



Greater Boston PFLAG

NEWS & VIEWS

June 2008 — August 2008

85 River Street, Suite 5A, Waltham MA 02453

Greater Boston PFLAG is committed to creating environments of understanding and respect for 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. We provide opportunities for dialogue about sexual orientation and gender identity, and act to create a society that is healthy and respectful of human diversity.

President's Message

By Stan Griffith

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stangriffith@rcn.com

The Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (MDESE) released the results of the 2007 Youth Risk Behavior Survey (MYRBS). While the 2007 MYRBS showed an improvement in risk behaviors among youth generally, the survey showed that risks of violence and attempted suicide increased significantly for gay, lesbian, and bisexual youth. The MYRBS is conducted every two years with funding from the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. The survey monitors behaviors of high school students that are related to the leading causes of morbidity and mortality among youth and adults in the United States. The 2007 MYRBS was conducted in 59 randomly selected high schools, and is based on responses from 3131 students in grades nine through twelve, and is representative of high school students throughout the Commonwealth. Massachusetts is one of only a very small number of states that asks questions about sexual orientation and compares results between gay and straight student populations. (The MYRBS does not ask for information about transgender students. Greater Boston PFLAG supports a change to future surveys to elicit information about gender identity and expression.)

More students described themselves as gay, lesbian, or bisexual (5.7% as opposed to 3.7% in 2005), and more students either identified as gay, lesbian, or bisexual and/or reported same-sex sexual contact (9.2% in 2007 and 6.4% in 2005).

The data show that risk behaviors, including attacks, suicide attempts, fear of violence against GLB youth (as well as use of drugs and alcohol) were higher in 2007

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than in 2005. (Charts comparing the results of the 2005 and 2007 MYRBS are on page 8.) In 2005 and 2007, the MYRBS reported that GLB youth were over four times more likely to have attempted suicide in the past year than their straight peers. The rate of increased reported attempts for GLB youth was significantly higher than the marginal increase for straight students. The percentage of youth reporting serious suicide attempts, those requiring medical attention, remained the same for straight youth (2.2%), but in 2007, the rate of serious attempts rose from 8.2% to 12.1%, **meaning that GLB youth were almost six times more likely than their straight peers to have made a serious suicide attempt.** The rates at which youth reported skipping school because of feeling unsafe at or en route to school within the past month rose for both gay and straight youth; and the disparity narrowed slightly, although it is still unacceptable that **GLB youth are three times more likely to have skipped school within the past month because of safety concerns.** Threats and injuries involving weapons against straight youth in the 2007 MYRBS showed a slight decline; **but threats and injuries involving weapons involving GLB students almost doubled from 2005 to 2007, so that GLB youth are over four times more likely to have been threatened or injured by a weapon during the past year.** While the rate of physical fighting involving straight youth remained the same from 2005 to 2007, it rose for GLB students.

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President's Message (Continued from page 1)

This is clearly not good news. The MYRBS does not shed any light on why conditions for GLB students worsened from 2005 to 2007, but my view is that we can point to three factors: funding cuts for safe schools anti-bias programs, the acrimonious debate over the proposed amendment to ban gay marriage, and complacency.

All available research points clearly to the fact that there are two antidotes to violence against GLBT youth, suicide attempts, and risk behaviors affecting GLBT youth. First, we need to eliminate hostile school environments through adequately funded anti-bias programs throughout the Commonwealth. Second, parental love and acceptance is crucial for children to grow up strong, healthy, and self-confident.

Alarmed by the disparities in GLB youth risk, in 1992 Governor William Weld established a Commission to address the issues facing gay youth, and supported funding for safe schools programs that were to become the model for programs throughout the country. Governor Paul Cellucci supported and expanded the role of the Commission and increased funding for safe schools. The Jane Swift and Mitt Romney administrations zeroed out funding for safe schools anti-bias programming. In fiscal year 2002, Massachusetts funded safe schools programs at \$1.6 million. Three years ago, a meager \$400,000 was added to the state budget over successive Romney vetoes. In the first Patrick administration budget, safe schools funding was "level funded" at \$400,000, and \$50,000 was added for



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the Commission on GLBT Youth. In my view, a maintenance budget in excess of \$2 million is needed if the mandated annual anti-bias trainings are to be adequately supported. We know that these programs must be continuously administered or their effects are lost because of staff turnover and changes in student populations.

In November 2003, the Supreme Judicial Court of Massachusetts handed down the *Goodrich* decision, deciding that the Commonwealth had no constitutionally adequate reason to deny marriage equality to same-sex couples. The political backlash was immediate and harsh. Opportunistic politicians were joined by some clergy in giving voice and a measure of legitimacy to homophobia. Greater Boston PFLAG worked hard to defeat the anti-gay marriage amendment to the Massachusetts Constitution, but we also were concerned about the fall-out of the fierce, prejudicial rhetoric and its impact on youth. Had the amendment gone to the ballot, the consequences would likely have been much worse in terms of heightened levels of vitriolic comments about our community.

Because of our victory in defeating the amendment banning same-sex marriage, many people think that problems affecting our community have disappeared. In the November 11, 2007 *Boston Globe Magazine*, Alison Lobron published an article entitled "Easy Out" that presented a rosy picture of what it's like to be a gay youth in Massachusetts. She suggested that youth are coming out at an earlier age (true) and are facing little or no problems or discrimination (as evidenced by the 2005 and 2007 MYRBS, not true). Most people, including medical and community health and suicide prevention professionals, are completely unaware of the continuing disparities between gay and straight youth. This complacency affects public funding and public policy, and there are completely inadequate resources being budgeted to address these issues.

Over the past 20 years, Greater Boston PFLAG has taught the language of love and acceptance to thousands of parents who did not know what to say when they first

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**Spirits Soared at 6th Annual Pride and
Passion Party Fundraiser!**

By Pam Garramone, Executive Director

"Last night was the best P&P ever. It was such a success I hardly know where to begin. Mercedes Urrea had me in tears and Jose Padilla had me in cheers."

"Hearing Sebastian's mother speak, and seeing Irwin break down into tears as the audience applauded the scholarship winners was incredibly moving. What a way to renew my sense of commitment to PFLAG and the work we do."

"A number of folks from church today could not stop talking about how much fun they had, and how moving the program was."

"CONGRATULATIONS!!!!!!!!!!!! IT SEEMED LIKE A HUGE SUCCESS!!!!!!!!!!!! I am so glad that it was wonderful, and those stories were so moving and amazing. You do amazing work. I loved being there. THANK YOU for everything that you do."

"What a wonderful event! Big congratulations and appreciation to you and to all who were involved with making Saturday's Pride and Passion event so moving, inspirational and fun!!"

"Best one I've ever been to! The speakers were so good; after the program, I just embraced the mother. She made people listen without shouting; she was quiet, but we were leaning on her every word. Very powerful. Loved when Jose said, "I'm about to educate you!"

"Amazing! The best! What a night! What a great night! Mercedes was amazing! Wonderful, wonderful night!"

"Loved that woman's moving speech about how you helped her, and let her know that her son would be ok. What a tearjerker! Great story. You must be so proud."

"It really was an awesome event. Great fun with great people."

"Really wonderful event! I can't stop thinking about it!"

On April 12th, over 400 people attended the 6th Annual Pride and Passion Party fundraiser at the Hyatt Regency Hotel to support Greater Boston PFLAG's Safe Schools and Communities Program.

There wasn't a dry eye in the Hyatt as Mercedes Urrea spoke about her teenage son, Sebastian, who recently came out. Her son was depressed and feeling lost with nowhere to turn. She reached out to PFLAG for help, first calling and talking to me, and then attending PFLAG meetings. With his parents' love and support, her son felt more confident, became a leader in his school's GSA, and won an Elsie Frank Scholarship!

The crowd cheered Jose Padilla, a straight senior at Haverhill High School, when he told of his amazing transformation into a GLBT advocate. He described the Greater Boston PFLAG presentation to his school's peer leadership group, and how it moved him so much that he had to look at his own biases. He became an ally, standing up to his history teacher who described a student's glasses as "gay" and confronting a group of gay-bashing boys. He wrote and recited a rap song comparing the plight of gay people to his own community of color. He received two standing ovations! Boston Mayor Thomas Menino was funny, engaging, and effective as he auctioned off Red Sox tickets! Congressman Barney Frank eloquently spoke of his PFLAG mom, the late Elsie Frank.

We were proud to honor the Greater Boston Business Council with our

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MARK YOUR CALENDAR FOR MONTHLY PFLAG MEETINGS

If you cannot reach one of the numbers below, call the PFLAG office at (781) 891-5966.

Arlington -- 2nd Tuesday, 7:15pm, First Parish Church, Sunshine Nursery School, 630 Mass Ave., Arlington (781) 891-5966 pflagarlmass@yahoo.com.

Brewster/Cape Cod -- 3rd Monday, 7:00pm, 1st Parish Brewster, Main St. (508) 398-6471

Cape Ann -- 1st Tuesday, 7:00-9:00pm, First Universalist Church of Essex, 57 Main St., Essex, MA 01929, www.uuessex.org for directions. Contact: Maria at m_menendez@verizon.net.

Concord -- 3rd Sunday, 7:00pm, Trinity Episcopal Church Library, 81 Elm (enter from River St.) Contact: Beth (978) 692-7677, bobandbeth@comcast.net.

Dorchester -- 3rd Thursday, 6:30pm, Codman Square Health Center, 637 Washington St., Conference Room A. Contact: Lucretia lucretiakeygodfrey@msn.com or (781) 891-5966.

Easton Area -- 4th Monday, 7:30pm (if holiday, then 3rd Monday); Unity Church, 9 Main St, (508) 238-0567, pflageaston@comcast.net. Co-Chairpersons: Cecile Arnold and Mary Cuddy Sutherland.

Fall River -- 1st Wednesday of the month. 7:00-9:00pm at Durfee High School, 360 Elsbree St. Room 101. Use the main entrance. Contacts: Mary Zema, Marianne Quinn (401) 391-1874, zemawoman@verizon.net.

Falmouth/Cape Cod -- Contact: Anne (508) 548-1038, annenfred@verizon.net

Martha's Vineyard -- 3rd Sunday, 3:00pm, Unitarian Universalist Church, 238 Main, Vineyard Haven, (508) 627-4948, rabrown1950@aol.com.

Reading -- 2nd Thursday, 7:30pm, Loring House, 211 Summer Ave., Reading, MA Email Linda at: whtsthpn@gmail.com. (On the campus of the Unitarian Universalist Church of Reading, at the intersection of Woburn St. and Summer Ave. Park in the parking lot between the church and Loring House.)

Springfield -- 4th Wednesday, 7:00pm, Feeding Hills Congregational Church, 21 N Westfield St., Feeding Hills, MA 01030-1672; (413) 786-5061, agrace1966@comcast.net.

Worcester -- 3rd Wednesday, 7:00pm, The Bridge, 4 Mann Street, pflagworchester@iname.com.

Non-PFLAG Group meetings:

Always Our Children -- 1st and 3rd Tuesday, 7:00pm, Community Room of Sacred Heart Convent (behind Sacred Heart Church), 395 Chestnut Street, Springfield, MA 01104, Contact: Ann (413) 736-6803

Straight Spouses Group -- For Boston group, contact ssn.boston@comcast.net or call Ivan (508) 966-0275 or email Tara at tgl563@gmail.com. Other areas use: www.StraightSpouse.org.

Transgender Group, Waltham/Tiffany Club of New England -- Call (781) 899-3230 or (781) 891-9325 for info.



The Samaritans provide a free and confidential 24-hour befriending helpline. This unique service, staffed entirely by volunteers, provides unconditional and non-judgmental support to anyone who feels alone, depressed, or in crisis.

Samariteens is a peer support line staffed by teens talking to teen callers during after-school and weekend hours. For more information on volunteering, call us at 617-536-2460 or visit us online at www.samaritansofboston.org. If you need to talk to someone on our help lines for any reason, you can reach us at **617-247-0220** or **877-870-HOPE (4673)** or for teens at **800-252-TEEN (8336)**.

2008 Elsie Frank Scholarship Winners

Our 2008 Elsie Frank Scholarship winners were announced at Greater Boston PFLAG's 6th Annual Pride and Passion Party Fundraiser and at Youth Pride. We received applications from 95 students from 74 high schools, the largest response in the history of the program. We awarded \$10,000 to six winners and 7 finalists received a Certificate of Recognition. We easily could have awarded 16 applicants; they were that good. Of the applicants, there were 59 straight allies (52 were females), 14 gay males, 8 lesbians, 2 bisexuals, 2 transgender, 2 questioning, and 3 applicants with gay parents.

To be eligible, the student must be an active member of the Gay/Straight Alliance at his/her school, or in a community-based organization for gay, lesbian, bisexual or transgender people. The award is based on the essay the student writes and his/her actions either as an individual or as a member of their Gay/Straight Alliance or community organization. It is NOT based on the student's grades or financial situation.

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2008 Elsie Frank Scholarship Winners -
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Congratulations and gratitude to all of our wonderful winners and applicants!

Erwin Mo is a senior at South High Community School in Worcester. She immigrated to the United States from Guatemala only three years ago to escape the discrimination and abuse she faced in her native country, where she was the victim of a violent hate crime that resulted in the death of a transsexual friend. Here, Erwin has found a place where she can “break patterns [and has] earned respect and has fought for her rights” as a transsexual. She is an accomplished dancer and will perform

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Gay and Questioning Foreign Exchange Students Need Homes

The Cambridge-based EF Foundation for Foreign Study is looking for host families in the Boston area who would welcome an exchange student who is gay or questioning. The Foundation’s representative told us that each year several of their students arrive in the U.S. and feel safe enough to come out, because they are away from the pressure they feel at home to live up to the expectations of families, friends, and teachers. The Foundation hopes to build up a list of families who would be willing to provide a safe home for several months to these students. They have asked Greater Boston PFLAG members and friends to consider opening their homes and hearts to students who, perhaps more than most, need the acceptance that PFLAG families and friends will especially provide. To learn more about the EF Foundation, go to www.effoundation.org or email Lori Scoggin at Lori.scogin@ef.com.

Greater Boston PFLAG *News & Views* welcomes coming out stories, articles, letters, and comments from our readers.

E-mail articles to Editor at:

GBPFLAG_Newsletter@yahoo.com.

Include your name and phone number.

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ADVERTISING INFORMATION

All ads must be camera-ready (that is, in a format ready to print). Mail your ad and payment to Greater Boston PFLAG, PO Box 541619, Waltham, MA 02454-1619, or e-mail your ad as an attachment to Pflagsafeschools@aol.com.

	<u>PER</u> <u>ISSUE</u>	<u>PER</u> <u>YEAR (4x)</u>
Business Card, 3-1/2" w x 2" h	\$15	\$50
Quarter page, 3-1/2" w x 4" h	\$25	\$100

DEADLINE FOR NEXT ISSUE:

August 8, 2008

Cahn Funds for Social Change Award

The Cahn Funds for Social Change has awarded \$2,000 to Greater Boston PFLAG to be used for promoting their new Helping Professionals Initiative, which will establish collaborative relationships between religious denominations and counseling professional organizations and Greater Boston PFLAG.

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Unconditional Love

To Gunner

Tick tock, Tick tock
The clock moves so fast
One day she was born
and now she is gone.
Tick tock, Tick tock
The clock moves so fast
I turn around and see that
she is really gone.
Who is standing in her place
but a young man and
I cannot see his face.
Tick tock, Tick tock
The clock moves so fast.
Could it be me?
Not willing to see,
but yet to my surprise
it is someone with my eyes.
He stands so close
that I must look again
to understand.
I have no blame
and take no shame.
Tick tock, Tick tock
The clock moves so fast.
So when I have a slip of the tongue,
it's only a moment in time
which was left behind.

But I really know
she is not gone,
but they have become one.
The phone will ring
and I say Hello.
Only to hear a deep voice,
my mind is slow.
So the words feel lost.
I may mumble,
I may stumble,
but he knows it is only
a moment in time.
He has grown to be someone special
with all his talents and drive,
to help people understand
that all our hopes and dreams
may always be alive.
Tick tock, Tick tock
The clock moves so fast.
I hope he knows
I will love him,
which will always last
till the end of time.
Love,
Mom
Kathryn-Lee Cahill
Weymouth, MA

Selected Quotes from the 2008 Elsie Frank Scholarship Essays

“Well this isn’t fair,” I thought to myself. “Why does my sister get the flashy pink Barbie corvette and I am stuck with a dingy G.I. Joe Jeep?” This Jeep certainly would not match my personality.” **Richard, Danvers**

“I was asked what it was like growing up with a gay father. In answering this question, I realized that I never really thought that I was any different from my peers.”
Ariel, Greenfield

“So, instead of hating those who would bring me down, I rise above that discrimination and take into stride all the positive things about me and remain true to myself no matter what.” **Mathew, Reading**

“...the LGBT community is the next large hurdle in the quest for an ideal United States – one that is free from prejudice. And this weighty task has been assigned to my generation.” **Sarah, Littleton**

“When society thinks about young boys, they often expect them to be out on a sports field. I was no exception to that stereotype, so I tried playing soccer, baseball, basketball, and gymnastics before I found the one activity that made me who I am today. At the age of nine, I auditioned for a small theatre production...I loved it!” **Patrick, Mashpee**

“After weeks of agonizing and hiding the secret, I promised myself that I would never be silenced again. Gradually, I came out to my closest friends, then to my sister, then to my parents. With their support, I grew more comfortable with myself.” **James, Raynham**

“My father, in particular, expressed support and a positive attitude when I came out to him, which was a complete surprise, because I was terrified of telling him.”
Michael, Milford

“From its original five-member attendance in 2005, the GSA club has exponentially grown, and currently has

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2008 Elsie Frank Scholarship Winners - (Continued from page 5)
the tango in her school's International Show, an artistic celebration of world cultures. Erwin plans on pursuing the performing arts or communications in college.

Meredith Nicholson is a senior at Brookline High School where she is a member of the National Honor Society, the award-winning Drama Society, and a student leader in the Gay-Straight Alliance. Described as a "child of the 60's with the know-how and vocabulary of the 21st century," Meredith takes her activism beyond the school walls as a GLSEN Boston clerk and Executive Committee member, and she has helped organize two GLSEN Annual Conferences as well been a part of a National Student Leadership Team. No stranger to overcoming obstacles, Meredith has faced both the stigma of being an out lesbian in high school and having Pervasive Development Disorder. Consequently, she is "determined to advocate for the right of all people to openly identify with the sexual orientation or gender identity that accurately reflects their sense of self." Meredith has applied to New York University, Emerson College, Smith College, and Sarah Lawrence, among others.

Edmund Hu is a senior at Malden High School where he is captain of the wrestling team and leader of the GSA. As an out student, Edmund initially struggled with acceptance from his traditional Chinese family, which led to difficulties with self-esteem, depression, and suicide. However, once he joined the GSA, Edmund became an advocate for other students like himself. As a role model within his school, Edmund has become, in his words, a "strange underworld hero to Asian American and gay students." Beyond school, Edmund's interests lie in veterinary and animal sciences, and he plans to pursue this track at the University of Massachusetts Amherst, the University of New Hampshire, or Howard University. Edmund will surely succeed, for as he writes, "Now, there is no stopping me."

Richard Kelley is a senior at Danvers High School and plans to pursue Business and Finance in the honors program at Bryant University, Babson College, Fairfield University or Bentley College. Before he leaves, Richard will have left an indelible mark at Danvers High School by founding SHIFT (Shaping Homosexual Images for Tomorrow), the school's first GSA. As president, Richard has led several fundraisers to help the non-profit organization Strongest Link, which provides support to AIDS patients and their families in Essex County. In addition, Richard has succeeded in changing how gay students are perceived at Danvers High among both the student body and faculty. He is also the president of his school's chapter of DECA. His GSA

advisor commends him for "going above and beyond the expectations of any student," and continues by stating that she has "yet to meet another student as dedicated as Richard."

Sebastian Urrea is a senior at Leominster High School. He was accepted at Tufts, Wesleyan, Boston College, Providence, and UMASS-Amherst where he will pursue Psychology, Music, Computer Engineering/ Programming or Education. Sebastian is in National Honor Society, French National Honor Society and National Hispanic Recognition Program. When Sebastian recognized that he was gay, "I gave myself a very hard time about it for months, and became very depressed, suicidal even." After coming out to his mom and dad and receiving their support, he flourished. He is the student advisor for his GSA, created a Facebook page for the GSA, and created a Spanish version of the GSA posters. "Now, I am openly gay, and proud of who I am." His guidance counselor writes, "His commitment and perseverance remain unwavering regardless of the nature of the obstacles presented. He refuses to settle for anything less than exemplary performance. Sebastian is a young man any one of us would be eternally proud to call our son."

Amanda Rains is a senior at Blackstone-Millville Regional HS. She has applied to Framingham State, Bridgewater State, and was accepted at Rhode Island College. She is an aspiring English teacher. Amanda founded and runs her high school gay straight alliance. She was an active GSA member of North Middlesex Regional HS. As an out lesbian, Amanda improved the school climate by speaking in a school assembly. When someone yelled, "faggot" as she walked to the stage, no one said or did anything. After that horrific moment, she spoke about the incident in a "School Climate Meeting". She said, "... half the issue with intolerance in the school are the teachers, and if they can't find it in themselves to be leaders, then what are we, as students, supposed to do?" Her guidance counselor says, "Amanda has become the sort of student that every teacher wishes she could have: engaging, thought-provoking, involved and contagious. When Amanda offers her thoughts, the students are poised, listening, imbibing her words."

Greater Boston PFLAG is looking for new Board Members!

Terms begin in October 2008 and last for 2 years.

We seek parents, families, friends and allies of GLBT people and/or GLBT people!

Meetings are once a month.

If interested and to find out more, email us at info@gbpflag.org or call 781-891-5966.

**Massachusetts High School Students and Sexual Orientation
Youth Risk Behavior Survey Comparison of 2005 and 2007 Results**

2005 Results Comparing Gay, Lesbian, and Bisexual Youth to Their Straight Counterparts

Reported Behaviors	GLB Students*	Other Students
Attempted suicide in the past year	24.8	5.7
Required medical attention as a result of a suicide attempt	8.2	2.2
Skipped school in the past month because of feeling unsafe on route to or at school	16.3	3.5
Was threatened/injured with a weapon at school in the past year	10.2	5.2
Was In a physical fight resulting in treatment by doctor or nurse	11.7	3.7

**All differences between GLB students and Others are statistically significant, p. <.05.*

2007 Results Comparing Gay, Lesbian, and Bisexual Youth to Their Straight Counterparts

Reported Behaviors	GLB Students*	Other Students
Attempted suicide in the past year	29.1	6.4
Required medical attention as a result of a suicide attempt	12.1	2.2
Skipped school in the past month because of feeling unsafe on route to or at school	13.3	4.2
Was threatened/injured with a weapon at school in the past year	18.7	4.5
Was In a physical fight resulting in treatment by doctor or nurse	12.7	3.7

**All differences between GLB students and Others are statistically significant, p. < .05.*

President's Message - (Continued from page 2)

heard, "Mom, Dad, I'm gay." We provide information to counter myths and misinformation about sexual orientation and gender identity so that every gay child or other family member can be truly accepted. Through our web site www.gbpflag.org and our helpline 866-GBPFLAG (866-427-3524), we connect people with free one-on-one and group support services. We have provided these support services because we have observed the positive results of parental acceptance.

On May 12, Greater Boston PFLAG sponsored a forum featuring Dr. Caitlin Ryan of San Francisco State University. Dr. Ryan gave us a preview of some of the conclusions of a six-year research study of GLBT youth and their families that she has directed, which will be published later this year. The study involved participants across racial, ethnic, religious, and socio-economic backgrounds, and is one of the most in-depth and rigorous examinations of how family acceptance and support results in positive outcomes for GLBT youth, and how negative family response to a gay child leads to negative outcomes. Dr. Ryan's research will likely have a huge impact on public policy and on the work of PFLAG.

In part, Dr. Ryan's research validates what Greater Boston PFLAG has been doing in terms of working with parents. But her research has much broader implications. Dr. Ryan noted that virtually every parent responds to a

gay child believing that they are acting in the child's best interest. However, almost all parents get their information about parenting a gay child from unreliable resources (such as personal upbringing, religious organizations, the media, peers) rather than from a health or counseling professional. A parent's lack of acceptance, has pronounced deleterious effects, and parental acceptance produces strong, healthy, and well-adjusted children. Parents who are confronted with information about the importance of acceptance tend to modify their behavior, and even modest changes in the level of parental acceptance produce measurable positive outcomes. Because children are aware of sexual orientation by 9th grade and have formed gender identities much earlier, there is a strong need to educate parents about the importance of parental acceptance, much earlier than is currently common. We at PFLAG will be pondering the implications of Dr. Ryan's research for our strategic plans for 2008-9. However, we will clearly need to seek out new ways to reach out to parents, and to improve our capacities to provide parental support and education.

Clearly, there is much to be done, and Greater Boston PFLAG could certainly use your help. Please call us at 781-891-5966 or visit our web site (www.gbpflag.org) to join greater Boston PFLAG, to contribute, and to volunteer. I am hoping, that with your help, we will look at the 2009 MYRBS and see signs of improvement.

Spirits Soared at 6th Annual Pride and Passion Party Fundraiser! (Continued from page 3)

Distinguished Community Leadership Award.

The success of the event was due to the hard work of our Pride and Passion Committee co-chaired by Jeff Dubinski and Linda Peterson; and our Honorary Co-Chairs – Anne and Chad Gifford and Joan Parker.

Pride in who we are and Passion for what we do carried the night. Over \$100,000 was raised for our Safe Schools and Communities Programs. This year we added seven new corporate supporters, and we thank all of our corporate sponsors: Bank of America, Goodwin Procter, Mintz Levin, TJX Companies, Inc., Bingham McCutchen, Bank of New York Mellon, Osram Sylvania, Raytheon, Reproductive Science Center, Burns & Levinson, John Hancock Financial Services, Sun Microsystems, Wainwright Bank, Coldwell Banker, Met Life Auto & Home.

And, thanks to our individual sponsors: Anne and Chad Gifford, Joan and Robert Parker, Debby and Andy Rempis, Stanley Griffith and Ann Schaufner, Arline Kulin, Doris Breay, Cecile and Rabbi Stephen Arnold, Ann and Charles Beitz, George and Alice Clattenburg, Ann and Chet Franczyk, Kathleen Miskiewicz, Mary and Rich Piccolo, Joseph Takarewski, and Paul Weeks and David Picard. Thanks to all of you who make this essential, life-saving work possible!

“It was a beautiful evening filled with love and very special people.”

Quotes from the 2008 Elsie Frank Scholarship Essays
(Continued from page 6)

about 35 members from grades sixth through ninth! Whenever Peter and I go back, we are known as ‘the founders of the GSA,’ and we are proud.” **Daly, Dorchester**

“I sincerely hope that one day I’ll be accepted just as I am, without people looking at me the wrong way, and without people whispering behind my back about my sexual orientation.” **Erwin, Worcester**

“But the real reward came when students from all over my high school began telling me that they were gay, too. I became this strange underworld hero to Asian American and gay students.” **Edmund, Malden**

“I am a queerspawn. I identify as heterosexual, but I know what coming out feels like.” **Emily, Georgetown**

“I think half of the issue with intolerance in the school is the teachers, and if they can’t find it in themselves to be leaders, then what are we, as students, supposed to do?”

Amanda Rains

“...my family and friends have shown me that I can live my life to its full potential and still be who I want to be.”

Michael McDonald

“...the fight for acceptance will always be urgent.” **Si Eun**

“Instead of walking in the shadows, I wanted to stand out from the crowd and demonstrate that a gay Asian-American can be as athletically talented, well-spoken, and ‘normal’ as any other person.” **Edmund, Malden**

“I was so scared of what they would say when I spoke at a freshman assembly recently about not using the word ‘gay’ as a substitute for stupid and how to be more accepting towards people in general. They told me that when I spoke, it really got through to them ... [they] convinced me that I’ve done something right for the community.” **Jackie, Medford**

“When I came out to my school, I wanted to let people know that I was available for GLBTQ students to use as a resource, or just as a friend. [A girl] sought me out on Facebook because she was planning on coming out to her parents and needed support. She was feeling really alone and lonely.” **Lauren, Needham**

“I had managed with the gay jokes and the ‘playful’ comments before, but the word ‘faggot’ was sneered with such a sentiment of resentment and disgust that it felt like a knife was launched into my chest. Gradually, I came out to my closest friends, then to my sister, then to my parents. With their support, I grew more comfortable with myself, and I saw notable changes in my disposition. My face no longer reddened at the mention of homosexuality, and instead of slouching back from intruding questions, I proudly proclaimed, ‘Yes, I am



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