere they go. I want my child to know that she can count on us to love and accept her without exception. I want my child to understand that my highest wish for her is that she lead a good life, full of love and beautiful experiences. I want her to know that she never needs to be ashamed of something as beautiful as love, and that her family would never ask her to try to be someone other than who she is. I want her to know that she can bring her girlfriend home to meet her family and they will be accepted and treated with kindness and respect, that she will not have to pretend it is something else in front of others in deference to their comfort and at the expense of her own self-respect. She is safe in her family and she is loved, whether gay, straight or purple rhinoceros.

I think there are parents out there who desperately want to speak up in support of their child, but their they need to see that they are not alone before they can do it. So here I am, I'm standing up to tell them that they are not alone, and that there are many of us out here, and we are not going away. They and their child can be honest and open and we will accept them and treat them with respect, and we will help them. I'm standing up for PFLAG so there is a friendly face ready to welcome them when they are ready to come.

--Melanie, Johnson City

11 Ways to Be a Straight Ally

1. Be informed about the realities, challenges and issues affecting the lives of GLBTQ people.
2. Be open about having GLBT friends, family or acquaintances.
3. Speak up when you hear derogatory slurs or jokes. Don't use them yourself.
4. Ask if you are unsure how to address the significant person in your GLBTQ person's life, rather than avoiding acknowledging the relationship.
5. Help your kids learn about and appreciate all different kinds of families.
6. Quit or don't join organizations that overtly discriminate. Let them know why.
7. Support GLBT-owned and GLBT-friendly businesses.
8. Encourage and support company policies and programs that promote a positive work environment for GLBT employees at your workplace.
9. Write letters to the editor of your newspaper to comment as a straight ally on why you support respectful and equal treatment for GLBT people.
10. Call, write, e-mail, or visit public policy makers and let them know that as a straight person who votes, you support laws that extend equal rights and protections to GLBT people.

11. JOIN PFLAG TRI-CITIES AND BE A VOCAL AND VISIBLE ALLY TO THE GLBTQ COMMUNITY!

The Tri-Cities Region Has A New PFLAG Chapter!

Purpose

PFLAG Tri-Cities has two main purposes: to provide a support community for all individuals who have a GLBT person in their life and to provide support to GLBT and questioning people. Even if you do not have a GLBT person in your life; you can be an ally. Allies are invited to be part of our mission of making our community safer, affirming, and more inclusive of GLBT or questioning individuals.



Meetings

We meet the 3rd Thursday of each month at 7:00 pm. Please check the website (www.PFLAGTricities.org) for upcoming meeting locations. We hope to have a permanent meeting place soon! We hope you will come and be a part of this exciting and growing community!

Your Loved One is Gay. Now What?

Your first reaction to learning that your loved one is gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgender, queer, or questioning can range anywhere from anger to sadness, fear to hurt, confusion to grief, and anywhere and everything in between. These emotions and the thousands of others that parents, families, and friends experience as they navigate their loved ones coming out process are normal.



We can tell you with absolute certainty that you're not alone. According to statistics, one in every ten people in this country

We have been through much of what you are feeling. We understand.

and around the world is gay, lesbian, bisexual or transgender (GLBT). Approximately one in four families has an immediate family member who is GLBT, and most people have at least one GLBT individual in their extended circle of friends and family.

Parents, Families and Friends of Lesbians and Gays (PFLAG) is here for you. Our members are parents, families and friends of GLBT people and GLBT people them-

selves. We have been through much of what you are now feeling. **We understand.**

The first thing you should do for yourself and your loved one is to talk to someone who has been through this process. Whether it is by e-mail, phone or in-person at a PFLAG meeting listening to and talking to those who have experienced the feelings you are encountering can be both cathartic and comforting. PFLAG has more than 500 chapters and representatives across the country ready and willing to work with families and friends both in meeting and in a one on one basis. **And now there is a local PFLAG Chapter, right here in NE Tennessee!** Contact us at pflagtricity@yahoo.com or visit us at www.PFLAGTricities.blogspot.com (www.PFLAGTricities.org is coming soon). **You are not alone!**

PFLAG Tri-cities relies on the support of its members and the community. Donations and membership requests may be sent to:

PFLAG Tri-Cities

P.O. Box 42

Mountain Home, TN 37684

PFLAG Tri-Cities can be found on the web at www.PFLAGTricities.org and on our own blog at www.PFLAGTricities.blogspot.com