



PFLAG *Southwest Washington Chapter*

May 2018 Newsletter

☎ Call: 360-562-0491 ✉ Email: pflagswwa@gmail.com
🌐 Web: www.pflagswwa.org 🌐 WSC Web: www.pflagwsc.org



Join us:

We meet the 2nd Tuesday of each month at 7 pm at the Children's Home Society, 1112 Columbia Street, Vancouver, WA 98660

Next Education and Support Meeting: May 8, 7pm

- Our speaker is Kate Kaufman from Brave Space. Brave Space facilitates access for transgender and non- binary persons and families to knowledgeable healthcare providers.
- The education session will be followed by our caring and sharing support group

2018 dates to remember:

- June 12, 7pm, PFLAG SWWA meeting
- July 10, 7pm, PFLAG SWWA meeting
- July 14, Saturday in the Park, Vancouver's Pride Event, 11-6pm, Esther Short Park
- August 14, 7pm, PFLAG SWWA meeting
- September 9, 9-4pm, Peace and Justice Fair, Esther Short Park

Chapter Donates LGBTQ Athlete Book to Triple Point

PFLAG Southwest Washington donated the book *Fearless: Portraits of LGBT Student Athletes* to Triple Point LGBTQ youth groups. *Fearless* is a photography book and personal memoir by American artist Jeff Sheng. Building on his own story as a closeted LGBT athlete in the 1990s, for ten years he photographed and interviewed over 200 LGBTQ athletes from a variety of high school and college sports.



Dale Clukey, Chapter Secretary/Treasurer, presents the book *Fearless* to Stephen Herndon of Triple Point

Editorial: Book Banning Rears Its Ugly Head

George is a children's book by author Alex Gino, about a 10 year old named George who was born as a boy but feels he is a girl. The book is included in a list of books for the Oregon Battle of the Books (OBOB) voluntary reading competition among schools.

The OBOB is designed to challenge students to read age appropriate books over the course of a year and then school teams are quizzed on in a multi-stage competition. Children are not required to read every book on the lists. They and their parents have a choice.

Two Oregon school districts, Cascade and Hermiston, barred third- through fifth-graders from entering OBOB because they deemed *George* is inappropriate. These districts created their own list. Hermiston's weak excuse was that book's "content is not addressed in our district curriculum at the fifth-grade level." In these districts the children and their parents can still read the book *George*, but the children are denied the opportunity to participate in the OBOB. Sad.

The book's author states "My book will not make anyone transgender, but it can help make people trans aware, and bring connection to those who already are trans, and I believe that those are good things. I don't believe that there's any age before which it is appropriate to learn compassion."

George (Cont.)

Also, at River Grove school in Lake Oswego, OR, there was opposition to the book. In response, PFLAG Southwest Washington chapter vice-president, Phaedra Baldwin, wrote to the school's administration supporting inclusion of the book. Here is her email to the school:

Fri, Apr 27, 2018 at 5:42 PM, Phaedra Baldwin <phaedrabadwin@gmail.com> wrote:
Hello,

I'm not a parent in your school, but I'm a parent of a transgender child in Vancouver, Washington. My son transitioned the summer between 2nd and 3rd grades, and has been living as a boy for almost 4 years now. We have legally changed everything including his birth certificate, and he is receiving hormone treatment. It is not a phase.

I know this is a sensitive subject for schools and I respect the situation you find yourself in. I plead with you to try and keep the book as part of the OBOB. Whether you are aware of it or not, statistically speaking there is probably a trans child in your school. That child is struggling with something none of us can imagine struggling with, and that child is aware of the stigma and judgement they will face if they try to be their honest selves. It is critical for their social, emotional, and academic well being that they have a leader in their school stand up for them. They need to hear someone say that their existence is not so horrible, that a story about someone like them should be allowed to exist.

No one is required to read this book. There is no agenda or indoctrination. Just let the book exist as part of the program. It means so much to those who are part of this minority group.

Thank you,
Phaedra Baldwin

As of April 30th, the River Grove school administration decided to include George in the list of books the students may read. We are grateful to Phaedra for writing to the school and pleased that this school did not follow the example of the Cascade and Hermiston school districts.



This is what it is like to be transgender. Sometimes the wrong label just ends up on the wrong product. There's nothing wrong with the label itself, and there is nothing wrong with what's inside the can... they just don't match because a mistake happened.

Yet at the end of the day the part that matters is what is INSIDE the can. No amount of denial or stubbornness will make those carrots turn into peas.