

# PFLAG Buffalo/Niagara

Parents, Families, Friends and Allies United with LGBTQ People

**PO Box 617  
Buffalo, NY 14207  
716-883-0384 Helpline**



**To avoid Father's Day schedule conflicts. we will meet the last Sunday instead of the third.**

**Our next Sharing Meeting will be  
Sunday, June 23<sup>rd</sup> @ 2:30-4:30.**

[info@pflagbuffalo.org](mailto:info@pflagbuffalo.org)

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

[www.facebook.com/pflag.niagara](https://www.facebook.com/pflag.niagara)

Generally, monthly sharing meetings are held at **Kenilworth United Church of Christ, 45 Dalton Drive, Tonawanda 14223**, from 2:30 - 4.30. Newcomers and anyone interested will be offered the option of meeting privately with a PFLAG parent. Our monthly meetings are in the library, which is near the parking lot entrance. The facility is handicapped accessible. **New Parents Meetings** are scheduled as needed at a location convenient to those involved. These self-help one on one sessions are available to those who request a meeting outside of the monthly sharing meeting.

*We meet because we have learned that someone very close to us is Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, or Transgender. We try to help one another deal with this information in a positive manner. Although we do not agree at all times, we try to be understanding. We offer help to those who seek it, but do not force ourselves on others. We strive to maintain anonymity while sharing on a level that is comfortable for all of us.*

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# PFLAG News and Updates



The Scholarship Committee will be meeting in early June to select the two winners. Winners will be notified in mid-June and the results will be shared in the July newsletter.



This year PFLAG will support Pride Parade by viewing, cheering, smiling, and stomping as attendees rather than as marchers. Our contingent will spread love and pride from the sidewalk this year; and, though the location of our support has changed, the strength and passion will not!



PFLAG was a Silver Sponsor of this year's *Buffalo Brunch*, embraceWNY's annual fundraiser and awards ceremony, held at Salvatore's Italian Gardens on May 5<sup>th</sup>. This year's Community Service honorees were Unity of Buffalo, Black Intelligent Women's Alliance (BILA), and West Seneca East High School's Gay Straight Alliance, and Rod Hensel. Special citations were presented to Assemblyman Pat Burke and Paul Morgan.

PFLAG thanks embraceWNY and *The Buffalo Brunch*. We are happy to support such a wonderful fundraiser; we congratulate all scholarship winners and honorees.

### ***END OF AN ERA***

With gratitude and best wishes, PFLAG Buffalo/Niagara said farewell to longtime board members Brian and Ann Carrier and Michele Perry at its May meeting. These dedicated people have together given over 30 years of support and service to our group.

They are stepping down from their posts after many years and countless hours of assistance to our education, advocacy, and support mission.



**Brian second from left; Ann third from left**

Ann and Brian began attending sharing meetings almost ten years ago. Later, both became board members, and Brian was elected treasurer. With Brian at the helm, PFLAG's finances and tax responsibilities were always clear, accurate, and on time. Brian also oversaw the use of technology and online resources as the group's finances modernized.

Ann started as one of a group of people who handled the *Helpline* responsibilities. Later, she became the sole person who received and returned all calls, doing so with understanding and empathy.

Ann's compassion, support, and calming voice and spirit were perfect for people reaching out for the first time.

Together, the Carriers also brought the “parent” part of PFLAG out into the community. They spoke, tabled, and shared at many events including the annual GSA Conferences. When groups called for speakers at corporate or private or religious events, Brian and Ann were always willing and very able as they shared their journey with PFLAG and educated many about what PFLAG has to offer.

They even opened their homes if people calling the *Helpline* wanted to meet ahead of the monthly meeting, knowing that a person in crisis may need support and connection sooner than later.

The Carriers also served as yearly “carriers” of the PFLAG banner announcing the PFLAG contingent at the Pride Parade.

PFLAG Buffalo/Niagara sends sincere thanks to Brian and Ann Carrier for all they have done. We wish them well as they leave the board and know they both will keep sharing our mission and work, but in an unofficial capacity.

Michele Perry started attending sharing meetings when her sister came out over 15 years ago.

She epitomizes the “family” part of PFLAG’s name and mission. She was asked to join the board, and eventually became the secretary. Michele is the sharing constant who identifies herself as the “proud sister of a lesbian.”

Chances are if you have ever been to a sharing meeting, you have heard these words and also heard wise words of support from Michele.

You will feel her heart and soul as you read these words she shared with the board recently:

When I walked into my first PFLAG sharing meeting, I didn’t really have a “journey” to talk about and didn’t have much of a story to share. I’m just The Proud Sister of a Lesbian who thinks this life is about being happy, no matter who you are with.

## PFLAG Buffalo-Niagara

PFLAG has educated me about many issues within the LGBTQIA community. PFLAG meetings helped to shape my views about the LGBTQIA community as well as the hetero community.

PFLAG has *tried to* teach me more patience when I'm speaking to people who espouse anti-LGBTQIA opinions. I'm still working on that patience level (!) but I try to come at these types of conversations from the vantage point of a "teachable moment" instead of an emotional one.

My involvement has given me one of my most joyful days of each of the last 15 year the Pride Parade.

These monthly Sundays have introduced me to so many good-hearted people from every walk of life, made me more appreciative of my role as that Proud Sister of a Lesbian, and has afforded me the opportunity of several treasured friendships.

If it wasn't for my involvement in PFLAG Buffalo/Niagara, I wouldn't have become an ordained minister and had the high honor of performing the nuptials of my younger sister and her wife. I have walked into Sunday meetings not wanting to be there and I have *ALWAYS* left with so much appreciation, with a heart that is full, a soul that is sailing and with feet barely touching the ground.

Michele's minutes of each meeting helped keep the board focused, its goals clear, and all old and new business recorded and progressing.



Michele's hard work, wise sharing, and tireless championing will not be forgotten.

We wish all three dear friends the best in their "retirement" and are so thankful for their decades of service and friendship.

***PFLAG Buffalo/Niagara Board of Directors***

***Voting for president, secretary, and treasurer took place at the May 19<sup>th</sup> board meeting and results are listed below.***

*Officers:*

*President: Julie Christiano*

*Secretary: Lisbeth Ball*

*Treasurer: David Barrett*

*Directors: Sharon Barrett and Kathryn Klopp*

**PFLAG Buffalo-Niagara, is a non-profit, all volunteer, community-based organization, not affiliated with any ethnic, religious, economic, or political group.**

