



OUTSpoken

newsletter

volume 2 :: issue 1 :: winter 2007

INSIDE:

> Marriage Equality by 2020—Are you in it to win it?

We are. Here's the plan.

> ACTION: Create Inclusive Valentine's Day Cards

Share this family project with friends, neighbors & teachers.

CHECK OUT:

> The Parents Group Corner

www.familypride.org/parents

> The Family Pride Blog

www.familypride.org/blog

> Ways You Can Give to Family Pride

www.familypride.org/donate

Family Pride

PO Box 65327

Washington, DC 20035

ph. 202.331.5015

fax 202.331.0080

info@familypride.org

www.familypride.org

Parent's Groups – What We're Up To

With the launch of our new website, Family Pride has also reinvigorated our commitment, connection to and support of local parents groups.

- We have divided the program & education department into **regional coordinators** because so much of what affects our families is determined by region and locale.

- We have just designed and are sending out **Parents Group Kits** – a resource guide to building and maintaining active and dynamic parents groups.

There is now a special “**parents group corner**” section of the family pride website, www.familypride.org/parents. We want to ensure that members and leaders of parents groups can connect, download materials and have access to special tools and strategies to advocate for loving families in their own communities and states.

Why?

We think supporting parents groups is important because building community we can also *build community power*. It is so important that LGBTQ parents, prospective parents, children of LGBTQ parents, extended family members and supportive friends get together face-to-face. Knowing that others may be going through what you're going through, celebrating the joys and working through the challenges of being an LGBTQ-parented family, expands your circle of touchstones, your circle of friends.

We encourage people to be part of local parents groups because in our experience, parents groups can be tremendously powerful resource centers. Members share information, contacts and experiences with one another. 96% of

counties in the U.S. have LGBTQ-parented families. Instead of feeling isolated, we want families to find other families just as alike and just as different as their own.

How we view our role:

Since Family Pride is the *national* organization dedicated to securing family equality for all loving families, Family Pride really views itself as a connector with regards to local parents groups. We want to be a resource and help parents in the area find one another. Many states and metro areas have multiple groups. In those cases, we want to help make sure those groups are talking with one another when collaboration makes sense. Additionally, we look to local parents groups to be information distributors. Parents groups have been formed because it is recognized that there is a need to connect in that community. And we recognize that we all have something in common, the paramount desire to ensure that all loving families are recognized, respected, protected and celebrated. That is why we are committed to offering information and materials parents groups may need to be successful.

Finally, Family Pride has the deep desire to support leaders and mentors in communities across the country. Organizing a parents group is no small task. When people volunteer to step up in capacities such as parents group leaders or contacts, we want to back them up in whatever way they think we can be helpful.

How are OUTSpoken Families and parents groups linked?

Family Pride is invested in harnessing the power of committed parents and allies. Just like OUTSpoken Families, we are dedicated to reaching out, motivating and mobilizing everyone we can in the fight for family equality. **Visit www.familypride.org/parents today!**



Research shows that non-LGBTQ people are most likely to support family equality when they know three or more LGBTQ people personally.”

Marriage Equality by 2020—Are you in it to win it?

By Dustin Kight

This November the fundamentalist right got a wake up call—the people of this country are tired of the politics of hate. Whether a majority of Americans are on the side of marriage equality in this moment or not, they do realize that attack politics are unhelpful as this nation moves forward into the 21st century. We saw this realization in Arizona, where for the first time the marriage equality movement was successful in beating back a state marriage amendment. And where we were not successful, we did make inroads into the hearts and minds of American voters. The numbers in support of marriage bans and amendments dwindle each time the fundamentalist right uses marriage as a divide and conquer tactic for political gain. People are catching on and they're learning about LGBTQ people and our families. The road ahead will not be smooth, but it will lead us to a definite place—marriage equality for all.

Still, the fight for marriage is not without controversy in our community. Many argue that our time and attention should be spent on other issues—access to healthcare, employee nondiscrimination acts, safe schools and other concerns. At Family Pride, we have also struggled with the issue of movement priorities, as we know that *love* and *care*, not marriage or any other legal arrangement, truly make a family. We realize, however, that our current legal system holds up marriage higher than any other relationship for the protection and recognition of families. **No other arrangement—not a civil union or any slew of personal contracts and legal papers—affords the same rights and responsibilities provided by 1,138 federal laws and policies than marriage.** Nor are any other arrangements as socially recognized as marriage.

Is it fair that we are called upon by society to make this one particular legal arrangement fit our families in order to have them respected and protected as much as any other? No, but for those people in our community that want to marry, for the unprecedented legal protections marriage provides, and for its cultural recognition, we move forward with the fight for marriage for all.

The great thing about the fight for marriage equality is that it truly doesn't have to shift our attention from other issues.

Our community's plan to win this fight is based on pro-LGBTQ work being done in all 50 states all the time. Whether it's the push for marriage in one state, the passage of an LGBTQ-inclusive nondiscrimination act in another, or the start of a public education

campaign on LGBTQ issues in yet another, **the fact that pro-LGBTQ work is being done *everywhere* will bring us closer and closer to marriage equality for all.**

This multi-issue, full court press approach has a name. **It's called 2020 Vision.**

2020 Vision—The Movement's Plan for Victory:

2020 Vision is a deadline-driven approach. It begins with the idea that to achieve marriage equality nationwide we have to set a date for that victory and work backwards. Imagine that marriage equality is possible by the year 2020. Then define the work that needs to be done in the next thirteen years. Activists within our community, under the stewardship of Evan Wolfson, executive director of Freedom to Marry, have mapped a strategy to reach 2020's goal:

- **10 states must enact full marriage equality;**
- **10 states must create and recognize civil unions;**
- **10 states must create some form of domestic partnership; (and)**
- **20 states must show “climate change,” or positive shifts in policies affecting LGBTQ people, all by 2020.**





This plan recognizes that certain states are more likely to pass marriage equality in the next 13 years than others. It does not, however, mean that there is a fixed list of states in which marriage equality must pass to make *2020* happen.

And if there's a fight for marriage in one state that results in civil unions instead, *2020* says that this is not a defeat, but a victory added to the column of the 10 states we need to have civil unions by 2020.

Also, if a state seems unlikely in the next 50 years to pass marriage or civil unions, that's fine—so long as work is being done to pass anti-bullying laws or hate crimes legislation in that state. As LGBTQ people and our allies are being visible, working to make change with their friends and neighbors, that work is paving the road toward marriage equality everywhere. Here's why:

Upward Pressure—How and Why *2020* Works

2020 Vision seeks a federal response to marriage equality. The freedom and ability to make legal arrangements protecting our families is a human right that should be available to all people in all 50 states. The recognition of those rights should be equal everywhere.

In the last 30 years, the fundamentalist right has been effective in making it more and more difficult for the federal government to act on behalf of the civil rights of its citizens. Human rights issues like the protection of families have largely been left to state and local governments. But state-by-state policies on basic rights aren't enough. The value of our families' relationships should be as respected in Massachusetts as in Idaho.

Still, because it is now unlikely that the federal government will act without pressure from below, we must work in each of the 50 states. **If we make sufficient change in the states, the federal government will be called to act in support of marriage equality nationwide.** If we follow *2020*, by that year at least 20 states will have some partnership recognition (marriage or civil union) for same-sex couples and 20 more will have enacted otherwise supportive policies for LGBTQ people. **At least 80% of the country will have stood up for equality; our base of support will be unavoidable. The winds of change will be strong and clear.**

Federal action could come from Congress, the President, or the Supreme Court. In the meantime, what's important to remember

is that the work we do in each of our states helps build support for equality that will affect all LGBTQ people. This is especially true for LGBTQ people in states where little to no movement has been made toward LGBTQ acceptance and equality. **Once marriage equality is recognized at the federal level, LGBTQ people will not have to worry that political wrangling in their states will suddenly affect the legality of their marriages.**

You and the Movement—*2020* Needs You

As Jennifer Chrisler, Executive Director of Family Pride, put it, "In order to win, we must have personal, specific conversations with people about our families, their joys, wants, needs, and dreams. And these conversations must happen again and again."

In speaking of *personal* and *specific* conversations, Chrisler is referring to the unique role LGBTQ parents play in the fight for marriage equality—for family equality in general. As parents, you have access to non-LGBTQ people in ways that many other LGBTQ people often do not. The connections made between your kids at school, between you and other parents in community organizations, communities of faith, and even at work make it possible for you to have important conversations with non-LGBTQ people—potential allies—about the necessity of equality for *all* loving families.

Research shows that non-LGBTQ people are most likely to support family equality when they know three or more LGBTQ people personally. Some of the most important work being done in this movement happens every day when you talk to fellow parents at the bus stop, visit with teachers, go to birthday parties and make your families visible. When you connect with folks about family matters, make sure you talk about how our families are being treated. Tell them about the need for legal protections. Tell them what they can do to help.

The work of *2020* will happen on all fronts. There will be litigators and legislators, professional activists and educators, but most importantly there will be the vast majority of LGBTQ people out there who will make it a priority in their daily lives to spread the message of equality. **The lesson of *2020*—it's great vision—is that all of our work, on each issue and in every way, contributes to the total push for justice for all. When you reach out, get active, make statements, and get involved, remember that everyday actions really do make great change. What you do is not only about today and tomorrow, but about *2020*, the year in which we make marriage equality happen, nationwide!**

“Research shows that non-LGBTQ people are most likely to support family equality when they know three or more LGBTQ people personally.”



ACTION: Create inclusive Valentine's Day Cards

Flowers, chocolate, candy hearts, teddy bears, candles, and celebrations of love: Valentine's Day (February 14) has long been observed as a time to let your feelings shine. For LGBTQ people, it can also be a perfect time to remind relatives, friends,

neighbors, teachers, peers, co-workers, and others that love is what makes a family.

Too often, the LGBTQ population goes unnoticed during Valentine's Day. This year, Family Pride challenges you to make your voice heard in a way that's creative and fun. Spend time together *and* be visible by **making inclusive Valentine's Day cards with your family to give to people in your community.** Here are some ideas to help your family create your cards:

- Love makes a family!
- Happy Valentine's Day from our family to yours.
- Love. Justice. Family. Equality.

Research shows that potential allies are most likely to support LGBTQ equality once they know three or more LGBTQ people personally. Use your imagination and come up with your own way to show how you and your family celebrate



Family Pride
PO Box 65327
Washington, DC 20035