

# TORONTO PFLAG

Parents, Families and Friends of Lesbians and Gays

September 2012 Newsletter #23

[www.torontopflag.org](http://www.torontopflag.org)

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## TORONTO PFLAG VISION

Toronto PFLAG is a charitable organization that speaks for a more accepting Canadian society by providing support, education and resources to all people who wish to grow in their understanding of sexual and gender diversity.

Toronto PFLAG actively assists in the recognition and growth of gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgender, transsexual, two-spirit, intersex, queer and questioning persons, and their families and friends, within their diverse cultures and societies.

## Next Support Meeting

Wednesday  
**October 3, 2012**  
7:30 p.m.

Kimbourne Park  
United Church  
200 Wolverleigh Blvd.,  
Toronto, ON M4C 1S2



**PRIDE 2012**



**JOIN US!**

**COFFEE WITH COPS**  
Thursday, October 4, 2012  
4:00 pm - 7:00 pm  
Starbucks Coffee Company  
485 Church Street  
Toronto, Ontario M4Y 2C6

For more information contact:  
Police Constable Danielle Bottineau,  
Toronto Police Service  
Divisional Policing Support Unit  
LGBT Liaison Officer,  
416-800-7266, [danielle.bottineau@torontopolice.on.ca](mailto:danielle.bottineau@torontopolice.on.ca)

## A message from your President

September 28, 2012

It's Fall. Kids are back at school; it's getting cooler and maybe we're spending more time indoors reading books, following the news or catching up on entertainment or sports. All of these in September have been areas where LGBTQ topics abound.

Let's start with school, and the recent topic of should there be a Queer-Centric high school in Toronto? This has been covered in print, on radio and t.v., and full disclosure – yes, I was on CBC and our son was on CTV, and as he said when asked if there was merit to such a school, “the answer is yes, and no.” Raymond's interview: <http://toronto.ctvnews.ca/video?clipId=770650&playlistId=1.973298&binId=1.815892>

Our son was accepted into the Claude Watson School for the Arts in Grade 7, and graduated from Claude Watson Earl Haig. As he said on t.v., had he not moved to such a programme at the age he did, he doubts he would be here today. Scary thought!

There may be students who are unable to focus or complete their education due to a homophobic school environment. Removing those students to a programme like the Triangle Programme can help as an interim measure for a limited number of students, but homophobia will continue until every school enacts their Safe School Policies and educates about diversity in all its forms, including sexual orientation and gender diversity.

Perhaps a course on Gay Culture, Gay Literature, LGBTQ history etc., could be offered to straight and LGBTQ students across the board. There is plenty of material out there and education is the way to dispel misinformation and enlighten the uninformed – which would help both LGBTQ and straight students move forward in understanding.

Homophobia was, and still is, rife in the elementary grades, and waiting till high school to address it, is way too late. There needs to be education now in early elementary grades to address diversity, and acknowledge different families including those comprising LGBTQ.

**Toronto PFLAG receives calls from parents whose children are in elementary grades and kids are coming out before middle school. These extremely brave students are still a small percentage of LGBTQ youth, many of whom wait until they are out of high school and independent of their families before coming out.**

Making every school safe for every student is the way forward. Raymond mentioned the importance of role models, something Rick Mercer also addressed in his rant earlier this year. If all the gay adults come out, things will be easier for gay youth.

I'll take it one step further. If all the straight allies come out and show they are open and supportive, things will be easier for gay youth and families with an LGBT loved one.

Pam Page reminded me yesterday that I often say “*I never wanted to change our gay son, I did want to change the society in which he lives.*”

That is the sentiment of so many PFLAG families, and doing what we can to have the TDSB ensure affirming education is adopted at every local school beginning in the elementary grades should make it easier to eradicate homophobia and make every school respectful of every student.

### Books

Our bookstore of choice is The Glad Day Book Store on Yonge Street. This store has been revitalised, from the books on the shelves to events like the recent evening with author Brian Francis, whose novels *Natural Order* and *Fruit* are both in our lending library.

Ours is a family of readers, and one thing I do regret is that when our kids were growing up I doubt there was one book in our home that featured a gay story line or had an LGBTQ character. We are making up for this today, and are aware of the enormous imbalance that prevailed, and the impact this omission has on society's potential to even consider that characters in novels might merit a mention or be an integral part of a plot line.

The Glad Day has a vast selection, buy them if you can. If you can't then get after your local library to expand their collections. School libraries can extend their collections too, and for anyone looking for books for the very young, check out Mabel's Fables.

### Sports

Disclaimer #2 I don't do sports! I'm more comfortable at a theatre than a sports venue. So I don't do sports – but I know homophobia when I see it, especially when written on the face of someone who is a known public figure and held in some esteem in the sporting world.

You likely all saw the pictures of Yunel Escobar, who printed a homophobic slur on his face, then wore it to work; i.e. sporting a homophobic slur on his face he played in a game of major league baseball. There is no excuse for doing something this repugnant. Regardless of the environment in which he grew up, Mr. Escobar is now an adult, responsible for his actions, employed by the Toronto Blue Jays, and living in Canada.

It is incumbent upon Mr. Escobar and everyone involved in the handling of the Toronto Blue Jays to ensure that some education takes place immediately so that hurtful acts like this whether intended or not are not repeated, because **whether they are intended or not, homophobic slurs HURT!**

I recently decided I should go outside my comfort zone and attend some sporting events, but until I do, and to help wipe the image of Mr. Escobar's face from my memory, here is a picture of Kevin Beaulieu, E.D. of Toronto Pride.



I think we all get and appreciate his message! Thank you Kevin.

Enjoy! Irene

## September in Toronto:

**One weekend** had a lot of glittering events with TIFF, and Fashion Cares, but Toronto PFLAG attended **Out on Bay Street's Leaders to be Proud Of Awards Gala**, and had the privilege of meeting some of Toronto's finest and brightest!



Anil Nahrain of BMO



Rupert Hon of TD

At both the Thursday evening cocktail award reception and Saturday's Gala Dinner, Irene and Gary Miller met with friends from Deloittes, BMO, HSBC, TD, PwC, Unilever and many others in whose offices Toronto PFLAG has presented Lunch & Learns or in-house workshops in recent months.

## LGBT Community Consultative Committee

Toronto PFLAG sits on the Toronto Police LGBT CCC in partnership with representatives from Toronto organisations and businesses.

Additional to the regular monthly meeting, Chief Blair invited all Toronto CCCs to an Award Event in September. Irene and Inspector Barbara McLean accepted the award on behalf of the LGBTQ CCC.



Award Event in September. Irene and Inspector Barbara McLean accepted the award on behalf of the LGBTQ CCC.

## The Giving Network

### Board Members

Marla Green, Bryn Hendricks, Irene and Gary Miller all attended the Board of Directors Networking Event at Slacks on Church Street, hosted by the LGBT Giving Network and Toronto HIV



Network. As well as the opportunity to catch up with friends in local organisations, guests were privileged to hear guest speakers Patrick Johnston of Borealis Advisors, and Councillor Kristyn Wong-Tam.

## Back to School:

### Forest Hill Collegiate Institute Leadership Programme

On September 27<sup>th</sup>, Toronto PFLAG in partnership with Toronto Police presented a Plenary Workshop to start the Orientation Day of Events.



In the Council Chambers of the North York Civic Centre, P.C. Danielle Bottineau, LGBT Community Liaison Officer Toronto Police and Irene Miller presented their 1- hour Diversity and Anti-Bullying Workshop to 260 Grade 9 students.

Forest Hill C.I. has an active GSA, supportive staff and designated Safe Zones within their school. When Toronto PFLAG participated in Forest Hill's whole school assembly in April, we donated a copy of *MyGSA.ca*

*Toronto PFLAG will donate a copy of MyGSA.ca to Toronto Schools that invite us in to speak with students, staff or parent groups. Please share this information if there is a school near you that would like to book a workshop.*

## Support Meeting

New families continue to be welcomed by Toronto PFLAG volunteers at the monthly Support Meetings. Refreshments are served at 7:15p.m, prior to the meeting beginning at 7:30p.m.

**October's meeting will begin with a special guest speaker, P.C. Danielle Bottineau, the LGBTQ Community Liaison Officer from Toronto Police who is working with Toronto PFLAG in various ventures.**

Guests do not have to confirm their attendance in advance but if first time visitors call 416-406-1727, our volunteers can be ready to welcome them on arrival.

Our group is a mixture of LGBTQ individuals ranging in age from young teens to adults, as well as parents, family members and allies.

If you know someone who needs our help, please direct them to our next support meeting:

October 3<sup>rd</sup> from 7:30 – 9:00 p.m.

Refreshments served at 7:15 p.m.

Kimbourne park United Church

200 Wolverleigh Blvd.

2 blocks north of Danforth Ave, ½ block east of Coxwell Ave.

## THANK YOU

Toronto PFLAG wants to offer a heartfelt '**Thank You**' to the wonderful people who have recently made a donation to Toronto PFLAG. Your donations are allowing us to continue offering our 24/7 Telephone Support Line, our Monthly Support Meetings and our ongoing outreach and community support.

If you would like to help, you can make a donation through the secure servers at CanadaHelps.org (charitable donation receipts are issued automatically), and if you wish you can specify that your donation remain anonymous, or you can choose to honour someone or a special occasion.

Or you may send a cheque to

Toronto PFLAG, 200 Waverleigh Blvd., Toronto, ON, M4C 1S2.  
(charitable donation receipts will be issued for amounts of \$20+)

**DONATE NOW**

<http://www.canadahelps.org/CharityProfilePage.aspx?CharityID=s70090>

*Charitable Registration BN: 891493348RR0001*