

## Iftar: Making Space for More of Us

By Shenaaz Janmohamed

**T**he U.S. is home to 8 million Muslims, and Islam is a vast multiracial faith. The first Muslims in the U.S. were forcibly brought over as enslaved African Muslims, who showed great resistance, continuing their spiritual practices despite grave persecution and danger. Ramadan, the ninth month of the Muslim lunar calendar, is a time of community gathering and collective spiritual practices. A central Ramadan practice is a daily fast from sunrise to sunset, closing nightly with community coming together to share food during *iftars*. These *iftars* can be a beautiful reflection of the history of migration and resilience of Muslims through food—from tamales, collard greens, noodles, biryani and much more.

*Iftar* spaces can also be a needed sanctuary for Muslim communities amidst oppressive conditions like Trump's Travel Ban, ongoing occupation in Palestine, famine in Yemen, and displacement of countless peoples due to war and military intervention across many Arab states and Muslim majority countries. Muslim folks are not alone in needing sanctuary in this historical moment. People need to come together in community-created spaces that are deliberately resisting ICE

and refusing to police black and brown bodies—safe(r) places that are community-built, where we can move towards healing and recalibrate our nervous systems.

For LGBTQIA Muslims however, to find community sanctuary can feel like an impossible feat. The global reach of patriarchy and its consequences of homophobia and transphobia continues to afflict our religious and spiritual communities. And the disconnection from spiritual and faith practices within social justice community does not invite Muslim folks to show up as whole to our organizing work. We often experience a double bind where we do not feel fully whole within Queer spaces and are often unwelcome or closeting ourselves in straight Muslim spaces.

Due of the onslaught of discrimination

(continued on page 11)



## Indulging Nourishment

By Mitali Purkayastha

***"Caring for myself is not self-indulgence, it is self-preservation, and that is an act of political warfare." —Audre Lorde***

**I**n the spirit of radical poet—and lesbian mom—Audre Lorde, I believe we need to decolonize acts of self-indulgence and of self-nourishment. We need to remind ourselves that food and plant medicine are ancestral ritual, critically important to self- and family-preservation and health. Many spiritual and cultural practices regard eating as ritual, as a very sacred time. Meals are where different peoples' energies are drawn together, where thanks are given. A nourishing meal at home with family is that very ritual: it is an extremely special time, when eyes and heart can connect, when the self and the family is fueled.

Breaking bread in family settings has great benefits, whether you're a single parent juggling things, or you

feel disconnected from your family or culture of origin, or your family consists of adults working around the clock at home. Defrosting, prepping, and organizing meals on a regular basis might feel daunting. It's hard at any time to juggle work life and community engagement and healthy food prep for your family. But now many of us feel like we are just fighting to survive. That means that now it is even more important to value self-preservation, re-imagining what indulgence means.

You might feel indulgence is shameful. You might even think it refers only to "treats." But why does making and sharing a meal feel like a chore more than a practice of self-care? Relax a moment and imagine the meals you most looked forward to growing up. A grandmother's dish, your aunt's rich cooking flavors,

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### DIRECTOR'S NOTE

## Food for Thought

by Renata Moreira, Executive Director

I went to Catholic Mass with my siblings and mamá every Sunday when I was growing up. I remember eagerly awaiting the time the priest would lift up the host, bless it, and share it with the community—mimicking Christ's *fractio panis*—the practice of breaking the sacramental bread. It turns out every spiritual tradition has a similar practice that revolves around shared nourishment of our individual and collective minds, bodies, and souls. The preparation and sharing of meals can be global rituals, unequivocally tied to love and care, in addition to survival. Preparing meals in community, with loved ones or strangers, is a great opportunity for us to connect to each other's humanity and Earth's bounty. The sharing of meals allows us to build community and nourish ourselves and those we love, even when we're chasing our toddlers around the table or begging our kiddos to ingest at least one spoonful of veggies. Yes, some meals can be quite stressful and preparation even harder—considering most of us are juggling a thousand responsibilities. And yet, they are still invitations for us to nourish ourselves, express gratitude for the nourishment, and connect with each other.

What we eat is one of the most important decisions we make every day (when we, in fact, have the privilege of making that decision). Our food and environments can either promote our family's health or make us sick. History has also taught us that our food has been colonized and weaponized against us over and over again. The way our food is produced and prepared can contribute to healthy communities, or it can undermine them. Our farming practices can use scarce natural resources responsibly, or they can deplete them. What we produce and consume tells stories of our access, privilege, and cultures. Inevitably, then, our food consumption—specifically—must become a major site of resistance and cultural reclamation. Our consumption has the power to link us back to the spiritual “breaking of the bread” and nourishing of our families in a very different way than what's usually dictated by commercial interests.

In this newsletter issue, we explore the shared wisdom of Shenaaz Janmohamed and Mitali Purkayastha and their recipes for resistance. And in this short column, I invite you to also consider how many revolutions were birthed at the kitchen table and how we can best continue feeding the bodies and souls of our movements for LGBTQ equity. We know LGBT folks experience disproportionate levels of food insecurity and higher participation rates in the SNAP program, for instance, especially those of us raising children and in black and brown communities. In fact, data from the Williams Institute at UCLA suggests that same-sex couples raising children are approximately twice as likely to receive food stamps as different-sex couples with children. It is, then, our collective responsibility to bring food politics to the center of our social justice agenda and continue fueling this work in sustainable ways.

What does that mean? We must nourish the body, mind, and souls of our various communities, which includes ensuring that our agents of change and children can access healthy food, rest, and connection to each other. We have known and done this since the beginning of time: Our revolution can start right in our very own kitchens selecting what is yummy for our families' health and teaching ourselves to critically assess our food origins and choices (or lack of choices). We can model for our children what communing over meals could look like without a cell phone at hand. We can support a more responsible and sustainable food system. And, yes, we must continue to demand that our political leaders step up to the plate. This summer, we invite you to keep cultivating and feeding your family and friends with relationships and food that will help us grow and propel social justice forward. Break bread with us? 🍞



# OUR FAMILY COALITION'S ANNUAL NIGHT OUT

FRIDAY, MAY 11, 2018



What a night! Thanks to all who made our Night Out gala an unprecedented success. Hundreds of community leaders, sponsors, and donors came together to honor leadership, celebrate, and give very generously to help ensure we can sustain and expand our critical work.

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[www.ourfamily.org/give-back/night-out](http://www.ourfamily.org/give-back/night-out)

# CALENDAR

<b>TUES</b> <b>July 31;</b> <b>Aug</b> <b>7, 14, 21;</b> <b>Sep 4, 11</b> <b>6–8pm</b>	<b>QTPOC Parents Support Group</b> <b>OUR FAMILY COALITION OFFICE, 1385 MISSION ST., STE 340, SAN FRANCISCO</b> Navigating the world as a queer person of color and parent can be complex; finding a safe space to connect and build community with each other can be a challenge. Join OFC for an 8-week support group for queer and trans parents of color where you can be your whole self and talk about what matters to you. Dinner and child care provided free with advance registration.	<b>SF</b>
<b>THU</b> <b>July 12</b> <b>6–8pm</b>	<b>Learn It, Do It Yourself! Domestic Partner &amp; Second Parent Adoption Workshop</b> <b>BANANAS, 5232 CLAREMONT AVE., OAKLAND</b> Do you have questions about the new adoption procedures or about the differences between stepparent and second parent adoption? At this hands-on workshop, Emily Daskow, an attorney with decades of experience working with LGBTQ families, will describe current adoption rules and procedures, answer questions, and then help you prepare the adoption paperwork. If you're not ready to move ahead with an adoption but want information about the process, attend the first hour presentation and Q&A. Stay for the second half if you want help with preparing forms.	<b>EB</b>
<b>SUN</b> <b>July 15</b> <b>10am–1pm</b>	<b>Habitot Pride Day</b> <b>HABITOT CHILDREN'S MUSEUM, BERKELEY</b> Celebrate Pride at Habitot Children's Museum with other LGBTQ families in an afternoon of fun and community-building. Infants, toddlers, preschoolers, and their grown ups can explore the rocketship, get messy in the art studio, splash around in the water play area, and more!	<b>EB</b>
<b>SAT</b> <b>July 21</b> <b>12–4pm</b>	<b>BBQ Lunch @ OFC LGBTQ Campout 2018</b> Join us at Tilden Park's beautiful Gillespie group campsite for fun, food, and family time in the great outdoors! We'll have games, and crafts. Lunch will be served 12–2pm, followed by optional crafts, and games. Meat and vegetarian options available. Spaces are limited so register now at <a href="http://ourfamily.org">ourfamily.org</a> !	<b>EB</b>
<b>SUN</b> <b>Aug 5</b> <b>2–4pm</b>	<b>Mission Cliffs Climbing Party</b> <b>2295 HARRISON ST., SAN FRANCISCO</b> Rock climbing is a fun activity for kids of all ages and abilities. While parents take photos, MC's party staff will do all the work of belaying the kids and encouraging them to climb as high as they want. Snacks and more fun activities for parents and kids will be provided in the break room. This activity is for youth ages 6–12 yrs.	<b>SF</b>
<b>THU</b> <b>Aug 9</b> <b>6–8pm</b>	<b>Inclusive Puberty &amp; Sex Ed Workshop</b> <b>OUR FAMILY COALITION OFFICE, 1385 MISSION ST., STE 340, SAN FRANCISCO</b> The California Healthy Youth Act ensures that puberty and sexuality education in California public schools are LGBTQ inclusive. In this discussion-based workshop for LGBTQ parents, we will talk about what schools are legally required to cover in sex ed by grade level, tools for parents to advocate for inclusive puberty and sexuality education, and age-appropriate ways parents can support understanding of these topics at home.	<b>SF</b>
<b>SAT</b> <b>Aug 11</b> <b>10am–12pm</b>	<b>Trans Family Field Trip to Cat Town</b> <b>2869 BROADWAY, OAKLAND</b> Cuddle, pet, and enjoy some kitty time at Cat Town with other trans families with kids. Cuteness alert—HIGH! Cat Town also has a cafe, so you can enjoy some coffee and snacks too. Space is limited!	<b>EB</b>
<b>SUN</b> <b>Aug 19</b> <b>3–6pm</b>	<b>Trans Family Pool Party</b> <b>SAVA POOL, 2695 19TH AVE., SAN FRANCISCO</b> Enjoy some splashy summer fun with OFC! Trans, non-binary and gender non-conforming parents and kids can dive in and have the pool all to ourselves, surrounded by friendly, supportive community. Allies welcome!	<b>SF</b>

**Free childcare and food are provided at all events, with advance registration.**  
**For further information and event registration, visit [www.ourfamily.org](http://www.ourfamily.org).**



WED  
Aug 22  
6–8pm

### **The Gender Creative Child**

**BANANAS, 5232 CLAREMONT AVE., OAKLAND**

Join us for a special evening with Dr. Diane Ehrensaft, pioneering advocate and champion for gender nonconforming children and adolescents. She'll bring her 30 years of experience to bear in a discussion of how we can nurture and support children who live outside gender binaries, and how we can prepare all children to be their authentic gender selves.

EB

THU  
Aug 30  
5–8pm

### **LGBTQ-Inclusive Preschool & Kindergarten Fair**

**SAN FRANCISCO DAY SCHOOL, 350 MASONIC AVE., SAN FRANCISCO**

Are you looking for LGBTQ-Inclusive Preschools and Kindergartens in San Francisco? Come join us at the 7th Annual San Francisco LGBTQ-Inclusive Preschool & Kindergarten Fair. This is a space for you to ask questions and gain valuable information about schools that are welcoming and LGBTQ-inclusive. Activities and snacks will be provided for children of all ages.

SF

WED  
Sep 5, 12,  
19, 26  
6–8pm

### **Group Triple P**

**OUR FAMILY COALITION OFFICE, 1385 MISSION ST., STE 340, SAN FRANCISCO**

OFC staffers will guide LGBTQ parents and caregivers through the 12-week Positive Parenting Program. Triple P is designed to promote positive parenting practices in the community, prevent a range of social and behavioral problems in children, and aims to support parents to promote their child's social, emotional, and behavioral development. For parents and caregivers with children 2–10 years old.

SF

SUN  
Sep 9  
10:30am–  
4pm

### **Oakland Pride Parade, Festival, & Family Garden**

**PARADE: BROADWAY & 14TH ST. GARDEN: FRANKLIN & 21ST ST., OAKLAND (KAISER PARKING LOT)**

Celebrate family and march with us at the Oakland Pride Parade! Then explore and relax in the Family and Children's Garden with a giant slide, bounce houses, art activities, games, petting zoo, story time and more.

EB

## **Indulging Nourishment**

*(continued from page 1)*

a regular, go-to family take-out meal. Which meals made you feel happy, centered, and or grounded?

Consider now preparing that favorite comforting meal as if its preparation were a ritual. As you grow in your practice of that ritual, try to give it the time and the space it needs. Build space in your schedule (even if it's once a month at first). Over time you will the ingredients—and the intention—will grow. And with that, so will the nutrition.

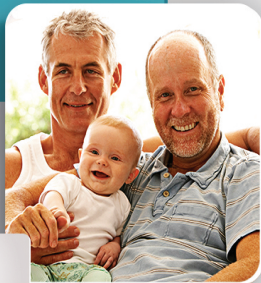
As the ritual of preparing and sharing meals becomes a more established part of your life, inevitable changes will create variations in how you make meals. How much time do you have on any given day? What's in the fridge? Perhaps you couldn't make it to the store this week: what dried and bulk foods do you have? Being mindful also means being resourceful. Remember that our/your ancestors ate whole foods. How can you incorporate whole grains, seeds, the whole vegetable (root, fruit, and stem) into this meal? If sitting together at the table isn't an option for your family for any reason, still make the preparation of the food a ritual for you and your family. Include everyone you can. Anything from packing lunches, to adding an ingredient to the pot, to brainstorming a grocery list of favorite foods, can be a way that everyone, of every age, can be involved in this sacred process of nourishment!

Your self- and family-nourishing ritual will be more powerful when all the food, herbs, spices, and other remedies are sourced and made by sustainable growers and makers. Indulging in teas, salves, oils, rubs, and any other accessible herbal and spice remedies for the entire family is another radical act of self-love and sustainable nourishment.

Incorporate these plant-based remedies into your morning or nightly rituals, as a way to indulge in another moment of self-preservation. As a way to signal storytime and bedtime with your children, light a candle, dim the lights, and apply a relaxing lavender salve. This is a gentle way to show yourself and your children some love before bed. With any and every seemingly busy, necessary family care step, set an intention, help yourself see that act as ritual, as your love alive in practice.

Connecting with the earth and their medicines, plants, and foods is connecting you and your family to your roots. Nourishing yourselves, your families, your loved ones, your roots, and your whole being: what a sweet, indulgent, radical act of love. 🌱

*Mitali Purkayastha, a caregiver of children for over 14 years, is a holistic chef and caterer specializing in the healing properties of food. They facilitate our Trans / GNC Parent Support Group.*



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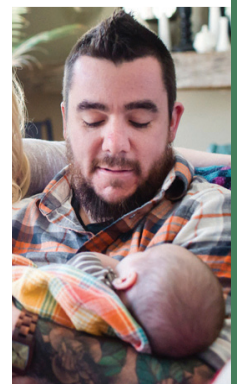
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## SUPPORT GROUPS

WED  
Aug 1  
Sep 5  
5:30–7:30pm

### Rainbow Family Night

HABITOT CHILDREN'S MUSEUM, 2065 KITTREDGE ST., BERKELEY

LGBTQ parents are invited to join our facilitated support group to connect, share experiences, swap tips, and discuss issues relevant to our families, while kids have a great time playing at Habitot.

EB

TUE  
July 24  
Aug 28  
Sep 25  
6–8pm

### Drop-In Support for LGBTQ+ Parents

CHILDREN'S DAY SCHOOL, 333 DOLORES ST., SAN FRANCISCO

Enjoy a meal with your kids and other LGBTQ+ families, then parents and caregivers break off for facilitated discussions with their peers about family and child-rearing issues. Dinner and childcare provided with advance registration.

SF

### SF Pride

This year we marched closer to the beginning of the parade than ever thanks to our representing the FAIR Education Act Implementation Coalition, which earned Pride's José Julio Sarria History-Maker Award. Proud of the impact of all that hard work; proud of our solidarity with families separated and incarcerated at the border; proud of all our families. Thank you all for making this year's Pride so very special.

JUNE  
24



## PLAYGROUPS

TUESDAYS  
July 10, 17, 24, 31  
Sep 11, 18, 25  
10–11:30am

### LGBTQ Parent-Child Interactive Playgroup (0–5 years)

We'll be taking various field trips in July. Check out our website calendar for programming! Note: Playgroup will be on hiatus in August. We'll be back in September.

EB

FRIDAYS  
July 27,  
Aug 3, 10, 17, 24, 31,  
Sep 7, 14, 21, 28  
9:30–11am

### Toddle with Me: Music & Movement Class (1–5 years)

COMMUNITY WELL, 78 OCEAN AVE., SAN FRANCISCO

Offered weekly for LGBTQ parents with young children, our music and movement classes promote kids' overall development. Using creative physical expression, this class promotes gross and fine motor skill development, coordination and balance, as well as early literacy, pre-math, and social-emotional skills.

SF

FRIDAYS  
Aug 3, 10, 17, 24, 31  
11:30am–1pm

### Infant Massage (0–12 months)

COMMUNITY WELL, 78 OCEAN AVE., SAN FRANCISCO

Infant massage is an amazing way to connect with your baby! In this 5-week interactive class for LGBTQ parents with infants, you'll learn the basics of respectful, connective touch; a whole body massage routine; specific techniques to help with tummy issues; and gentle baby stretches that connect left/right brain neural pathways.

SF

FRIDAYS  
Sep 7, 14, 21, 28  
11:30am–1pm

### Baby & Me: Infant Class (0–12 months)

COMMUNITY WELL, 78 OCEAN AVE., SAN FRANCISCO

Want more quality time with your little one? OFC will be hosting an 8-week infant class for LGBTQ parents and caregivers. This interactive parent-child class helps support child bonding, overall health, and increases know-how about your infant's cognitive, physical, and language development!

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## Two Spirit Storytime

JUNE

3

The first-ever  
Two Spirit  
Storytime was a  
wonderful success.  
Thank you to  
everyone who  
came out and who  
helped make it  
happen.



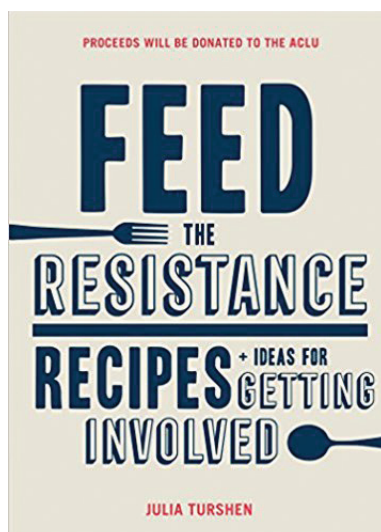


## BOOK CORNER

### **Feed the Resistance: Recipes + Ideas for Getting Involved**

by **Julia Turshen**

From publisher's website: When people search for ways to resist injustice and express support for civil rights, environmental protections, and more, they begin by gathering around the table to talk and plan. These dishes foster community and provide sustenance for the mind and soul, including a dozen of the healthy, affordable recipes Turshen is known for, plus over 15 more recipes from a diverse range of celebrated chefs. With stimulating lists, extensive resources, and essays from activists in the worlds of food, politics, and social causes, *Feed the Resistance* is a must have handbook for anyone hoping to make a difference.



### **Iftar...**

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around who has access, safety, and inclusion within our Muslim community. Staying curious and open to how marginalized folks experience systemic oppression due to disability, gender, sexuality, class and race, are questions all communities must grapple with to meet the changing political and cultural expressions and needs of this historical time.

There is a collective need for community to experience spaces that are affirming in our wholeness and that assert an experience of belonging. As an organizer and healer—but mostly because of my role as a mama—I have felt this need for LBTQIA Muslims to be held in all of our intersecting identities. I have been longing for my 2.5-year-old daughter to witness the rich and deep spiritual practices within Islam, while also knowing she and her queer family are fully welcomed and held as part of the greater whole. This past Ramadan I birthed Queer Crescent Healing, a community project that creates healing arts and spiritual practice spaces for queer, trans and nonbinary Muslims. We kicked off our programing by hosting a weekly healing *iftar* for queer and trans Muslims and allies. During these *iftars* we invited healers from adjacent and allied communities to share their modalities and practices such as herbalists, body workers, reiki/energy workers, organizers, and martial arts practitioners.

Looking back at this month of celebrating both Ramadan and Pride, I feel humbled knowing I was able to tap into the legacy of resistance, which is the foundational lesson from our Stonewall ancestors. I am reminded that sometimes the most revolutionary acts are the subtle ways we interrupt the status quo, and instead decide to radically make space for more of us to be seen. Making space for more of us to heal and be free. ☺

*Shenaaz Janmohamed, LCSW is the Founding Director of Queer Crescent Healing, a healing arts and justice organization building safety and spiritual practice spaces for trans, queer and gender nonconforming Muslims.*



Our Family Coalition advances equity for lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and queer (LGBTQ) families with children through support, education, and advocacy.

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