



# Coalition des familles homoparentales

NEWSLETTER - VOLUME XIV - No. III – March 2013

## TRANSFORMING FAMILY

*By Jake Pyne, trans activist and community-based researcher*

When North American transgender and transsexual (trans) people began to seek medical assistance to transition in the 1960's, the accepted practice in newly established gender identity clinics was to advise them to sever contact with their established lives, often including relationships with their own children. While this practice is no longer endorsed, the notion that a child will be harmed by a trans parent lingers. The limited research that focuses on trans parents and their children has often assumed a deficit in trans-led families. Negative perceptions of trans people as parents appear in fertility journals where assisted human reproduction clinicians debate whether it is ethical to assist trans people to become parents. These same transphobic perceptions are repeated in US family court rulings in which trans people are routinely separated from their children. It is clear that trans parents have been poorly represented in the discriminatory accounts of their lives. What is less clear is how trans parents experience this discrimination and how they might understand their strengths as parents.

The Transforming Family project was launched to respond to these concerns, filling an important gap in knowledge by documenting the impact of transphobia on trans parents and drawing attention to the strengths that they bring to parenting. The project was led by the LGBTQ Parenting Network at the Sherbourne Health Centre in collaboration with the Re:searching for LGBTQ Health team at the Centre for Addictions and Mental Health (CAMH). Four focus groups were held in November 2010, with a total of 18 trans parents in Toronto.

### Findings

Participants in this study had distinct experiences in relation to the timing of when they became parents. In the first two sections of this report, participants are separated into two groups in order to highlight their unique experiences: section one speaks to those who were already parents when they came out as trans or transitioned; and section two speaks to those who embarked on becoming parents after already identifying as trans or transitioning. Section three, Navigating a Transphobic World, and section four, Parenting Strengths, include the experiences of all participants.

### TRANSFORMING FAMILY

#### Parents coming out as trans or beginning a gender transition

**Trans parents, their children and partners lack adequate support during transition.**

Trans parents overcome substantial fears and come out as trans or begin to transition out of a desire to care for themselves and their children. Despite this they are often accused of harming their families. Transition can be a time of high conflict and if family break-down occurs, it often coincides with a number of other losses for trans parents. While many trans parents find ways to

communicate with their partners and their children about their identities, and many partners and children find ways to understand and adapt, most do so without the benefit of community supports and resources.

**Societal transphobia is a threat to trans parents' ability to maintain child custody and access.**

The majority of those who were parents before coming out as trans or beginning a gender transition had access to their children limited or removed. Whether this occurred through formal legal avenues or through informal practical barriers, at the heart was societal transphobia. Trans parents are pathologized and discredited in custody disputes and they face emotional injury and financial barriers that disadvantage them in their attempts to maintain custody of, and access to, their children. It is imperative that training programs are implemented to address transphobia among professionals working in the family law system. In addition, resources are needed to provide separating or divorcing trans parents with accurate information about the legal issues facing them.

**It gets better: trans parents' relationships with their children improve over time.**

Through coming out or transitioning, trans parents eventually experienced an improved sense of wellbeing and often began negotiating new names and roles with their children. Together with the growing social acceptance of trans people, these negotiations allowed many children to develop a new relationship with their trans parent. Trans parents said clearly: It does get better.

## **Trans People Becoming Parents**

**Family planning is poorly facilitated for prospective trans parents**

Many trans people do not pursue adoption due to an expectation that they will be unsuccessful. Adoption services must become more accessible to prospective trans parents, including effective outreach to trans communities to counter this perception. Fertility services are inconsistent in their treatment of prospective trans parents; there are varying barriers and levels of support. Some clinicians fail to distinguish between the biological contribution that prospective trans parents might make to the conception process and their lived experience of gender (i.e. a trans woman might freeze sperm before transitioning; a trans man may want to get pregnant with his own eggs). Standard clinical forms and practices must be adapted to accommodate the reality of trans bodies.

### **TRANSFORMING FAMILY**

**Trans people who are new parents have difficulty establishing legal relationships to their children.**

Some trans parents are unable to enter their family information into the on-line Ontario Birth Registration system (*legal complications exist in Quebec as well*). Existing parental designations do not accommodate the realities of trans people's bodies, as some trans women may contribute sperm to their child's conception and some trans men may opt to become pregnant and give birth. Within the existing system, these parents must choose: to register as their child's legal parent but as the wrong gender; to attempt to remedy the problem by assuming a significant advocacy burden; or to forego parental rights. It is the responsibility of Service Ontario to provide a birth registration process which accommodates all parents.

## **All Participants**

**Transphobia and erasure have real effects on trans parents and their children.**

Trans people in general experience public scrutiny, harassment and discrimination. For those who are parents this occurs in multiple settings and can cause pain and confusion for children. Trans parents experience not only active discrimination but also more subtle forms of erasure, rendering

them invisible and unrecognizable to service providers. Trans parents and their families struggle on more than one front, often with very little support.

### Trans parents and their children exercise agency in how they respond to transphobia.

Though trans parents and their children are deeply impacted by transphobia, they are not passive victims, instead actively strategizing to address discrimination. Trans parents protect themselves and their children by making choices to be or not be visible, by advocating for themselves and their children and by educating their children about transphobia. Creatively navigating unfriendly environments, trans parents challenge assumptions about gender through everyday acts of activism.

### Trans parents teach important lessons.

Trans parents demonstrate a number of parenting strengths, at times because of, rather than in spite of, their identities and experiences as trans people. As they journey to express their unique selves, they become role models for diversity, acceptance and authenticity. As they struggle and learn the difficult skills of self-advocacy, they pass on vital lessons about strategy, endurance and courage. And as they create options for their children to express their authentic selves, they raise a new gender literate generation, contributing to building, as one participant put it, "the world that needs to be."

To download this report and for more information:

<http://www.lgbtqparentingconnection.ca/socialchange/TransformingFamilyReport.cfm>

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Interested in writing for our newsletter? Send your articles at any time to [info@familleshomoparentales.org](mailto:info@familleshomoparentales.org) or by post to CFH, 110, rue Sainte-Thérèse, bureau 405, Montreal, Quebec, H2Y 1E6  
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## News Briefs: December 2012 - February 2013

### Canada News

**November 29<sup>th</sup> 2012 (*Vancouver Sun*)** — A woman who wanted to know the identity of her sperm-donor is taking her case to Canada's top court after the B.C. Court of Appeal threw out an earlier decision that sided with her.

Olivia Pratten wants people like her to be treated the same as those who are adopted and argued the B.C. government should change its laws accordingly.

But the appeal court ruled on November 27<sup>th</sup> that there is no legal right for offspring to know their biological past and providing such information would amount to state intrusion into many people's lives.

"It's very disappointing," Pratten said of the appeal court ruling.

"All we were asking for is the same benefits as adopted people. They've basically said, 'No, you can't have that.' And they've basically said that it's OK for the government to discriminate. It's failing to protect the health and safety of donor-conceived people, that's what this court has done. We'll be appealing it to the Supreme Court of Canada."

The appeal court concluded that contrary to Pratten's argument, it is not her constitutional right to know the identity of her biological father.

"There are many non-donor offspring who do not know their family history or the identity of their biological father because of decisions taken by others, or because of the circumstances of their conception," Justice David Frankel said in the written ruling on behalf of the three judges.

"However desirable it may be that persons have access to information about their biological origins, Ms. Pratten has not established that such access has been recognized as so 'fundamental' that it is entitled to independent constitutionally protected status under the Charter," the ruling said.

**January 9<sup>th</sup> 2013 (EGALE News)** An advertisement for the University of Alberta's Institute for Sexual Minority Studies and Services' "No to Homophobes" campaign asks why the word "faggot" can be so casually used in society. The TV commercial bleeps over obviously unacceptable swearwords and other forms of abuse until a woman says "gay faggot". The advert then asks "when will homophobic language be unacceptable too?"

Last year the campaign published Twitter tracking figures to show that the word "faggot" was used more than 2.5 million times between July and September 2012. In just one week, it was in 219,000 tweets. Meanwhile, the insult "So Gay," was in 900,000 tweets, while another 800,000 had "No Homo." The word "dyke" came across in 350,000 comments.

**To see the video :** <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LqnOdN5gmV4>

**January 28<sup>th</sup> 2013 (Pink News)** Canada has appointed a former cabinet minister as its first openly-gay provincial premier, who is also the first female leader of the most populous Canadian province. Openly gay former education minister, Kathleen Wynne, 59, was appointed by Ontario's Liberals to be the province's premier.

During her acceptance speech for her new position, Ms Wynne thanked her partner, Jane, for her support during her campaign.

As well as being the first openly gay premier, Ms Wynne is also the first woman to be selected for the position. This appointment is significant because it means that Canada's four most powerful provinces, British Columbia, Alberta, Ontario and Quebec, are now led by women.

**February 11<sup>th</sup> 2013 (CBC News)** An anti-gay evangelical organisation which describes homosexuality as a "perversion" has been receiving funding from Canada's government for work in Uganda.

The Canadian government has denounced homophobia in Uganda, and its Foreign Affairs Minister, John Baird, has spoken out against plans for an anti-gay law which includes the death penalty for "aggravated homosexuality". It has, however, been providing \$544,813 in funding to evangelical group, Crossroads Christian Communications (CCC), based in Ontario.

The group makes programming to help dig wells, build latrines and promote hygiene awareness in Uganda for 2014.

The organization's website had contained a list of "sexual sins" deemed to be "perversions." It read: "Turning from the true and/or proper purpose of sexual intercourse; misusing or abusing it, such as in pedophilia, homosexuality and lesbianism, sadism, masochism, transvestism, and bestiality."

Once contacted by the press, however, the page was reportedly taken down.

The Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA) had been providing the funding to the CCC. The federal minister responsible for CIDA, Julian Fantino, has defended the funding decision, saying that the money was for a specific project. Quebec's government recently announced that it wanted to create its own agency because it did not support CIDA's funding choices, CTV news reports.

Steve Foster, President of the *Conseil Québécois LGBT* said the Canadian government should stop funding the CCC and similar groups. "It's unacceptable that the government would accept that kind of organization as an international-co-operation organization. Taxpayers' money should not be used to finance religious groups working abroad, who furthermore contribute to the creation of discriminatory, even inhumane and dangerous, policy," he said.

A study by the Canadian Research Institute on Humanitarian Crisis and Aid found that, between 2005 and 2010, the funding for religious non-government organisations increased 42 per cent. Secular groups saw an increase of five per cent.

New Democrat MP Hélène Laverdiere said Fantino's office had become a "black hole" for aid proposals, with many simply disappearing, while those that do get funding don't align with Canadian values. "Those that are funded are increasingly out of step with Canadians," she said. "How did Christian Crossroads, an anti-gay organization, get sign-off from the minister to operate in a country which Canada has strongly criticized for persecution of its gay citizens?"

## Gay Marriage News

**December 6** - The **Mexican** Supreme Court makes a unanimous ruling which could signal the beginning of equal marriage rights across the entire country. The Supreme Court rules in favour of three couples wishing to marry in the southern Mexican state of Oaxaca. The court rules that the ban on same-sex marriage is discriminatory, and that it is unconstitutional. The decision is partly based on a ruling from February 2012, in which the Inter-American Court of Human Rights decided that governments couldn't discriminate on the basis of sexual orientation.

**December 7** -The **US** Supreme Court agrees to take up California's ban on same-sex marriage, a case that could give the justices the chance to rule on whether gay Americans have the same constitutional right to marry as heterosexuals.

It is announced the court will hear challenges to the Defense of Marriage Act (DOMA), which defines marriage as between a man and a woman, passed under President Bill Clinton in 1996, and California's Proposition 8. The court will also decide whether the US Congress can deprive legally married gay couples of federal benefits otherwise available to married people. Several lower district courts have already ruled that DOMA is unconstitutional.

**December 11** - Same-sex couples in **England and Wales** are set to be allowed to marry, under plans announced by Culture Secretary Maria Miller in the House of Commons. Following a government consultation, legislation allowing same-sex marriage is expected in 2013.

Although the Catholic Church and Church of England are opposed to equal marriage, faith groups such as the Quakers, Unitarians and Liberal Judaism support marriage rights for gay couples and have stated they would like to provide the ceremonies.

Mrs Miller says the Equality Act 2010 is to be amended to ensure that no discrimination claim could be brought against religious organizations or an individual minister for refusing to marry gay couples (or allowing their premises to be used for this purpose). The proposals will allow religious organizations to 'opt in' if they so chose.

**December 12** - **Uruguay** comes one step closer to legalising marriage equality, after a majority of members of its lower house of Congress vote in favour of a measure to legalise equal marriage. The measure will now go to the country's Senate, where it is expected to be approved. In recent years, Uruguay has allowed same-sex civil unions, gay adoption and gay members to serve in the armed forces.

**December 17** - Tens of thousands of demonstrators take to the streets of **Paris** in support of the government's decision to legalise equal marriage and adoption. **French** President Francois Hollande's government has presented a bill to legalise equal marriage and allow gay couples to adopt.

Families attend with young children, and some comment on their support for the measure. Arthur, 10, who attended with his eight-year-old sister, Lola, and their mothers, says: "I think marriage is good for everyone!" As well as Paris, several thousand people demonstrate in Toulouse, and rallies are held in Marseille, Lyon and Nantes on Saturday, in support of the reform.

A national poll by IFOP, suggests that 60% of the population is in favour of legalising marriage equality, and 46% are in favour of gay couples being able to adopt.

**December 20** - A **Taiwanese** court which had been scheduled to give a decision on the case of a gay couple who had appealed to have their marriage legally recognised, makes no ruling, and instead sends the case to the country's top court.

According to Huang Kuo-cheng, a lawyer representing the couple in this case, the proceedings for a constitutional interpretation could take up to a year. A leading LGBT rights advocate, Chi Chia-wei, expressed disappointment at the decision: "The judges showed no spine on this critical case. This could have become a milestone case for all Asia."

Two women were married in a Buddhist ceremony in Taiwan back in August, in what was believed to have been the first known ceremony of its kind to be held in the country.

**December 20** - In what is being seen as a major U-turn, former **US** House Speaker Newt Gingrich believes the Republican Party should accept the idea of same-sex civil marriages. The Republican veteran, who lost out to Mitt Romney for his party's 2012 presidential nomination, said he thinks the GOP needs to "accommodate and deal with reality" and accept civil legal equality for gay couples.

The remarks by Gingrich are all the more surprising as he pushed for the Defense of Marriage Act (DOMA) through the US Congress in 1996. DOMA banned federal recognition of gay couples and President Obama stopped supporting the law in July 2011. Gingrich previously said the movement towards marriage equality was a "temporary aberration that will dissipate" and compared same-sex relationships to "pagan behaviours."

In December 2011, his lesbian half-sister Candace, criticised her brother's stance on gay rights, described him as egotistical, and announced her firm support for President's Obama's re-election campaign.

**December 21** - A judge in the **Brazilian** state of **São Paulo** rules that gay couples in civil unions will no longer have to apply to the courts to have their relationships 'upgraded' to marriages.

The judgement effectively means that same-sex marriage is now legal in the state. The judge also rules that gay couples not already in civil unions will be entitled to simply hold a marriage ceremony on request, rather than having to first enter into a civil union and then "upgrade". Some commentators suggest that gay couples from around the country will flock to São Paulo to get married.

**December 23** - The pope takes his opposition to gay marriage to new heights, denouncing what he describes as people manipulating their God-given gender to suit their sexual choices — and destroying the very "essence of the human creature" in the process. Benedict XVI makes the comments in his annual Christmas speech to the **Vatican** bureaucracy — one of his most important speeches of the year. He dedicates it this year to promoting family values in the face of vocal campaigns in France, the United States, Britain and elsewhere to legalize same-sex marriage.

In his remarks, Benedict quotes the chief rabbi of France, Gilles Bernheim, in saying the campaign for granting gays the right to marry and adopt children is an "attack" on the traditional family made up of a father, mother

and children.

**December 27** - Gay rights campaigners criticise the decision of **Uruguay's** Senate to delay voting on the country's proposed equal marriage bill. A vote will now take place in April amid calls by some parliamentarians for greater scrutiny of the legislation.

**December 30** - A spokesman for Barack Obama says that the **US** president has encouraged politicians in his home state of **Illinois** to change the law to make marriage equal.

At Christmas, a group of 250 rabbis, pastors, bishops and other leaders representing liberal and reform Christian and Jewish groups have called on the state of Illinois to pass the Religious Freedom and Marriage Fairness Act that would make same-sex marriage legal.

**December 28** - The government in **Thailand** forms a committee with policy advisors and LGBT rights advocates to draft legal recognition for same-sex couples. No country in Asia currently has comprehensive civil partnership law. So if this legal recognition is passed, Thailand will be the first.

**January 13** - Hundreds of thousands of people take to the streets of **Paris** to protest against the country's upcoming bill which would allow equal marriage and adoption rights for same-sex couples. Authorities estimate that 340,000 people participated.

**January 17** - The French edition of Elle Magazine comes out in support of equal marriage in **France**, amidst a heated debate on the issue by featuring a lesbian couple getting married, on its cover.

**January 24** - The Marriage Bill for **England and Wales** is officially introduced in the House of Commons by Culture Secretary Maria Miller.

**January 24** - **Rhode Island's** House of Representatives overwhelmingly passes a same-sex marriage equality bill. The final vote is 51 in favour and 19 against. The debate will now head to the state Senate where a contentious battle is anticipated to unfold with a number of senior lawmakers adamantly opposed to equality for same-sex couples.

Nine US states have already decided to legalise same-sex marriage. Illinois has plans to vote on the topic later this year.

**January 29** - Following months of debate and controversy over the issue of equal marriage and gay adoption, debate begins in the **French** parliament. In what is perceived as an attempt to appease opponents to the bill, the government drops medically assisted reproduction for lesbian couples, from the country's upcoming bill.

**February 1** - In the **US**, one of Mitt Romney's key aids, David Kochel, speaks out in support of same-sex marriage, saying that the Republican Party needs to adapt its policy to suit more modern views.

**February 2** - The French National Assembly, the lower house of **France's** Parliament votes in favour of making same-sex marriage legal.

**February 5** - **British** MPs vote 400 to 175 in support of the government's Marriage (Same Sex Couples) Bill - following an afternoon of heated debate in the House of Commons. The bill would enable same-sex couples to get married in both civil and religious ceremonies, where a religious institution had formally consented, in **England and Wales**. It would also allow couples who had previously entered into civil partnerships to convert their relationship into a marriage. The bill will now proceed to a parliamentary committee for further scrutiny.

**February 12** - **France** takes a step closer to legalising equal marriage and adoptions for same sex couples, as its National Assembly approves a bill to do so, during its second reading today. The French "Marriage for All"

bill has now been adopted 329 votes to 229, and 10 ministers abstain. The bill will now go to France's Sénat on 2 April.

## International News

**December 4 – (MSNBC)** The American Psychiatric Association has revised its *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders* and it no longer lists being transgender as a mental disorder. Transgender people will now be diagnosed with "gender dysphoria," which means emotional stress related to gender identity.

The classification of "transgender" as a mental disorder has been used in the past to prove that being transgender is a psychological problem that can be treated. In one case, the *Associated Press* cited over the summer, a transgender woman was at risk of losing the children she fathered before her transition.

"The argument is that one criteria for terminating parental rights is if one parent has a severe, chronic mental illness that might be harmful to the child," psychiatrist Dan Karasic told the *AP*. "A lawyer is apparently using that to argue that because the person is trans and has a diagnosis of Gender Identity Disorder, she should have her parental rights terminated."

Homosexuality was also considered a mental disorder by the APA until 1973. The *DSM-5* is scheduled to be released in May of 2013.

**December 13 (Pink News)** - The European Parliament has adopted two resolutions calling on Russia and Ukraine to abandon their LGBT censorship plans. The plans in both of the countries could mean fines, or prison sentences for any positive portrayal of the LGBT community in public.

The Ukraine Bill 8711, which received initial approval in October, envisages fines, and prison terms of up to five years for spreading "propaganda of homosexuality".

The following day, Russia's Supreme Court ruled that the country's second largest city of St Petersburg could continue to enforce its homophobic censorship law.

Russian courts in as many as nine regions currently punish the positive portrayal of gay people, in measures first adopted in 2006. These measures mean no gay pride events, and lawmakers representing United Russia, Vladimir Putin's party, want to extend these measures to the federal level.

**December 13 (swissinfo.ch)** - The Swiss parliament has voted to allow gay couples to adopt each other's children. However, the motion passed in the House of Representatives was not as liberal as the original version approved by the Senate. The Senate had approved a motion granting adoption rights regardless of marital status or sexual orientation, as long as the arrangement was the best option for the child in question. However, the House of Representatives altered the motion – specifying that a homosexual could only adopt the child of his or her partner.

The developments were welcome news to homosexuals interested in adopting their stepchildren and gaining proper parental rights. However, gay rights groups will continue to push for full adoption rights.

In Switzerland it is estimated that there are several thousand children growing up in homes headed by same-sex couples.

**December 14 – (ILGA News)** Uganda's Parliament has closed for the end of year recess without passing the country's pending Anti-Homosexuality Bill, according to LGBT campaign group *AllOut*. However, even if the bill dies this year, it could easily be picked up again in the 2013 session.

LGBT activists believe that Ugandan president Museveni would be prepared to sign the bill, which proposes the death penalty for certain homosexual acts.

**January 2 (*La Presse*)** - The first baby in France to be born in 2013 was by a lesbian couple, although current inequality means only one of the parents has formal legal recognition in relation to the child. A baby boy, named Sacha, was born on the morning of New Year's Day between midnight and a minute past midnight at the Moulins Hospital Centre, in central France, the hospital announced.

The birth mother, only referred to as Maude, has been in a relationship with her partner, Delphine, since 2010, according to the regional newspaper *La Montagne*. Under current French laws, Delphine has no legal status in relation to the child.

**January 3 – (*Pink News*)** Democrat Tammy Baldwin has become the first openly gay politician to be sworn into the US Senate.

Chuck Wolfe of the Gay and Lesbian Victory Fund said today: "LGBT Americans have finally broken through a glass ceiling that held firm for more than two centuries.

The 50-year-old is described as a strong supporter of LGBT, women's rights and has pushed heavily for healthcare reform. She was a staunch critic of Don't Ask, Don't Tell, America's previous ban on openly gay members of the armed forces.

**January 10 (*Pink News*)** - Sweden has ended a law that made forced sterilization compulsory for people undergoing gender reassignment surgery, in order for the state to recognize their gender identity. The law dates back to 1972.

Many had argued that the law broke Article 3 of the EU Charter of Fundamental Rights, which protects "the right to respect for everyone's physical and mental integrity".

This ruling came after an unidentified plaintiff wanted to undergo gender reassignment surgery, but refused the sterilization. The case was taken to court on the plaintiff's behalf by the Swedish board of health.

**January 12 (*AFP*)** Thousands of French lesbians couples are believed to have travelled to Belgium in order to conceive babies, through artificial insemination, which is not available in their home country. Around 2,000 babies conceived in Belgium through artificial insemination are believed to be born each year to French lesbian couples, who are not eligible for the procedure in France. Professor Michel Dubois at the University Hospital of Liege said: "We have seen a sharp increase in demand over the past three years. The word is getting around in France, our patients are passing the message along."

Belgium allowed gay civil marriage in 2003, and allows artificial insemination for all "regardless of civil status or sexual orientation".

The babies conceived in Belgium were nicknamed "Thalys babies", after the high-speed train service between Brussels and Paris, which many of the mothers use to travel back and forth. "French mothers accounted for 80 percent of the 833 artificial insemination cases we handled last year," said Dubois.

**January 13 (*Huffington Post*)** - The Vatican newspaper stressed that children should be raised by a father and a mother after Italy's top appeals court granted a lesbian mother custody of her son, prompting a debate over gay adoption.

Italy's Court of Cassation rejected an appeal by a father who feared his son would not have a balanced upbringing if he lived with his mother and her female partner. The court ruled it was "mere prejudice" to think that a child could not be brought up normally by homosexual parents.

While gay rights group *Arcigay* hailed the decision as a "historic ruling" in Italy, where it is illegal for gay couples to adopt, Catholic leaders were quick to defend the traditional family unit.

**January 18 (*Pink News*)** - The Indian Home ministry has imposed new regulations that prevent gay and single foreigners becoming surrogate parents to children born from surrogates in India. In order to legally become surrogate parents foreigners will now be required to apply for a medical visa, rather than a tourist visa. To be granted the medical visa applicants will be asked about their marital status. The new regulations on surrogacy require potential surrogates to be "a man and a woman" who have been married at least two years. According to the home ministry, attempts to enter into surrogacy without the medical visa will now be punishable by law.

Couples will also be required to provide a letter from their country's embassy stating that they recognize surrogacy. Previous attempts to bring home surrogate children had been thwarted by states not recognizing surrogate children, as was the case with a gay man who was prevented from bringing twin babies to Norway for two years.

Surrogacy is a growing industry in India and proposed legislation has yet to pass through parliament. The Home ministry's new visa regulation has been seen as an interim solution to address this problem, but is also criticized for not doing enough to protect Indian women from exploitation.

**January 22 (*AP*)** An official says Nepal's government will begin issuing gender-neutral citizenship documents for people who do not wish to be identified as male or female. Nepal's Supreme Court ruled in 2007 that the government should issue "third gender" citizenship certificates but it took five years to implement the decision.

Activists hailed the decision, saying it was an achievement for LGBT rights in the country. Sunil Baba Pant, a gay politician and LGBT campaigner said the new simple and clear guidelines should make life easier for the sexual minorities. Gender-neutral documentation is increasingly being rolled out by governments across the world.

New Zealand also offers the gender-neutral option on passports in accordance with International Civil Aviation Organization.

**February 6 (*The Advocate*)** After being inundated by petitions, emails, and phone calls, the Boy Scouts of America (BSA) has delayed making any decision on its ban of gay scouts and troop leaders. The group's board, which had been considering repealing the ban, said it would instead wait for a national meeting in May.

The board meeting was touted by the group itself as a potential turning point in the decades-long stalemate. On the table was a proposal to remove the national organization's ban while instead allowing local troops to decide for themselves. The national BSA originally encouraged the public to offer feedback on its proposal to repeal the ban. And it may have gotten more than expected, quickly announcing it would stop taking phone calls. Even President Obama reiterated his support for a repeal in an interview on *CBS*.

After activists delivered petitions bearing 1.4 million signatures calling for an end to the ban, BSA spokesman Deron Smith acknowledged the immense pressure the group is under from all sides. "The BSA has received a great deal of feedback from a variety of viewpoints," he said, "and we appreciate everyone sharing their perspective on this issue."

**February 7 (*Pink News*)** - The Justice Ministry of the Netherlands is set to commission a report on the possibility of legally recognizing families with three or more parents, and has noted the protective values of such a law for LGBT families. So-called "pink" families would be protected by the recognition of families that have three or more parents. The extension would mean that children could have three or more parents, taking into account the biological parents of children of same-sex couples.

This could prove useful for families headed by a same-sex couple in the instance of death of a currently unrecognized parent, for health care decisions or to be entitled to inheritance rights. The government in the

Netherlands is looking to change the law to take into account its 25,000 LGBT families, and issues faced by stepparents or sperm donors.

At the end of 2012, Wiebe Alkema, a spokesperson for the justice ministry said it "is going to investigate and see what the possibilities are for recognizing three parents or more per family."

Green MP Liesbeth van Tongeren commented on what has been the norm for legally recognizing parents: "Currently parenthood in the eyes of the law is almost always the consequence of biological parenthood," the party said in a statement. She said, "This does not represent the diversity of families in the Netherlands. Often enough, the father of a child with lesbian parents also plays a role in the life of the child," she said.

"How a family lives is more important than the biological lineage," Van Tongeren added. "The bill should take into account what's best for all concerned."

The Netherlands currently has no legal recognition for stepparents, or sperm donors who may wish to be involved in the upbringing of their child.

## **News from the LGBT Family Coalition**

### **UPCOMING MEETINGS**

#### **MARCH 2013:**

◆ **Thursday March 7 at 7 p.m.**

**CONFERENCE: TRANSFORMING FAMILIES (TRANS PARENTS)**

(For more information please see attached flier). **Reservations necessary.**

**Location: UQAM, salle N-M450, Pavillon Paul-Gérin-Lajoie, 1205 rue St-Denis**

◆ **Tuesday, March 19 at 7:00 p.m.**

**MONTREAL: SPECIAL COURSE FOR FUTURE PARENTS – STARTING A FAMILY THROUGH SURROGACY**

Guest speakers: Joanne Wright: Director of Canadian Surrogacy Options and 4-time surrogate mother, Doreen Browne, Montreal lawyer who specialises in surrogacy cases, gay fathers through surrogacy.

**PLEASE SEE THE ATTACHED FLIER FOR IMPORTANT DETAILS. Reservations necessary.**

**Location: Centre St-Pierre, 1212 rue Panet**

◆ **Tuesday, March 26th at 7:00 p.m.**

**QUEBEC CITY: COURSE FOR FUTURE PARENTS – PART 3: FERTILITY CLINICS**

(For more information please see attached flier). **Reservations necessary.**

**Location: Université Laval, Pavillon Louis-Jacques-Casault, Room CSL-3532  
1055, avenue du Séminaire, Québec (Québec)**

#### **APRIL 2013:**

◆ **Sunday April 7 starting at 10:00 a.m.**

**QUEBEC CITY: FAMILY ACTIVITY: CABANE A SUCRE**

(For more information please see attached flier). **Reservations necessary.**

◆ **SATURDAY April 13 at 11:30 a.m.**

**SUGARING OFF PARTY : La Cabane à Sucre Lalande (St-Eustache).**

(For more information please see attached flier). **Reservations necessary.**

◆ **THURSDAY, April 18th at 7:00 p.m.**

**MONTREAL: COURSE FOR FUTURE PARENTS : SURVIVING THE ARRIVAL OF YOUR YOUNG CHILD (FOR WOMEN AND MEN)**

(For more information please see attached flier). **Reservations necessary.**

Location: Maison Parent-Roback, 110, rue Ste-Thérèse, Salle 105, Montréal, H2Y 1E6

◆ Tuesday, April 30th at 7:00 p.m.

**QUEBEC CITY: COURSE FOR FUTURE PARENTS – PART 4: UNDERSTAND AND ANSWER (OR NOT?) THE MOST COMMON QUESTIONS (FOR WOMEN AND MEN)**

(For more information please see attached flier). **Reservations necessary.**

Location: Université Laval, Pavillon Louis-Jacques-Casault, Room CSL-3532  
1055, avenue du Séminaire, Québec (Québec)

**MAY 2013:**

◆ Wednesday, May 15th at 7:00 p.m.

**MONTREAL: COURSE FOR FUTURE PARENTS : UNDERSTAND AND ANSWER (OR NOT?) THE MOST COMMON QUESTIONS (FOR WOMEN AND MEN)**

(For more information please see attached flier). **Reservations necessary.**

Location: Maison Parent-Roback, 110, rue Ste-Thérèse, Salle 105, Montréal, H2Y 1E6

◆ Tuesday, May 21st at 7:00 p.m.

**QUEBEC CITY: COURSE FOR FUTURE PARENTS – PART 5: OUT IN THE WORLD : SURVIVING DAY CARE AND PRIMARY SCHOOL (FOR WOMEN AND MEN)**

(For more information please see attached flier). **Reservations necessary.**

Location: Université Laval, Pavillon Louis-Jacques-Casault, Room CSL-3532  
1055, avenue du Séminaire, Québec (Québec)

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**BULLETIN BOARD:**

◆ **La Marg'Elle** est un groupe pour femmes homosexuelles et bisexuelles affilié à la Maison des Femmes des Bois-Francs. Briser l'isolement, favoriser l'échange, l'identification et l'affirmation de soi.

Info: [margelleboisfrancs@hotmail.com](mailto:margelleboisfrancs@hotmail.com)

[www.lamargelle.spaces.live.com](http://www.lamargelle.spaces.live.com)

819-758-3384

◆ **Dorshei Emet B'nei Mitzvah Program:** Do you have children entering grade 6? We offer a meaningful program in which children discover the relevance of their Jewish heritage. Dorshei Emet is a welcoming Synagogue to individuals and families of all backgrounds, and to interfaith and LGBTQ families. **514-486-9400 (Alys Geiger)**, [www.dorshei-emet](http://www.dorshei-emet), or drop in anytime to Saturday morning Shabbat services, 10h00 to 12h15, and stay for a light lunch and meet some of the members!

◆ **Le Centre des femmes de Rivière-des-Prairies! 514-648-1030** - Nous sommes ouvertes aux lesbiennes! Si vous avez besoin de plus d'informations vous pouvez consulter notre site web : [www.cdfrdp.qc.ca](http://www.cdfrdp.qc.ca) ainsi que le site de notre regroupement : [www.rcentres.qc.ca/propos.html](http://www.rcentres.qc.ca/propos.html)

◆ **L'Écho des femmes de la Petite Patrie** est un centre de femmes qui offre des rencontres pour lesbiennes. Ces rencontres ont lieu les lundis soirs aux deux semaines de 19h00 à 21h30, et sont animées par une personne ressource. Ces rencontres, qui se veulent un lieu d'échange, de ressourcement et d'information, s'intéressent aux réalités et aux conditions de vie des lesbiennes. Les rencontres sont en français. Un service de halte-garderie est disponible avec réservation faite une semaine à l'avance. Le centre est situé au **6032 St-Hubert (métro Beaubien)**. Téléphone (514)277-7445, télécopieur (514)277-1689

## MISCELLANEOUS

♦ **Traducteurs, rédacteurs, etc.:** Nous sommes à la recherche de bénévoles pour la traduction française de ce bulletin. Toute contribution (même à raison d'une page ou deux par mois) est la bienvenue. Si vous êtes disponible, veuillez nous contacter : [info@familleshomoparentales.org](mailto:info@familleshomoparentales.org)

♦ **Batshaw Youth and Family Centres** is encouraging English speaking and bilingual gay and lesbian couples, and singles, to consider becoming **foster parents**. There are babies, pre-schoolers and older children who are waiting for a foster home. For some the plan will be to help them return to their families. For other children, the plan will be to work toward **adoption**. What a remarkable feeling it is to know you have made a difference in the life of a child by providing a stable, safe and loving environment. For more information, please call, **Rena Rubin, Foster Care Recruiter, at 932-7161, local 416, or send an e-mail to rena\_rubin@ssss.gouv.qc.ca**

♦ The **Open Book Library's** collection includes over 5500 books written by LGBT authors or by authors who write about our communities. Some of these books are for children and adolescents. We are very proud that approximately half of our collection is in French. Much more information as well as online consultation of the book collection is available at our Web site [www.ccglm.org/en-b](http://www.ccglm.org/en-b). We are located at **2075 Plessis (CCGLM)** in the Village. Come visit us! Open Wednesdays and Fridays from 1-8 p.m. (514) 528-8424.

♦ **The Kid Scoop: The all-in-one reference for kids activities.** [www.kidscoop.com](http://www.kidscoop.com)

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**The bulletin board is a free forum for members to communicate amongst each other. If you want to post an announcement in the next issue please send it to us at any time to [info@familleshomoparentales.org](mailto:info@familleshomoparentales.org) or by post to CFH, 2401 Coursol, Montreal, Quebec, H3J 1C8. If you have something to advertise, sell, rent or buy...anything where money must change hands, you can place an ad in the newsletter. Ads cost 20 cents per word.**  
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♦ **THERE IS NO FREEDOM WITHOUT FINANCIAL FREEDOM - LA LIBERTÉ PERSONNELLE PASSE PAR LA LIBERTÉ FINANCIÈRE.** Financial services for individuals and small businesses: budgeting, debt management, investments, future planning, personal taxes, wealth enhancement strategies. 20% of all subsequent fees will be donated to the CFH. **J. Freed, (514) 489-8633, [www.jfreed.ca](http://www.jfreed.ca)**

♦ We're putting the "real" in real estate! We don't have big hair and Gucci shoes, just a down-to-earth knowledge of the market. We know how important the right home is to your family. If you're thinking of buying or selling a house or condo anywhere in the city, we can help. **Mary Lamey (514-978-6522) and Amy Barratt (514-718-6522), affiliated real estate agents and proud lesbian mums.**

♦ Photographe professionnelle pour mariages, maternité, portraits, familles. Membre de la CFH. Contactez-moi pour plus de renseignements. **Marie-Andrée Boivin 514-273-9658 [marieandreeboivin@yahoo.ca](mailto:marieandreeboivin@yahoo.ca)**  
[www.maphotographe.com](http://www.maphotographe.com)