



# PFLAG Southwest Washington Chapter

## February 2019 Newsletter



Phone 360-562-0491 ● Email [pflagswwa@gmail.com](mailto:pflagswwa@gmail.com)  
Website: [www.pflagswwa.org](http://www.pflagswwa.org) ● WSC Website: [www.pflagwsc.org](http://www.pflagwsc.org)

### Join us at our regular meetings:

**Vancouver Meeting**  
Second Tuesday, 7pm  
Children's Home Society  
1112 Columbia Street,  
Vancouver, WA 98660

**Battle Ground Meeting**  
Third Thursday, 7pm  
406 NW 5<sup>th</sup> Avenue  
Building B, Battle Ground, WA  
98604

Next Vancouver Education and Support Meeting is February 12, 7pm-9pm.

- Our speakers will be Flynn Alexander and members of the Clark College Queer Penguins.
- The education session will be followed by our caring and sharing support group.

Next Battle Ground Support meeting is February 21, 7pm-9pm

- The meeting will lead off with our caring and sharing support group

### 2019 dates to remember:

- March 12, 7pm  
Vancouver meeting
  - March 21, 7pm  
Battle Ground meeting
- April 9, 7pm  
Vancouver meeting
  - April 18, 7pm  
Battle Ground meeting

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### Annual Business Meeting of the Members

As required by the chapter bylaws, the Annual Business Meeting of the Members is to be held annually. This year the meeting will be held on February 12 following the regular education and support meeting.

The agenda includes:

- FY 2018 review
- FY 2019 goals
- Membership report
- Finance report
- Communication report
- Advocacy report
- Bylaws revision discussion/vote
- Election of board

**Join us for the Chapter's 23<sup>rd</sup> anniversary celebration.**

*Let us eat cake!*



**If you want to serve on the board please email the board at [pflagswwa@gmail.com](mailto:pflagswwa@gmail.com).** Positions are president, vice president, secretary, treasurer or secretary/treasurer, and at least two board directors.  
We welcome new faces and views.

## WSUV Creative Writers Series

Corrected date: February 27,

6pm, WSUV

14204 NE Salmon Creek Ave

This presentation features Qwo-Li Driskill, a non-citizen Cherokee Two-Spirited and queer writer, activist, and performer. He is the author of *Asegi Stories: Cherokee Queer and Two-Spirited Memory*.

“Two-Spirit is a modern, pan-Indian, umbrella term used by some indigenous North Americans to describe certain people in their communities who fulfill a traditional third-gender ceremonial role in their cultures”. (Wikipedia)

For more information contact Pavithra Narayanan at pavitraa@wsu.edu or 360-546-9788

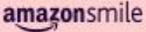
Please name PFLAG Vancouver-Sw Washington

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## PFLAG National Recommended Trans LifeLine



[About](#) [Hotline](#) [Microgrants](#) [Blog](#) [Donate](#) [Resources](#)

The Hotline:

US: 877-565-8860 / Canada: 877-330-6366

Trans LifeLine is a national trans-led organization dedicated to improving the quality of trans lives by responding to the critical needs of our community with direct service, material support, advocacy, and education. Our vision is to fight the epidemic of trans suicide and improve overall life-outcomes of trans people by facilitating

## Everybody Has a Story: School staff helped Jessica with her gender transition

By Jeff Newport, Felida

Published: January 26, 2019, 6:00 AM

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In 2008, I was getting ready to start my 25th year as a principal of Rosa Parks Elementary School, in the Lake Washington School District. A parent called to say her fifth grade son, Jacob, was no longer Jacob. Jacob was now her daughter, Jessica.

This did not surprise me. Jacob had an outstanding fourth-grade teacher who had noted his differences.

After some reflection, I invited some parents I knew well to provide some thoughtful counsel about the transition. They helped me understand the range of feelings in the community and how kids might react.

Jessica would be in the fifth grade. I had a fantastic fifth-grade teacher who was skilled, kind and compassionate, with high expectations for all kids. She was very understanding and supportive of diversity in all its forms. I called her. She was honored to be selected to have Jessica in her class.

Jessica's parents came to discuss issues specific to Jessica's transition. They lived outside of the school's attendance area but had enrolled their child because of its diversity (in the heart of Microsoft territory), vision of the arts, laughter and joy. Kindness, compassion, respect and friendship were intentionally embedded into the daily life of the school.

They felt that Rosa Parks would be a good fit for their child, who was a bit quirky. They were right. This was the culture of the school the parents had chosen for Jacob, who had become Jessica.

Jessica's parents provided me information from a transgender conference they had attended. They were concerned that students would struggle to accept Jessica's new identity. Our school counselor helped us develop a plan for the first day of school. The plan included Jessica's use of the women staff's restroom; a letter that I would send to all parents of fifth- and sixth-graders focused on acceptance and tolerance; and plans for a meeting that the counselor and I would hold with fifth- and sixth-grade students on the first day to inform them of Jessica's transition and to answer their questions.

I contacted the TransActive Gender Center, which provides training and education in transgender issues, and two of its staff visited Rosa Parks. They were women, but early in their presentation they said: "We know that you are wondering if we were once men? Yes, we were." At the end of the session, school staff members thanked our guests for their knowledge, strength and the information they had provided.

Jessica arrived on the first day dressed in jeans, a tank top and pink coat. She went to the library while the counselor and I spoke with her classmates about her transition. As the year went on, some kids continued to not understand Jessica. Some laughed and gossiped, but Jessica was strong and ignored these kids.

The majority of students openly accepted Jessica and often confronted the bullies. The staff was very supportive. Jessica's parents felt that the transition to fifth grade was a huge success! They had been greatly concerned about how Jessica would be accepted, not only by kids but by staff and the school district.

Early in the year, a parent with a strong Christian background, with one daughter in Jessica's class, told me that she was not supportive of Jessica but that her daughters would not act in a disrespectful manner. But several months later, she told me that she had done some research and was now fully in support of Jessica. Her daughter became an advocate for Jessica with other classmates.

In sixth grade, Jessica began using the girls' restroom. She performed in the school's drama presentations and attended camp. Near the end of sixth grade, Jessica's parents came in to talk about junior high. We found her a placement at a school that was going to be great for her.

Jessica, now 22, is a beautiful young lady. She has a job and is very happy with her life. Her mom's final words to me: "We couldn't have done it without the love, support and understanding of you and the school! We were all pioneers!"

## **Vancouver library story hour celebrates diversity, playfulness**

By **Scott Hewitt**, Columbian Arts & Features Reporter

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Published: February 1, 2019, 6:05 AM

**What:** Drag Queen Story Hour.

**When:** 2:30 to 3:30 p.m. Feb. 9.

**Where:** Vancouver Community Library, 901 C St.

**Admission:** Free. Priority admission for families with children.

Apparently, children and their parents can go enjoy a different sort of storytime at the Vancouver Community Library on Feb. 9. This one will be rainbow-colored, all-inclusive, costume-positive and simply fabulous.

If your notion of storytime leadership is a mousy librarian intoning something tranquil, like “Goodnight Moon,” take another look.

The Feb. 9 reader will be a Portland nightclub star who hails from Vancouver. Her stage name is Clare Apparently, and she’ll be decked out in full drag. The event is called Drag Queen Story Hour.

“We haven’t settled on the books yet,” Apparently said, “but they’ll probably be about diversity and acceptance and friendship across differences. We’re working off lists that were compiled by the national organization with the help of professional children’s librarians.”

That national organization, launched in 2015 in San Francisco, has now spread Drag Queen Story Hours to many libraries across the nation — including Portland and even Longview.

Vancouver library officials call Drag Queen Story Hour an effort to reach out and make marginalized people in our community feel safe and welcome. It’s a way to teach tolerance, teach self-acceptance and prevent bullying, they said.

“As an organization, we feel it’s an important part of our mission to look at equity, diversity and inclusion,” said Amelia Shelley, executive director of the Fort Vancouver Regional Libraries system. “We want to normalize the message that everybody is different.”

That’s the same message the library tries for with its materials collection and its other programs, from English as a Second Language to computer-coding classes, staff development coordinator Blake Kincaid added: responding to community needs and representing diverse points of view. Drag Queen Story Hour “is just an extension of what we do with our collection,” Kincaid said.

But here’s one key difference: officials said no taxpayer dollars will be spent on the event, which is supported entirely by funds from the independent Friends of the Vancouver Community Library group. Not tapping public money for a happening that some people find objectionable was a careful decision, Kincaid said.

“This is not a regular storytime, which we have all the time,” Kincaid said. “This is a special event and we’ll evaluate it afterwards. It’s not for every single family, but for families who feel a need and choose to attend.”

### **Visible, optional**

Because it’s historically been an “invisible need,” Shelley added, our whole culture is climbing a learning curve about gender identity and fluidity now. New visibility provokes “deep-seated feelings people have about gender identity,” she said. “It’s certainly generated more interesting comments than I would have expected.”

On Facebook, those comments range from “Yay!” to “Disgusting.”

“This atrocity has already spread like a plague to libraries throughout the Portland area,” one commentor wrote. “This must not be tolerated!”

Heidi St. John, a Christian motivational speaker based in Vancouver, hinted at a live protest: “Are you ready to get off the bench? The fact that this is being pushed on our kids is a tragedy, and it will not stop until people are willing to stand up to this wicked agenda!”

“Have sign, will travel,” another commentor responded.

### **Families first**

Because space is limited and the event is intended for children and families who will appreciate it, priority admittance will be given to families with children, according to senior public services librarian Kari Kunst.

The library is not pushing anything at anyone, public services director Amy Lee emphasized, just meeting existing community needs. “All public libraries try to cover community needs. We are giving this one a try,” she said.

Unlike public schools, Shelley said, the library’s mission is to provide for everyone, but not parent anyone. When it comes to attending events, borrowing materials and exposing children to new ideas, she said, “We expect parents and caregivers to make those choices.”

Another Facebook commenter said: “In the words of my 9 year old, if you don’t like it, don’t go. But don’t be rude.”

### **Not a nightclub act**

Clare Apparently grew up as Kit Crosland, a Vancouver native who attended Evergreen High School.

“I know from talking to some of the teachers as an adult, it was in their contract that they would lose their employment if they ever told a student they were gay” (until such discrimination was banned), she said.

“That’s how, on the institutional level, we limit role models for LGBTQ children and teenagers. That’s the sort of lack that could have been filled in by community and library events. I would have appreciated it so much when I was a child.”

Apparently said Vancouver’s Drag Queen Storytime will be completely age-appropriate — not a racy nightclub act. Apparently granted that some online objections “aren’t completely baseless,” because the nighttime drag world is “very adult-focused. It’s all about adult things, and that’s great in the right environment.”

But Apparently, who has worked with youth at social service nonprofits and elementary schools, said Drag Queen Storytime will be nothing but child-oriented. “I know how to hang out with kids. I know how to make the transition from 21-and-up drag queen to child appropriate,” she said.

“A large part of my drag is about playfulness,” Apparently said. “I always think of recapturing the energy of being 5 years old, turning on a radio and dancing in the living room in front of the mirror. The freedom and joy of loving that song, loving yourself, dancing in your body, letting it all out. That’s the direction I take my drag — recapturing the joy of childhood that’s been pressured out of us.”



**THE FORCE IS WITH US!**  
**MAY 3 - 5, 2019**

**SKAGIT VALLEY COLLEGE**  
2405 E COLLEGE WAY, MT VERNON, WA 98273

**MAY 3 - MEET & GREET    MAY 4 - CONFERENCE**  
**MAY 5 - SPECIAL EVENT**

**STATE CONVENTION 2019**