



Volume 2|Issue 9  
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# PFLAG Riverview Newsletter

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## *Our Mission*

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**Our mission is to build on a foundation of loving families united with LGBTQ+ people and allies who support one another, and to educate ourselves and our communities to speak up as advocates until all hearts and minds respect, value and affirm LGBTQ people.**

## Director's Corner

**National Coming Out Day is October 11<sup>th</sup>. Our own Dylan shares his own coming out story.**

There were signs from my early ages that I was "different" & "unique" compared to other children. Whether it was my obsession with Sailor Moon that gave it away, or my tendency to choose more "girly" toys to play with, I was never afraid to let my creative side show. Growing up in a Southern Baptist household, the idea of homosexuality was something that was "taboo" and frowned upon according to what some interpreted from the Bible. Middle school was especially tough for me, since I was different at a private school, the bullying intensified. I was called very hurtful things and labeled as "gay" even though I was still developing my preferences, and really didn't have any idea about that aspect of my life. High school was a much more accepting experience as I was able to slowly understand more about myself & sexuality. I remember testing the waters as being "bisexual", then coming out as fully gay, then back to straight. Junior year was the turning point for me as I was fully out of the closet and was starting to understand & love the person I was becoming.

My parents were upset at the beginning, which I understand. As a parent you don't want your child to go through the animosity from others for being openly gay, and you worry that they may not make it to "heaven" based upon the faith you have. I truly feel that continuing to be a good person & being a beacon of light in the world helped my parents understand & accept me fully. They finally understood that being gay was simply something you were born as, and it can't be changed. My mother even marches in Pride every year & is part of a local PFLAG group.

My feelings of religion have been tumultuous, but I try to abide by the simple rules of life. Loving others, showing compassion, treating others with respect, are just a few of the teachings that I feel really matter the most. I try to interpret stories & lessons from all the different religions I encounter & apply them to how I live my life. A relationship with a higher power is important, but I think everyone's journey is personal.

Fast forward to 28, I am the happiest I've ever been. I am a homeowner, business owner, and doggy dad of two! I've worked hard to make my life fulfilling & continuing to find joy in everything I do. The world has slowly grown to be more accepting, and it brings me such glee that people are allowed to express themselves openly without as much criticism as I dealt with growing up. Confidence is one of the most powerful things, and I think that really loving yourself fully helps facing the world much easier!

Much love, Dylan

## Hurricane Relief

We hope everybody stayed safe in this storm and had minimal damage. Unfortunately, our southern neighbors did not. We will be collecting donations for flats of water, trash bags, and gloves to help our neighbors in Southwest Florida. Donations will be accepted through October 31st. If you would like to donate, please text Kimmi Waechter at (714) 315-0217 to organize a pickup time.



## Holiday Events



PFLAG Riverview Family Friendsgiving November 22<sup>nd</sup> -6:30pm-8:30pm at The Regent on The Venetian Terrace. This event is for those chapter members and our friends who would like to share a meal together with friends and possibly make some new ones! PLEASE RSVP to Faith by 11/14 by texting 813-833-7972 and mention what side you will plan to bring. We are looking for volunteers for this event!



This holiday season we will be celebrating the PFLAG Family with our first ever Gingerbread Persons Dessert Party! The “Genderbread” Person is a teaching tool to help break down the often-confused differences of gender identity, gender expression, and sexuality. Undergoing several edits as we learn more about LGBTQ+ people, the Genderbread Person has been used across organizations around the world to help clarify concepts. We’d love for you to join us for fun, desserts, cookie decorating, and holiday spirit!

Please bring a labeled dessert to share! It can be a homemade holiday tradition or a grocery store bakery favorite!

If you wish, you may also bring gently used clothing to be donated to Out of the Closet Thrift Store in St Petersburg. This thrift store was founded in 1990 and helps raise funds and awareness for AIDS Healthcare Foundation. 96 cents of every dollar this store makes goes towards HIV prevention and treatment services. It also provides a safe space for all to get HIV tested and thrift shop regardless of expression, identity, or orientation.

RSVP to Kimmi at 714) 315-0217 with number of guests and the dessert you will be bringing!

Volunteers will be needed throughout the event and for decor. If interested, please text Kimmi at (714) 315-0217.

## Upcoming Events

**October 11<sup>th</sup> 7-8pm:** PFLAG SUPPORT ON ZOOM & NATIONAL COMING OUT DAY. Our special guest is Ez Rodriguez, MA., PhD (they, them). They are a non-binary, queer artist, educator, activist and works for Equality Florida as the Safe Schools Director for all counties in our state. They also have the BEST Bow Tie Fits you have ever seen!! (email [pflagriverviewfamily@gmail.com](mailto:pflagriverviewfamily@gmail.com) for link)

**October 25<sup>th</sup> 7pm:** PFLAG Connects in person meeting at The Regent. Jose Guevara (he/him), is a financial literacy educator with Suncoast Credit Union. He currently holds the seat of Treasurer for PFLAG Riverview among other boards that benefit students in Hillsborough County. As you might have guessed, Jose has a background in finance and education. His “why” statement stems from his passion for giving back to the community and making a difference in students' lives just like the advocates he had in his life while growing up.



## Future Events

**November 8th-7pm-8:15pm:** PFLAG ZOOM Support on Election Day with Special Guest Ben Greene he/him. He is a remarkable twenty something who travels around speaking to audiences all over the U.S. Check out his Ted talk that launched his speaking career! It is entitled “Where are you sitting”. You can find it on You Tube!!

**November 22<sup>nd</sup> -6:30pm-8:30pm:** PFLAG Riverview Family Friendsgiving at The Regent on The Venetian Terrace. PLEASE RSVP to Faith by 11/14 by texting 813-833-7972 and mention what side you will plan to bring. We are looking for volunteers for this event!

**December 13<sup>th</sup> 7pm-9pm:** Gingerbread Persons Party at The Regent All are welcome to celebrate the Holiday Season with PFLAG RIVERVIEW! Come enjoy Hot Chocolate and fun festivities. Bring a Dessert to share. RSVP to Kimmi by texting 714-315-0217 & mention the dessert you will be bringing. We are looking for volunteers for this event!

**December 27<sup>th</sup> 7pm-8pm:** PFLAG ZOOM Peer Support (Topic TBD)

\*\*\*From time to time, we have special guests share on both zoon and in-person support meetings. Please feel free to email Faith at [Pflagriverviewfamily@gmail.com](mailto:Pflagriverviewfamily@gmail.com) to offer your suggestions for future topics of discussion. \*

## Membership Drive

We are offering one free book per household for new or renewed memberships this summer. We have four titles to choose from while supplies last!! Choose from Gender Transition by Cindi Grace Miller, God & The Gay Christian by Matthew Vines, The Savvy Ally by Jeannie Gainsburg, or Legendary Children: The First Decade of RuPaul's Drag Rae and the Last Century of Queer Life by Tom Fitzgerald and Lorenzo Marquez. Thank you to all that have supported our chapter through new and renewed membership.

If you would like to support our chapter with paid membership, click [here!](#)

## 2022 PFLAG Riverview Board & Leadership Team

### Executive Board

Faith Moeller: Pres/Co-Founder  
 Jodi Chadwell: VP/Co-Founder  
 Marisol Prokopowicz: Secretary  
 Jose Guevera: Treasurer

### Leadership Team

Mari Macabenta: Membership Coordinator  
 Kimmi Waechter: Event Coordinator  
 Nichelle Neal: Social Media Manager  
 Nico Van West: Chief Community Relations Officer  
 Cindi Grace Miller: Advisor  
 Maxi Hall: Founding Member  
 Russ Jones: Founding Member

## Please Follow Us on Social Media



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You can find additional resources on our webpage

<http://www.pflagriverview.org/>

