



Welcome to 2017

There's no introduction that can be written that will adequately capture the mass of emotions that are bringing us into the New Year, so we aren't going to spend time discussing it.

But here's what we, as PFLAGers, want to talk about right now: Power.

The power to change the course of history is in PFLAG's DNA. PFLAG's story literally starts with a woman who may have been nervous or even a bit scared, but let courage take over and stood in the middle of a New York City street – at a time that was decidedly not favorable to her message – and held a sign proclaiming her support for her gay son.

That is the PFLAG legacy: Overcoming fear and taking on the fight anyway, because we've got a mission to achieve.

And at this very moment, PFLAG members must carry on that legacy, stand strong and proud in the face of those who will roll back progress, take away rights, and deny the essential dignity of individuals. Because this is who we are as an organization, we have no choice but to fight.

We are the people who build safe places for the most vulnerable in our communities, often in places where it seems impossible. We are the people who faithfully appear in our elected officials' offices, acting as watchdogs for equality. We are the people educating and sharing our stories in our faith communities, our workplaces, and our schools.

We are the people who carry on the legacy of a brave woman standing in the street with a sign, driven by pure love.

One of the most famous comments from openly gay, African-American civil rights pioneer Bayard Rustin is that of his concept of "angelic troublemakers" in communities. But to really understand what he was asking people to do, you've got to read the full context. It is the PFLAG call to action in dark and hostile times:

"We need in every community a group of angelic troublemakers. Our power is in our ability to make things unworkable. All we have is bodies. We need to tuck them, tuck them, tuck them, in places so that the wheels don't turn."

Welcome to the Fight, Angelic Troublemakers of PFLAG!

Let us be clear: PFLAGers will not allow the wheels of injustice to roll over anyone on our watch.

This is our legacy, and together we're living up to it, no matter what comes our way.

We are in this together. In the upcoming months, look for new resources, actions, and tools to help stop the wheels of injustice in your community. Start with reading our Unity and Inclusion Policy, approved unanimously by the PFLAG National Board of Directors. This is our commitment to action to achieve equality and inclusion for everyone, and to recognize that to meet this goal, we need to work alongside others with the same mission – especially those with whom we may have not connected before.

If you're a PFLAG chapter member, talk about this statement with your chapter. Adopt it as your guiding principles for your work going forward. Share it with people. And if you're not connected to a chapter, but are one of our many supporters, read it over. Let it serve as your guide to center your personal work and commitment to equality. For all of us, let it be a powerful statement that will remind us of our commitments, both externally and personally.

It all starts here, angelic troublemakers of PFLAG. Welcome to the fight.



Beth Kohm, Interim Executive Director

PFLAG National