

"I Want All Children to Feel Safe and Seen"

An Interview with Gavin Odabashian

Gavin Odabashian is an adult child of LGBTQ parents and an early education teacher

OUR FAMILY COALITION: Tell us a little bit about yourself and your family.

GAVIN ODABASHIAN:

I grew up in the Bay Area. I am 27 years old, and I have two moms and a younger brother. My sperm donor is a close family friend whom I have always known.

One of my moms gave birth to me and then a few years later my other mom gave birth to my brother. We have the same sperm donor. When my moms decided they wanted to start a family, there weren't many models for how to do it. There weren't many couples they knew going through the process and even fewer lesbian couples who were giving



birth with a friend as the sperm donor. From the beginning it was always agreed upon that my moms would be the parents, and my sperm donor would play the role of good family friend—not playing a father role for me or my brother. This has always been an important point for me; I have two amazing parents and I'm not "lacking" anything.

Looking at queer families like mine through a biological lens can be very limiting. There's so much more to a family than that. The question of which mom I'm biologically related to typically comes up, and I usually bristle at it, as it suggests that I'm somehow less connected to my brother or to my mom who didn't give birth to me. And oftentimes people assume that my mom who didn't give birth to me is my biological mother because we are so similar and close—which goes to show we

(continued on page 4)

What Makes Schools LGBTQ-Inclusive?



By Rob Darrow, PhD

What makes a school inclusive and welcoming to all students—especially LGBTQ students? If you ask this question to different groups of people—whether parents or teachers or students, you may get different answers.

I recently facilitated a student panel composed of high school LGBTQ-identified students speaking to a group of educators. Their message over and over to the adults in the room was, "care for us like you do all of your students," "accept us for who we are," and "ask questions if you want to know more."

Most educators have not learned much about the LGBTQ community because few college education preparation programs (for teachers, counselors, librarians, nurses, school administrators, etc.) discuss LGBTQ topics, people or history. People who have learned about the community

have done so on their own through their own reading or because a family member identifies as part of the LGBTQ community. Most educators I have met throughout the state want to be more inclusive in their teaching and want to learn more about the LGBTQ community as it relates to their students. The challenge of the school structure is finding the time to facilitate this time of learning for teachers who already have busy teaching schedules. Although I am focusing this article on K-12 education, many of the thoughts can apply in other educational settings as well, such as preschools, community colleges and universities.

Let's take a minute to identify the type of LGBTQ topics that educators need to know in order to create an inclusive school. Among other concepts, educators need to learn about gender identity, sexual orientation, school policies and procedures about supporting LGBTQ students, how to support LGBTQ students, how to react to homophobic remarks or bullying on campus, how to create a safe and inclusive space in their classrooms, and how to integrate LGBTQ topics into their curriculum, whether in history, English, math, health science or P.E. There are six main groups of

(continued on page 11)

IN THIS ISSUE



Director's Note	2
Calendar	6
Support Groups	8
Playgroups	8
Night Out 2018	9



History Forum	11
Our Donors	12
Staff Updates	13
Book Corner	13
Night Out Sponsors	15
Staff & Board	15



DIRECTOR'S NOTE

Inclusive Education IS Transformation

by **Renata Moreira, Executive Director**



As a trained academic and social change advocate, I've spent most of my professional career bringing innovations from educational institutions to real applications in community. For over a decade, I also saw the crucial role of community-based initiatives and experiences in informing educational environments for the benefit of the broader community. It is in this spirit that I now share with you how proud I've been leading OFC over the past two years, witnessing our nonprofit beautifully bridge social transformation and education.

At OFC we spend lots of energy and resources to advance inclusive education for all. We educate child-serving professionals about LGBTQ family diversity and anti-bias approaches to their work. We provide parents and families with key skills and support to raise healthy families. We have advocated vigorously for change in educational institutions' approach to LGBTQ people and families. And we work in collaboration with visionary educators to ensure that the promise of LGBTQ visibility continues to be realized.

It occurs to me that folks may not see the direct link between our work and the well-being of LGBTQ families. So, what's the exact connection to education work?

OFC was founded a generation ago to strengthen and extend LGBTQ family-centered playgroups, support groups, and advocacy. We soon realized that one of the most long-lasting ways we could strengthen our community would be to take on the issue of our invisibility and/or misrepresentation in the institutions that had the greatest impact on our children and our families. Schools are where children develop a sense of themselves outside their families and neighborhoods. Schools are where they begin to form understandings about the world around them, and how they (and our families) fit into it.

So long as our children's families are invisible in their books and classroom discussions, and so long as their teachers are afraid to even mention LGBTQ people—let alone with clarity and understanding—our children will be at risk. Sometimes physically; always emotionally.

Over the years we have worked hard to usher in a great many changes for the better. In the fall of 2017, we saw the state of California adopt only the LGBTQ-inclusive textbooks we recommended, for use in K-8 classes throughout the state. And last October in San Francisco, and this February in Los Angeles, we hosted the first-ever forums for educators interested in taking the next steps with us. We brought together and focused the priorities of dozens of teachers, content-providers, administrators, scholars, and community members passionately dedicated to being a part of the next phase of this work—where the rubber hits the road, as it were, the lessons' arrival in the classroom.

How can teachers teach about something they may know little about, which was not a part of their credentialing process? How do schools build understanding and defuse tension around material which for many in their community remains anywhere from uncomfortable to controversial to patently unwelcome? Where can one find training to do this work with wisdom, confidence, and compassion?

We've been answering these questions together with some amazing educators, and this spring's newsletter cover articles features two of them. I couldn't be more proud of OFC's work and grateful for our educators: my daughter will be entering kindergarten in a couple of years and based on the advocacy we've already had to do for her in preschool, I know I'm going to want her teachers to receive all the support they can now. I want my daughter to be able to know she'll be understood and supported when she says what we all feel: "I'm proud of my family." 🌈

LGBTQ-FRIENDLY SUMMER CAMPS

FAMILY CAMPS

Crissy Field Center

June 1–2, 2019

bitly.com/cfc-queerfamily

Crissy Field Center facilitates outdoor environmental day camps that provide children with meaningful experiences in the Golden Gate National Parks and beyond. This event is overnight camping in the Presidio, Saturday-Sunday. All camping gear is provided.

PACT Camp

July 2–7, 2019

Tahoe City, CA

www.pactadopt.org/events/

Putting It All Together: Adoption, Race & Family—A Gathering for Adoptive Families With Children of Color is a weeklong summer retreat where adopted children of color and their families share experiences while learning from experts and each other.

Camp It Up!

July 27–August 4, 2019

Quincy, CA

www.campitup.org

Camp It Up!—the longest-running LGBTQ family camp in the country—is an experience, a feeling of belonging, of connecting, a powerful expression of how life can and should be for all of us. It's where each of us is safe to be just who we are, where kids can run free and be held by an entire community.

Camp Tawonga—Keshet LGBT Family Weekend

Multiple dates June through August

Yosemite National Park

www.tawonga.org

This innovative program draws participants from all over the country. The first of its kind in the Jewish

camping world, we offer a truly incredible community. Renowned educators from across the country will lead specialized workshops.

DAY CAMPS

Girls on the Go! Camp

June 17–August 23, 2019

www.girlsonthegocamp.com

Girls explore, engage, and connect with one another and the beautiful Bay Area. Special guests share their talents in interactive playshops, with a special focus for each week. Girls enjoy summer days filled with spontaneous and planned adventures.

Monkey Business Camp

June 10–August 23, 2019

www.monkeybusinesscamp.com

Monkey Business Camp was founded by two lesbians. They started Monkey Business Camp to nurture the creativity and individuality of each child in a loving and magical environment. They develop programs to achieve a balance between structure and spontaneity, to provide for the varied needs and interests of campers, and to build a powerful, peaceful, fun-loving community.

Brave Trails

Multiple dates starting June–August

Just outside Los Angeles

www.bravetrails.org

A residential summer camp for lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans, queer, questioning, asexual, and allied youth (LGBTQ), ages 12–20. Campers will focus on developing their

personal leadership skills while enjoying activities, workshops, and fun programming. From roasting marshmallows and drag shows to horseback riding and social justice workshops, there are plenty of activities to choose from!

enGender–Rainbow Day Camp

Dates TBD

El Cerrito

www.engendernow.org/summer-camps

Rainbow Day Camp is a play-based camp for gender-creative kids to reinforce positive, gender fluid identities in a community of peers. Psychotherapists who are gender specialists will be available after drop off and before pickup to answer questions and facilitate the parent support discussion group.

FAMILY CRUISE

R Family Vacations

July 21–28, 2019

<http://www.rfamilyvacations.com>

R Family Vacations and Olivia are teaming up once again to bring you the cruise of a lifetime! Introducing our 2019 LGBT Family and Friends Caribbean Group Cruise on board one of the World's Largest Ships—Royal Caribbean's Harmony of the Seas! Join 500 of your closest LGBT family and friends (everyone can join us—kids are welcome but not required) as we sail round-trip out of Orlando/Port Canaveral, FL with stops in CocoCay (RCCL's own private island), St. Thomas/St. John, St. Maarten and three thrilling days at sea.

Safe and Seen...

(continued from page 1)

really are a mixture of nature and nurture, and families are complex.

OFC: To what extent were you 'out' about your family? How much educating did you feel you had to do?

GO: Growing up, there weren't any families like mine in my community. School was hard for me because of that. I was keenly aware of my difference and felt the burden that many kids feel who are "the only _____ kid in the class." I was always the first kid with two moms going through my schools. There weren't openly gay teachers or administrators at my elementary or middle schools. There was a lot of education that me and my family had to do with my teachers and peers.

I experienced microaggressions, like teachers referring to 'your mom and your dad' when addressing kids' parents, even though they knew my family structure was different from that. I remember when a kid in my class told me "my mom said you can't have two moms." There were multiple situations like that where—it wasn't explicit homophobia—but it definitely was ignorance.

I was really sensitive to being different. I had a lot of fear about being bullied or about people saying mean things about my family. I didn't feel seen or understood at school. Although I was always extroverted and social, I was pretty avoidant of school, not wanting to go most days of elementary school. As I got older, around the time I was in middle school, I became more concerned with blending in as much as possible. I certainly wasn't trying to form a GSA at my school or come right out about my family. And that was painful because I felt like I was betraying my parents by not being more outspoken and proudly out.

I feel sad now that the younger me felt this outside pressure to conform. At the same time, I tried to protect my moms from homophobia. I worried about them a lot. And I would vet new friends before bringing them over to my house—listening to hear if they would say anything homophobic, especially then, when the phrase "that's so gay" was commonly used. I heard it pretty much every day. So, I kept track of who said that and who didn't and wouldn't become close with those people in school.

As a child, I didn't really seek out other queer families. In hindsight, I think that it might have been helpful to develop relationships with more families like mine. I remember my moms would ask if I wanted to be a part of different groups for kids of gay parents, but I think because of where I was developmentally, I didn't want to participate.

OFC: What changed for you then?

GO: For high school, I left the public school system and

went to a small, independent school. At that school there were more efforts to engage students around "diversity" issues. I remember there being different events and workshops with panelists speaking about LGBTQ issues and about the many diverse ways that a person can be. I remember feeling more safe just because these events existed. I felt encouraged to be more involved and outspoken about my family.

Simultaneously, while I was in high school, we as a family were fighting more and more for marriage equality. We would go to marches and speak at rallies. Especially surrounding Prop 8 in 2008, we became much more involved in LGBTQ activism.

My moms got married during that window of time when gay couples could get married in San Francisco. It was so beautiful to witness their decades of marriage and commitment finally recognized legally—and so painful to then see Prop 8 pass.

OFC: Why did you decide to become an educator, and how does your own family show up in how you teach?

GO: My childhood experiences deeply inform my practice and purpose for why I want to be a teacher. I want all children to feel

seen and safe for being themselves. I want all children to know that the beautiful, different parts of them make them special and these differences contribute to a community in such an important ways. Our differences should be celebrated and talked about directly and openly.

OFC: How old were you when this discomfort first showed up and you started avoiding school?

GO: In first grade, maybe even kindergarten. There were a number of situations that made me feel like I didn't belong, where I wasn't well supported by the adults at school. My experience as a child fuels how I am with kids now. I want every child to feel supported, and I want them to know that they matter, to feel that their story, their family, who they are, can be present in the space. I often think about myself as a child and how I would do things differently if I could have been the teacher to my younger self. In the school where I teach now, there is much more diversity than in my schools when I was kid, more diversity in terms of experiences, family structures, race, class, and gender identities. And as an educator, I want to always be intentional about curriculum, about how I structure my teaching, and our class norms, how I respond to social-emotional issues that arise.

One of the most important things we can teach young people is understanding that we are all different and arriving to school coming from different experiences in life. We are all deserving of dignity, respect, and kindness. Our duty as

(continued on page 5)

"One of our first lessons is that in our world we don't just have boys and girls. We have human beings and people who identify on a spectrum."

Safe and Seen...

(continued from page 4)

a community is to take care of each other and to learn from each other about our different experiences.

OFC: How old are the kids in your classroom?

GO: Six and seven. I love really this age. We teach them about what it means to be a human being in a community. We teach them that it's our job as a community to support everyone and to speak our truths, and to listen to each other. We teach them about differences of genders and identities. We talk about stereotypes. We teach them that it's each person's right to define for themselves who they are. It's amazing because you can tell they are growing up in a time and in communities where they know about gender: they know 'yes, a boy can wear a dress and yes, a person can be non-binary and no, they don't have to be a boy or a girl, and of course two women can be in love.' It's beautiful to witness. And I am open with my students about my family. From the very first day, I tell them 'I have two moms' and it doesn't even seem to faze them. They are familiar with families like mine because there are LGBTQ families in our school and more visibly in communities and in society.

OFC: I think it's great that kids get the chance to talk about diversity in school too because what you get at home might be a different lesson than the one you get at home. It should be an ongoing conversation and critically thought about so we don't pass on those biases.

GO: The school I teach in now is rooted in social justice values. That on its own is powerful—to expose children at a young age to social justice frameworks for looking at the world. And I think schools need to take a multilayered approach to being truly inclusive. I'm thinking about my own experience. Even if my teachers had allowed me to make two mother's day cards for my moms, that's not enough to make a child feel safe, seen, and understood for who they are. Teachers need to be thoughtful about representation in the books we read, about diverse representation in the images we use in the classroom. Schools need to provide quality trainings for teachers about inclusion, equity and bias. We need to be thoughtful about the language we use. As an educator, how do you talk about people, how do you model kindness and openness in how you speak to others, how do you address a class? Is it "boys and girls," or do you refer to them as "kids," or "students?" How are you reinforcing dominant, heteronormative ideas in subtle ways? These questions are so important to think about and regularly reflect on. I

love helping children form their visions of the world and themselves. As a teacher you're in a precious, privileged position because you're helping to guide them through important self-exploration. Everything you do and say matters, especially in early education.

OFC: The FAIR Education Act requires Fair Accurate Inclusive and Respectful representation of LGBTQ folx and people with disabilities in history and social studies curriculum. Can you speak to what LGBTQ inclusive education looks like in your classroom, specifically as an early education teacher?

I think it starts from the very first day of school, as I said, embedded in curriculum but also in the classroom norms and the culture you create as a teacher. One of the things we do at the beginning of the school year is we introduce the students to the classroom, to the routines, the norms and expectations for behavior, and to the expectations for recess and the bathrooms. Our school used to have a boys bathroom, a girls bathroom and a single-stall all-gender bathroom—and we just recently renovated to have all-gender bathrooms only, which is fantastic.

We teach our students that it's each person's decision to use the bathroom where they feel most comfortable. Your job is to take care of your needs and also to help others feel safe, it's not your job to police who is using which bathroom. And of course if you see someone who is doing something that's making someone else feel uncomfortable then always tell an adult. So, from the beginning, one of our first lessons is that in our world we don't just have a binary of boys and girls. We are complex human beings and people who identify on a spectrum. And the bathrooms is just one small example.

More broadly, we teach our students that you are allowed to decide and define for yourself who you are and how you identify. And that this may change over the course of a person's life. We are always growing and changing as human beings. We teach about the range of pronouns. We talk about making assumptions about how a person might identify based on how they look. It's amazing how my students soak this up! I've even accidentally gendered things or people at times and the kids will say, "But you don't know how they identify." Something very normative can come up in a book, and I will ask how could these characters be or look different? And the students have really creative, expansive ideas. I've witnessed children being so supportive of each other, especially when a classmate is curious about exploring their gender identity, or is gender expansive. They stand up for each other. And for this age, that can be

(continued on page 15)

<p>SAT Apr 6, 13, 20 & 27 May 4 & 11 10am– 12pm</p>	<p>Cooking and Nutrition Series TBD—PLEASE CHECK OUR WEBSITE CALENDAR FOR UPDATES 18 Reasons will lead LGBTQ parents and children in an interactive cooking and nutrition class. Gain insights about supporting a developing diet and ways to encourage healthy eating. This six part series will take place every Saturday and is designed for parents and children ages 3–6 years old.</p>	<p>EB</p>
<p>SAT Apr 6 2–5pm</p>	<p>Talking With Kids About Race SAN FRANCISCO PUBLIC LIBRARY, 100 LARKIN ST, KORET AUDITORIUM, SAN FRANCISCO Parents and their children, educators, and caregivers are invited for an afternoon of storytelling, story learning, story creating, as well as story evaluating...especially when stories don't align with our values.</p>	<p>SF</p>
<p>SAT Apr 13 10am–12pm</p>	<p>Family Field Trip to Cat Town CAT TOWN, 2869 BROADWAY, OAKLAND 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, so remember to register on our website!</p>	<p>EB</p>
<p>WED May 8 6:30–8:30pm</p>	<p>Coming Out: How to Support Your LGBTQ Child HABITOT CHILDREN'S MUSEUM, 2065 KITTREDGE ST., BERKELEY So your child just came out as lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender or gender non-conforming. What do you do? How you react has a deep and lasting impact on their lives. Join us for a discussion on parenting and supporting your child with Dr. Diane Ehrensaft, Ph.D., Director of Mental Health, Child and Adolescent Gender Center, UCSF and Jessie Rose Cohen, LCSW, a Bay Area child and family therapist and queer parent who specializes in work with youth.</p>	<p>EB</p>
<p>THU May 16 10:30am– 12:30pm</p>	<p>Gardening Workshop for Toddlers PIEDMONT AVENUE BRANCH LIBRARY, 80 ECHO AVE., OAKLAND Gardening is a perfect sensory activity for all ages! From the smell of the soil to the sight of beautiful flowers and the taste of herbs, all senses will be engaged in this class. The workshop will include storytime, songs, and a hands-on activity. Kids have the opportunity to get a little dirty, so please dress appropriately.</p>	<p>EB</p>
<p>THU May 16 6–8pm</p>	<p>Egg Meets Sperm Mixer ERIC QUEZADA CENTER FOR CULTURE & POLITICS, 518 VALENCIA ST., SAN FRANCISCO Are you ready to start a family? Looking for egg or sperm, or a co-parent? At this fun mixer, LGBTQ people interested in finding or being a known donor or co-parent can meet one another and talk about expanding family. Facilitated icebreakers, refreshments and wine will be provided. Open to folks of all genders.</p>	<p>SF</p>
<p>SUN June 2 12–2pm</p>	<p>Trans Family Picnic in the Park HELEN DILLER PLAYGROUND--MISSION DOLORES PARK, SAN FRANCISCO Join trans, gender nonconforming and non-binary parents and their families for a fun picnic at Dolores Park to kick off Pride season. Bring a blanket and your favorite beverage, and OFC will provide tasty chicken and vegetarian tacos, along with kid snacks, and fun activities. Find us by the playground!</p>	<p>SF</p>
<p>FRI June 14 6–9:30pm</p>	<p>QWOCMAP Film Festival BRAVA THEATER, 2781 24TH ST., SAN FRANCISCO Join Our Family Coalition in support of Queer Women of Color Media Arts Project. Through film, queer women and transgender people of color authentically represent their visions, voices and life stories. We will be providing childcare on opening night!</p>	<p>SF</p>

*Free childcare and food are provided at all events, with advance registration.
For further information and event registration, visit www.ourfamily.org.*

SAT June 15 11am–5pm	<i>San Mateo Pride 2019</i> SAN MATEO CENTRAL PARK, 50 E. 5TH AVE., SAN MATEO Join us for fun, crafty activities! We'll be situated as close to the jumpy house as possible. There will also be healthy snacks for you and your little ones. See you there!	
SUN June 23 10am–12:30pm	<i>Frameline Family Matinee</i> ROXIE THEATER, 3117 16TH ST., SAN FRANCISCO Wondering which Frameline film to bring your child to, if any? May we suggest our annual Family Film Matinee, co-hosted by the Frameline Film Festival. Super secret film title to be announced in June!	SF
FRI June 28 2–5pm	<i>Trans March Family Zone</i> HELEN DILLER PLAYGROUND—MISSION DOLORES PARK, SAN FRANCISCO Come be part of one of the largest trans events in the country! Join other trans families—including trans parents/caregivers and their families, and gender-expansive kids and their families—at the family zone and march.	SF
SAT June 29 11am–1pm	<i>Dyke March Potluck Brunch</i> HELEN DILLER PLAYGROUND—MISSION DOLORES PARK, SAN FRANCISCO Kick off your Dyke March day (or begin and end it!) with a potluck brunch for the whole family at the entrance of Dolores Park's fantastic playground.	SF
SUN June 30 9–11am	<i>SF LGBTQ+ Pride Parade</i> LOWER MARKET ST AREA, STEP-OFF BLOCK TBA, SAN FRANCISCO March in the LGBTQ Family Contingent at the SF Pride Parade! Our precise gathering time and block are TBA; watch our website for details mid-June.	SF
SUN June 30 11am–4pm	<i>SF Pride Family Garden</i> HELEN DILLER CIVIC CENTER NORTH PLAYGROUND, LARKIN & MCALLISTER STS., SAN FRANCISCO Join in fun art activities, face painting and more at the Family Garden.	SF



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SCAN ME

Night Out Sponsorship Opportunities

DEADLINE: APRIL 15

Is your workplace or business ready to be featured as champions for equity, inclusion, and the LGBTQ family community? Night Out sponsorship puts your support in the spotlight. It's not too late!

Champion Sponsors (\$6,000) receive preferred seating for twenty guests (two tables of ten) plus stage recognition, premium logo placement in all event materials, and more!

Teacher Sponsors (\$3,500) receive tickets for ten guests (one table of ten) at Night Out plus visibility benefits.

Advocate Sponsors (\$1,750) receive five tickets to Night Out plus promo benefits.

Neighbor Sponsors (\$650) receive two tickets to Night Out as well as listing in Night Out materials.

<https://www.ourfamily.org/give-back>

Please contact jenny@ourfamily.org, to sign up for this opportunity today.

SUPPORT GROUPS

WEDNESDAYS

Rainbow Family Night

EB

Apr 3

May 1

June 5

5:30–7:30pm

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.

TUESDAYS

Monthly QTPOC Parents Support Group

SF

Apr 9

May 14

June 11

6–8pm

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

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's monthly support group for queer and trans parents of color in San Francisco where you can be your whole self and talk about what matters to you. Dinner and child care provided free with advance registration.

TUESDAYS

Drop-In Support for LGBTQ+ Parents

SF

Apr 23

May 28

6–8pm

OUR FAMILY COALITION, 1385 MISSION ST., STE 340, 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.

PLAYGROUPS

FRIDAYS

Toddle with Me (1–4 years)

SF

Apr 5, 12, 19, 26

May 3, 10, 17, 24, 31

June 7, 14

9–10:30am

RECESS COLLECTIVE, 2226 TARAVAL ST., 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.

TUESDAYS

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

EB

Apr 2, 9, 16, 23, 30

May 7, 14, 21, 28

June 4, 11

10–11:30am

DESTINY ARTS, 970 GRACE AVE., OAKLAND

Interactive play and circle time for infants, toddlers, and their grown ups, including fun activities like music, movement, and storytelling. Healthy snacks provided!

MONDAYS

Baby & Me: Infant Class (0–12 months)

SF

Apr 8, 15, 22, 29

10:30am–12pm

COMMUNITY WELL, 78 OCEAN AVE., SAN FRANCISCO

Want more quality time with your little one? Join OFC for the second half of our 8-week infant class for LGBTQ+ parents and caregivers. This parent-child interactive helps support child bonding and health, and increases know-how about your infant's cognitive, physical, and language development!

OUR FAMILY COALITION'S
ANNUAL **NIGHT OUT**
FRIDAY, APRIL 26, 2019
@ THE INTERCONTINENTAL SAN FRANCISCO

Join us for another special NIGHT OUT!

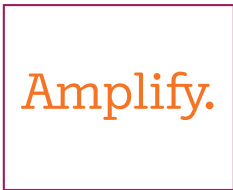
Sponsorship opportunities still available at <https://our.family.org/give-back>
Tickets are also on sale now! Don't miss out. This event will sell out.

Our Honorees



LUMINARY AWARD

Zach Wahls, Iowa Senator, for his advocacy on behalf of LGBTQ family and gender equity coast to coast.



CORPORATE IMPACT AWARD

Amplify for their exemplary, pioneering work in inclusive education.



COMMUNITY PARTNER AWARD

Alison Collins, Commissioner, San Francisco School Board and community organizer, for her dedication to educational equity for all.

Champion



Teacher



Steve Disselhorst and Lorevic Rivera

Advocate



Sharon Dulberg and Ilana Drummond • Kelly Shira and Nicole Pasini

<https://www.ourfamily.org/give-back>
As of March 14, 2019

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What Makes Schools ...

(continued from page 1)

people who work on a school campus who need some or all of this information: school administrators, teachers, health educators, school librarians and counselors, support staff, and students. Finally, various state laws (FAIR Ed Act 2011, California Healthy Youth Act 2015 and others) have passed that address many of these topics in Education Code, but most school districts are at the beginning stages of implementation.

Members of OFC staff have been focused on supporting school administrators and teachers about teaching LGBTQ history as part of a statewide effort to implement the new History Social Science Framework that was adopted in 2015. This statewide group is called the “Community of Practice for the Implementation of the History Social Science Framework, Content, Literacy, Inquiry and Civic Project” or CLIC Project. There are regional leads from throughout the state that will meet quarterly from 2018–2020 to learn how to best implement all of the content of the new framework in their respective regions. OFC is the lead agency in helping to educate the educators about the teaching of LGBTQ history.

Through our surveys with the CLIC region leads, we learned that most of the regional leads have good knowledge about the new framework and some knowledge about the LGBTQ community, but have limited knowledge about the *teaching* of LGBTQ history. We have worked together to identify those critical attributes that educators and teachers need to know in order to begin teaching LGBTQ history—and ultimately, to contribute to creating a more inclusive school climate.

We realized early on that educators needed a guide to first understand a little about the LGBTQ community and how they can learn more about teaching LGBTQ history. Most teachers want to feel confident and comfortable with the content before beginning to teach the content to students. We have now developed “Teaching LGBTQ History: An Educator’s Guide,” which provides background information about teaching LGBTQ history, ideas about how to integrate the content into history courses, basic LGBTQ vocabulary, and a list of resources to learn more. We specifically

provided ideas for implementation for schools that include:

- Building an understanding of LGBTQ history and the LGBTQ community within your school, district or county
- Building teacher content knowledge
- Building community / stakeholder knowledge and understanding
- Implementing the plan with a mind to sustainability and continuous improvement

Future tools we are developing as part of the CLIC project will be a video overview about teaching LGBTQ history, LGBTQ history lesson plans about gender that are aligned with the history social science framework, and professional learning modules for school administrators and teachers. In the process, we continue to learn more about the best ways to provide tools for educators.

Teachers teaching LGBTQ history in the curriculum is one component of creating an inclusive school culture. Together, we continue to work on all components of inclusive education for all students. Ultimately, schools and school districts need a systematic plan about how to provide an inclusive education for LGBTQ students. Teaching LGBTQ content in various courses—history, English and health—is a good way to continue to make our schools more welcoming and inclusive for all students so that ultimately, all are successful in school. ↻

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LGBTQ History Stakeholder Forum: Los Angeles

FEB

1

The LGBTQ History Stakeholder Forum was a tremendous success! We hosted a powerful day-long event, with facilitated sessions among educators and educational stakeholders, bringing all our collective insight to bear on the content and structure of the inaugural LGBTQ history professional learning program!



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Support Our Family Coalition at www.ourfamily.org.



Farewell, Tarah! Welcome, Rick!

After almost a decade of service to Our Family Coalition and our families, we bid farewell to Tarah Fleming as Education Director and welcome our new director, Rick Oculto!

Tarah has been a key player in the creation and development of OFC's Education Program since coming aboard in 2010. Tarah brought with her a wealth of experience from working on racial justice issues and infused the Education Program with an intersectional frame that permeates how we approach all of our social justice work and ensures that the most marginalized are at the forefront of our planning.

She helped develop the nationally acclaimed Welcoming Schools K-5 Program in partnership with the Human Rights Campaign. She later developed OFC's Inclusive Schools Program in 2013, expanding our trainings to K-8 in California.

In partnership with OFC's Policy Team, Tarah and Rick furthered the work of the FAIR Education Act and led it to where it is today: preparing for a statewide professional learning roll-out with the goal of training educators to teach LGBT history and the new CA HSS framework.

We are grateful for Tarah's dedication. She has trained thousands of teachers and family members in workshops such as Anti-Bias Education in Early Childhood, LGBTQ inclusive K-12 Classrooms, How to Talk with Kids about Race, and much more. As a fierce ally, she has also organized OFC's Family Power Group to support educators and parent leaders to advance radical inclusion and equity for LGBTQ families and people of color in California.

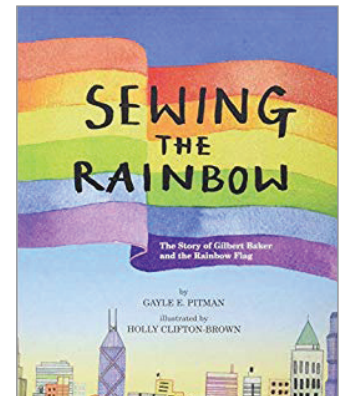
We wish Tarah the best as she furthers her work for social justice by way of her consulting practice. We welcome Rick as our new Education Director as he continues to advance this important work with OFC's team and our partners, taking our Education Program to the next level. Please contact education@ourfamily.org to request trainings for your school or district. 🌈

BOOK CORNER

Sewing the Rainbow: The Story of Gilbert Baker and the Rainbow Flag

By Gayle E. Pitman

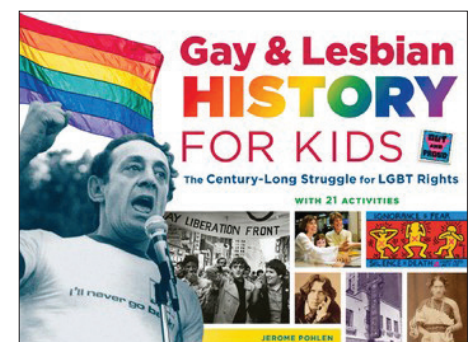
Gilbert Baker always knew he wanted a life full of color and sparkle. In his small, gray, flat Kansas hometown, he helped his grandma sew and created his own art whenever he could. It wasn't easy; life tried over and over again to make Gilbert conform. But his sparkle always shone through. He dreamed of someday going somewhere as vibrant and colorful as he was. Set against the backdrop of San Francisco during the gay rights movement of the 1970s, Gilbert's story unfolds just like the flag he created: in a riot of color, joy, and pride. Today the flag is everywhere, even in the small town where Gilbert grew up!



Gay & Lesbian History for Kids: The Century-Long Struggle for LGBT Rights, with 21 Activities

By Jerome Pohlen

Given today's news, it would be easy to get the impression that the campaign for LGBT equality is a recent development, but it is only the final act in a struggle that started more than a century ago. This history is told through personal stories and firsthand accounts of the movement's key events, like the 1950s "Lavender Scare," the Stonewall Inn uprising, and the AIDS crisis. Kids will learn about civil rights mavericks, like Dr. Magnus Hirschfeld, founder of the first gay rights organization; Phyllis Lyon and Del Martin, who turned the Daughters of Bilitis from a lesbian social club into a powerhouse for LGBT freedom; Christine Jorgensen, the nation's first famous transgender; and Harvey Milk, the first out candidate to win a seat on the San Francisco Board of Supervisors. Also chronicled are the historic contributions of famous LGBT individuals, from General von Steuben and Alan Turing to Jane Addams and Bayard Rustin, among others. This up-to-date history includes the landmark Supreme Court decision making marriage equality the law of the land. Twenty-one activities enliven the history and demonstrate the spirited ways the LGBT community has pushed for positive social change.



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Safe and Seen...

(continued from page 5)

challenging because neurologically and developmentally speaking, their brains have not yet developed the capacity to fully empathize with another person's experience.

Being able to see outside of one's own experience is a skill that we all need to practice actively, and that can be really difficult. It's a process. Ideally these lessons and conversations don't just happen a few times in one grade, it happens all the time, all the way through their schooling.

OFC: In the ideal educational world, what would you hope LGBTQ inclusive education would look like?

Laying groundwork from early on to establish foundational norms is so important. It's also about having an embedded approach that all teachers

would consistently model over and over again. It's more than just the curriculum and the explicit teaching—which of course is essential! But it's also in the small ways we communicate with each other. It's in the culture of a school, in our values. Our curriculum should be rooted in values of inclusion, respect, equity, diversity.

For myself as a student, I didn't really learn about queer people in history in school—so I'm thrilled about the advancements of the FAIR Education Act. Imagine the impact on children's lives when they can see and read about people like them, when our differences are normalized, visible, celebrated—in school and in our communities! I think it will be transformational. When we pretend differences don't exist, it is so harmful. Inclusive education has to be a deepening, reflective work. It needs to be multilayered and embedded in everything we do. 🌈



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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