

TORONTO PFLAG

Parents, Families and Friends of Lesbians and Gays

November 2013 Newsletter #37

www.torontopflag.org

office@pflagtoronto.org

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
January 8, 2014
7:30 p.m.

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



A BIG THANK YOU to Mike Chalut, Marty Fortier, Scarlett BoBo, Phillip Villeneuve and 103.9 ProudFM for an amazing 1st Diva's Brunch on Dec. 1, 2013.

The DIVA BRUNCH is held on the 1st Sunday of every month from 11 a.m. to 3 p.m. at GANZI.

Keep tuned to Toronto PFLAG's Facebook Page for information on next months Diva's Brunch at Ganzi.

A message from your President

November 2013

Lunch & Learn at Toronto City Hall was a dream made real when we held our first session during November. Understanding how busy most Councillors and their staff are we thank all who joined us and we welcomed staffers from many Council offices, as well as Councillors Mike Layton and Janet Davis, and in true PFLAG fashion Janet shared some of her story about 'coming out as a proud parent and ally'. Councillors who could not attend but who dropped by for a quick 'hello' included Fletcher, Carroll, Vaughan. **A special word of thanks to Deputy Mayor Norm Kelly** who stopped by during the presentation, did not want to interrupt the session but took the time to speak with a PFLAG Dad!



Toronto PFLAG mums Irene, Anna and Mary-Anne with proud Toronto PFLAG Dad Gary.

Dealing with homophobia at home and abroad

#1 - Mayor Ford: On May 17th we first heard of a video and allegations of various wrongdoings involving Mayor Ford including his use of a homophobic slur as well as purportedly using crack cocaine. Despite repeated denials we have since heard the Mayor own up to the use of crack cocaine, as well as other acknowledgements of guilt; however, to my knowledge the Mayor has not addressed the homophobia comment.

May 17th, coincidentally, was the day the Mayor and many City Councillors stood with Toronto PFLAG, our allies and supporters to recognize the International Day Against Homophobia and Transphobia, and proclaim Toronto to be a city free of homophobia.

We gave the benefit of the doubt to Mayor Ford and warmly welcomed him to our Flag Raising, whilst reminding him and all Councillors present that we expected them to stand behind the words in the proclamation not just for 30 minutes at the podium, but for the entire year.

I echo our Police Chief in that I am disappointed in our Mayor. I am disappointed that despite standing with us and hearing how hurtful it is when someone uses homophobic slurs that he has not taken steps to apologise and make meaningful amends to the LGBTQ community and the families with loved ones who are LGBTQ.

I have always said that Toronto PFLAG would keep our door open in the hope that Mayor Ford would come through willing to listen and learn about our families. It remains open; however, at this point in time I find myself looking forward more hopefully that the next

person through the door will be Deputy Mayor Kelly. With World Pride coming to Toronto in June 2014, I think we want to look forward with renewed Pride in our City and City Council members who will represent us on the World Stage.

#2 – Lack of Pride in Sochi: The closer we get to the Olympic Games in Russia, the more I feel frustrated that despite the horrifically homophobic laws passed by Russia's Government we, in a country that condemns homophobia, are turning a blind eye by waving off our athletes, coaches, and supporters some of whom may be LGBTQ or have family members who are, and saying what?

- That it's o.k. to accept an invitation to visit a country which has laws that punish people by dint of fact that they are LGBTQ or show love and support for someone who is LGBTQ;
- That it's o.k. for said country to treat its LGBTQ citizens with contempt; and threaten jail terms to families who show support for their LGBTQ children;
- That it's o.k. for the Olympics to protect 'us' temporarily whilst we're there; although should 'we' return to Russia later 'we' had better take care and not run afoul of their despicable laws;
- That it's o.k. for us to go there and ignore the plight of our peers who have been sentenced to life in the closet or face beatings, torture and imprisonment?
- That it's o.k. because athletes have been waiting for this day to shine for 4 or 8 years – yet for any LGBT Russian, the opportunity to live their lives openly has been outlawed and the possibility of having a moment to 'shine with pride in the limelight' is never going to be permitted unless Canada and other countries who respect human rights stand up and act.

I understand that many countries treat their LGBTQ population abominably. Visiting them is a choice as is boycotting them. I wish a decision had been taken to move the Olympics elsewhere so that individuals, groups and nations could take action against Russia without compromising the spirit of the Olympics. It wasn't, so now we can only hope that some brave souls will do what our governments have not done.

- We will gladly donate our rainbow bracelets to anyone going to Sochi as well as our maple leaf rainbow pins. I hope every Canadian newscaster on-site in Sochi will wear both.
- I hope there will be a way to show families like ours in Russia that we are not indifferent to their situation. I hope somehow we can let them know we care.

Pride House in Toronto: During the Olympics there will be a Pride House in Toronto, as well as in Washington, and both Manchester England, and Glasgow Scotland. We'll post more details as they are confirmed.

Celebrations: Whether you celebrated Hannukah, are counting your way through Advent or lighting candles for Diwali, it's the season for celebration. Whether you celebrate in a large group, or with one or two friends I wish you all loving, smiling faces around your table.

With hugs and warmest wishes of the season, Irene Miller

The Giving Network Donor Thank You event: Marla Green and I had the privilege of attending The Giving Network's Donor Thank You Event, which was held at Integral House. We appreciated the generosity of the owner James Stewart for opening his home and inviting us



his in.

Here I am with Doug Kerr of the Giving Network Peter Kinch of Ernst & Young.



and

Marla and I flanking Sarah Hunter and James Brown

Transgender Day of Remembrance was November 20th, and the event at the 519 coincided with our Board Meeting. During our meeting Board Members observed a minute of silence.

Canada Border Services Agency: Toronto PFLAG was delighted to partner with PFLAG London Ontario to present a workshop for employees of CBSA. Irene Miller of Toronto and Lori Ward of London, collaborated and shared the morning workshop along with Bonnie Gibson who had worked for Canada Border Services and who shared her story of coming out as trans. The opportunity for Irene and Lori to work together and then have a meal and spend time information-sharing afterwards was priceless!



Irene, Lori and Bonnie at CBSA Workshop presentation

UPCOMING EVENTS:

Forte Toronto Men's Chorus is presenting **Gloria**, a **holiday concert** on Saturday, December 14th at 7:30 p.m. at Metropolitan United Church, 56 Queen Street East, Toronto.

Toronto PFLAG's Irene Miller will join Councillor Kristyn Wong-Tam and CBC host Michael Serapio as guest readers for this evening of music and readings. <http://www.forte-chorus.com/home.php>
Advance ticket sales are \$25 or \$30 at the door.



UPCOMING EVENTS:

Brunch with Benefits - a.k.a. Proud FM's Diva Brunch

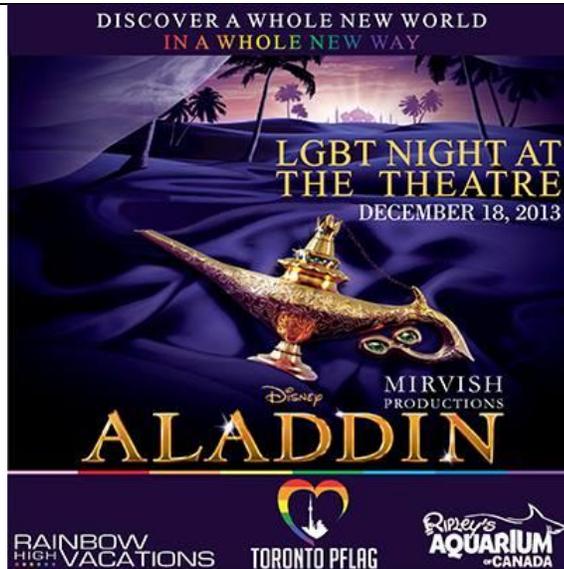
Starting December 1st, and continuing on the first Sunday of each month, join us for:

Brunch with Benefits a.k.a. Proud FM's Diva Brunch

The next Diva Brunch is
Sunday, January 5th
11:00 a.m. – 3:00 p.m.
Ganzi Restaurant at 504
Jarvis Street!

- amazing tunes by DJ Phil - playing The Supremes to Cher to Brit Brit!
- Hosted by the newly crowned Queen of Halloween Scarlett Bobo.
- We will be selling raffle tickets for amazing prizes to benefit Toronto PFLAG.

Mark your calendars for January 5th, etc., and enjoy Brunch with friends and benefit Toronto PFLAG!



In an exotic, faraway land, one man's life is about to change with the lucky rub of an ancient lamp – and you're invited to join the magic carpet ride.

Welcome to ALADDIN, Disney's new Broadway-bound musical, adapted from the hit film and featuring some of the best-loved music by Academy and Tony Award-winning composer Alan Menken and lyricists Howard Ashman, Tim Rice and Chat Beguelin, with book by Beguelin.

With its timeless story, extravagant sets and costumes and a host of memorable characters and songs, ALADDIN will transport you to a place you only know in your dreams. Go ahead, make a wish. And discover a whole new world, in a whole new way....at ALADDIN!

LGBT NIGHT AT THE THEATRE to support Toronto PFLAG

ALADDIN – WORLD PREMIERE! at the Ed Mirvish Theatre
Wednesday, December 18, 2013 @ 7:30PM

Our friends at Rainbow High Vacations are rolling out the pink carpet for Toronto PFLAG families and friends
(Yes, they are actually rolling out the PINK carpet!)

What's Included:

- ✓ Your choice of ticket (all price levels are available)
- ✓ An exclusive admission ticket welcoming the LGBT community to the new Ripley's Aquarium
- ✓ Häagen-Daz and soft drink voucher
- ✓ All taxes, ticket handling fees and service charges

More information and to order your tickets, visit our website
<http://www.torontopflag.org/news-events/news/special-offer-see-the-dec-18-world-premiere-of-aladdin-and-support-toronto-pflag>

Diva Brunch raises funds for Toronto PFLAG

The wonderful 103.9 Proud FM and Ganzi restaurant on Jarvis Street hosted a Diva Brunch on Dec. 1, with partial proceeds to Toronto PFLAG. Several board members and allies attended this fun event, featuring the talented and lovely Scarlett Bobo. The food, service and entertainment were excellent – thank you Proud FM, Scarlett and Ganzi!

If you missed Diva Brunch don't worry, there are more to come. Diva Brunch takes place on the first Sunday of each month, with a growing roster of Divas. Visit the [event page on Facebook](#) for details.



Toronto PFLAG board members with the birthday Diva: (L to R) Irene, Michael, Ann, Scarlett Bobo, Marla, Vera, Jill, Gary

RYERSON UNIVERSITY

I was privileged to sit in when some of the students presented their project designs of what the dream Toronto PFLAG office would look like, and I was swept up in their enthusiasm for this Case Study assignment. Many wore Toronto PFLAG shirts and seeing what they incorporated into their designs let me know that they had learned a lot about Toronto PFLAG and the families and community we serve.

I thank Prof. Michael Plasse-Taylor for choosing our charity and affording me an opportunity to speak with his students about who we are and what we do.

iPad 1:38 AM 84%





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 Wolverleigh 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