



## NEWSLETTER - VOLUME XVI - No. I – September 2014

### **LGBT FAMILY COALITION: COMING UP FOR 2014-2015!**

*By Mona Greenbaum, executive director, LGBT Family Coalition*

Each year, in September, I like to give our old and new members an update about the Coalition, as well as a heads-up about important family-related issues in the year to come. After all, the well-being of our community and of our families is at the centre of our mission.

*So what's up this year?*

*Name change:* First of all you may have noticed that we are no longer called 'La Coalition des familles homoparentales.' Our new name was adopted unanimously by our members at our Annual General Assembly in June. We are now the 'Coalition des familles LGBT/ LGBT Family Coalition'. As we welcome an increasing number of families with trans parents into our group, we felt that it was important for our title to reflect this diversity. This name change accompanies our mandate to carry out trans-specific events each year. We are very proud to be one of the most trans-inclusive organizations in all of Quebec.

*Workshops for school staff:* Something else to be proud about - every year we carry out workshops with thousands of professionals, especially those working in schools, to help them to fight against homophobia and gender-based harassment and to become more inclusive of family diversity. This year we launched a press release in June after passing the mark of having trained over 10,000 professionals ([press release-fr: http://www.familleslgbt.org/documents/pdf/press/comm\\_presse\\_10000profs.pdf](http://www.familleslgbt.org/documents/pdf/press/comm_presse_10000profs.pdf)). In order to meet the increasing demand for these workshops, this fall, we will be training a dozen new facilitators to add to our teams in Montreal and Quebec City.

Recently, over 80 university professors, deans and program directors signed letters attesting to the quality of our trainings and the necessity for their students to learn about homophobia and gender-based harassment. The letters also attest to how much the students enjoy our visits.

*Web-based resources for professionals working with youth and families:* Over the summer, our Super-Volunteer, Amy Green, put hundreds of hours into building up our web site to house the huge variety of resources that we offer to teachers, psychologists, social workers and other professionals. Please click here to see what we are offering ([resources and tools: http://www.familleslgbt.org/youth.php?lang=en](http://www.familleslgbt.org/youth.php?lang=en)).

We are currently doing workshops in all 12 Faculties of Education across the province. Our new web-based resources are of great value to a whole new generation of teachers who will be better equipped to deal with homophobia and gender based harassment and will better understand the reality of our families. This work will obviously have an impact on the school experience of our youth.

*Book Project:* Another project that we are very excited about is a book we will be launching in the spring of 2015 on LGBT Parenting. The book is titled "Familles LGBT au Québec: moment présent et evolution." By the way, we need your help for this as we are looking for family photos and short testimonies to bring the book alive. If you have some nice images of your family please send them to us! This is a great opportunity to make our families more visible.

*For future parents:* For the future parents we will be having our first intensive weekend of the year in November ([intensive weekend future parents: http://www.familleslgbt.org/documents/pdf/ateliers\\_futurs\\_parents.pdf](http://www.familleslgbt.org/documents/pdf/ateliers_futurs_parents.pdf)) and monthly workshops in Quebec City starting in January. This is a great way to find out more about becoming LGBT parents and to connect with others who are at the same point in their lives.

*For those who already have kids:* We will be continuing to offer interesting activities for families like our recent outing to a 'Les Capitales' baseball game in Quebec City. This is a great way for both you and your kids to touch base with old friends and to make new friends as well. We're looking forward to seeing you at our annual mega-picnic at Jenna and Eby's place ([picnic: http://www.familleslgbt.org/documents/pdf/news/calendrier/Farm%20picnic%202014.pdf](http://www.familleslgbt.org/documents/pdf/news/calendrier/Farm%20picnic%202014.pdf)). Last year, close to 200 adults and kids came together at their wonderful organic farm. Later in the fall, come pick pumpkins with us at Oka ([pumpkins: http://www.familleslgbt.org/documents/pdf/news/calendrier/pumpkin%20picking%202014.pdf](http://www.familleslgbt.org/documents/pdf/news/calendrier/pumpkin%20picking%202014.pdf)).

On a more serious note, this year, there will be a number of issues that we will need to follow closely:

*Assisted Procreation Program:* With the new liberal government we will see budget cuts. One of the items sure to be on the chopping board is the relatively new Assisted Reproduction (AR) Program. Many women, and even some men, in our community have benefitted from this program that covers fees associated with AR through Medicare. It looks like Gaétan Barrette, the Health Minister, is set on decreasing the huge fees associated with this program. The question is: Will the program be cut completely or just partially (ex. coverage only for the first child, or coverage for only 30% of the fees)? And even more importantly for us as a community: Will we be treated differently from the rest of the population? Before Barrette was elected, he spoke about cutting out those who suffered from 'social' as opposed to 'medical' infertility (read: lesbians and single women), but the two briefs that we presented to the government commission on AR were well integrated into the commission's final report which states that a differential treatment for the LGBT community would be clearly discriminatory. It seems that Barrette has done his homework, because since the report was launched in June he has stopped talking about 'social infertility'. We'll see in the fall...

*Surrogacy and Adoption:* Other items that will undoubtedly come up this year are surrogacy and adoption, although they will probably be more on the register later in the year (spring 2015). A committee within the Ministry of Justice is currently working on a report about reforming family law. Surrogacy and adoption are issues they will be addressing. For adoption, they will probably be looking at open adoptions (where biological parents maintain some ties with the child), something we need to watch closely. For surrogacy, we have consistently asked the government to legislate on this practice so that parents, children, surrogates and egg donors can all be legally protected. The current situation is a complete legal void that leads to all kinds of problems from filiation disputes to problems with parental leave.

As always we will be keeping a close watch on these issues and will participate in media interventions, consultations and lobbying to have our voices heard.

*Funding:* For the immediate future, however, our focus needs to be the funding of our own organization. With each passing year, as our organization grows, our financial needs are greater and greater. Although we have meetings planned with the variety of government agencies that fund us, we desperately need your help, as well. Paying your membership promptly and (even better!) adding on a donation, are ways to really help us to continue carrying out our important work ([renew membership and donate: http://www.familleslgbt.org/membership.php?lang=en](http://www.familleslgbt.org/membership.php?lang=en)). Your help, as always, lets us continue the important work for our families and especially for our kids.

Hope to see you this year!

Mona

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**Interested in writing for our newsletter? Send your articles at any time to [info@famillesLGBT.org](mailto:info@famillesLGBT.org) or by post to CF-LGBT, 110, rue Sainte-Thérèse, bureau 405, Montreal, Quebec, H2Y 1E6**

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## News Briefs: May - August 2014

### Quebec News

**June 6** — Health Minister Gaétan Barrette said that the 386-page review of Quebec's four-year-old **Assisted-Reproduction Program** by the province's health and welfare commissioner was "excellent," but he could still scrap the program as an economy measure. Barrette explained he is considering two options: a new bill implementing the commissioner's recommendations this fall; or ending public funding of the program, in part or in whole, shifting costly in vitro fertilization and other procedures from Quebec's public hospitals and assisted-procreation clinics to the private sector.

"Everything is on the table," Barrette told reporters, noting that assisted reproduction is not an essential health service.

Quebec's health budget has been growing by four to five per cent yearly. But this year the increase has been trimmed back to a three per cent and Barrette confirmed he is looking into eliminating costly tests and procedures, such as assisted procreation, to spend health dollars more efficiently.

Initially budgeted at \$30 million in 2010-11, the cost of Quebec's program was close to \$70 million in 2013-14. The announced goal of recovering \$100 million in overall health costs by reducing the cost of neo-natal care for premature babies born under the program, did not materialize.

"The status quo is unacceptable," Robert Salois, Quebec's Commissaire de la santé et au bien-être, told reporters, adding that guidelines are needed to decide who may benefit from the program and which procedures should be used. Salois said parents who already have one child should be excluded from the program, as should parents who have voluntarily become sterile. An age limit of 42, with some leeway depending on the reproductive health of the mother, should be set.

The commission suggested the government continue to accept demands by single and same-sex parents for access to assisted procreation and called for a public debate on the legal, ethical, clinical and social aspects of surrogacy.

**June 11** - No matter how a child is conceived, he or she has the right to be adopted by his/her intended parents, concluded the **Court of Appeal in a judgment that gives a certain legitimacy to surrogacy contracts** in Quebec.

In the legal decision written by Me Yves-Marie Morissette the Court of Appeal erased the surrogate mother's legal link to the child to permit an adoption by the intended non-biological mother, as the surrogacy contract between the parties intended.

Up until now, judges have been divided on what to do about surrogacy in Quebec. According to the Civil Code surrogacy contracts are null and void that is, cannot be enforced. So judges have been split on the legality of adoption by intended parents. Many judges who have dealt with gay fathers have accepted the agreements whereas in 2009 a heterosexual couple was denied.

The case concerned a couple who used the same surrogate, a friend of theirs, two times. In 2009, the surrogate (who is not the egg donor) carried a first child for the couple. The intended mother had no problem adopting the child who is biologically connected to her husband.

For the second child conceived in the same way three years later the situation was different. The judge refused to authorize the adoption even though the surrogate clearly indicated that she did not feel at all connected to the child. At the heart of the refusal was the idea that the surrogate had been paid and that surrogacy runs counter to public order.

At the Court of Appeal however the judge cited the child's best interest as the justification for the intended mother to be legally recognized as the parent of the child. He stated that all children should have the same rights regardless of the circumstances surrounding their conception.

Me Alain Roy, is law professor at the Université de Montréal and the president of a committee in the Justice Ministry that is currently looking at the reform of family law in Quebec. Me Roy is skeptical about the legal conclusions of this judgment given the current state of the law. He said that if the current law does not recognize these contracts it is because legislators did not intend to encourage surrogacy as a socially accepted practice.

« Now we need to determine if we still consider these social imperatives to be more important than the best interest of the child. It is important that we continue to study these issues, » concluded Me Roy.

**June 12** - Veteran Canadian **women's hockey goaltender Charline Labonté has gone public as a gay athlete.** "I am gay and proudly authentic," she wrote in a story published by OutSports.com and LezSpreadTheWorld.com.

Labonté, 31, who won Olympic gold for the fourth straight time at the Sochi Games last February and hinted at hanging up her skates internationally, felt uneasy about playing in Russia. "The new Russian laws, including the anti-gay 'propaganda' laws, created a malaise that was felt by most people around me, gay or straight," Labonte revealed. "Were we afraid? Of course! Were we in danger? No idea. We never had the intention to protest or talk about being gay. We were in Sochi for a single reason and that was to compete at the highest level of our capacities. We worked too hard to let any outside distractions separate us from our ultimate dream."

The native of Greenfield Park, Que., said she was happy to have girlfriend and Canadian Olympic speedskater Anastasia Buscis by her side in Sochi, which made celebrating another gold that much more sweeter.

**August 5** – *Ulysse et Alice, Tango a deux papas* (Tango has Two Dads), *La fille qui voulait être un garçon* (The Girl Who Wanted to be a Boy), *Mademoiselle Zazie a-t-elle un zizi ?* (Does Madam Zazie have a penis?). These are some of the suggestions that the *Centrale des syndicats du Québec* (CSQ), Quebec's biggest teachers' union, are proposing for daycares and primary schools. A reading list for youth has been put together to address questions about homosexuality, bisexuality, trans identities, family diversity and bullying.

"These are books that look at stereotypes, they're not about sexuality," said Jacques Petrin, the president of the CSQ's committee for sexual diversity and gender identity, who put together the list. The initiative is foremost for fighting prejudice, but it also can help teachers and daycare professionals to discuss these questions with children.

The CSQ's proposition has elicited a wide variety of responses on social media. Some parents think it's a great way to educate children and fight prejudice, while others are vociferously against the idea citing that children are too young to be learning about these issues.

Michel Dorais, professor of social work at Laval University says, "All children are concerned by these issues because there is not one family in Quebec that does not know an LGBT person. People who are against respect for human diversity, whether they are racist, sexist or homophobic have the right to their opinions, but Quebec and Canadian society have made, through our laws, other choices".

The list is available on the CSQ'S web site.

**August 10** - A walk for trans rights saw more than 300 demonstrators in Montreal denounce the current required procedure for name and gender marker changes on identification. "We walked because the current procedures are discriminatory," Caroline Trottier-Gascon, one of the demonstration's organizers, said in a

statement. “They cause the marginalization of trans people who can’t have proper identification without encountering unacceptable criteria.”

Changing your first name and gender marker in Quebec currently requires acknowledgments from mental health professionals, along with proofs of physical changes ranging from hormone replacement therapy in the case of a name change to genital surgery for changing gender markers. Bill 35, which modifies the requirements for changing gender markers, was passed in December 2013. Despite that, said organizers, it still hasn’t been put in place, which they deem unacceptable as it prolongs the waiting period for countless trans people who want to legally change their identity.

**August 11** - Raymond Gravel, a former Bloc Québécois MP and well-known Quebec priest, has died. The diocese in Joliette says Gravel died from lung cancer at the Centre hospitalier régional de Lanaudière, northeast of Montreal. The 61-year-old acknowledged not long ago he had smoked for 49 years. The outspoken social activist represented the Montreal-area riding of Repentigny in the Commons from 2006 to 2008. Gravel was known for his progressive stands on homosexuality, same-sex marriage, abortion rights and the role of women in the church.

Véronique Hivon, a former PQ cabinet minister, said Gravel’s support had helped advance her bill to legalize physician-assisted death for the terminally ill in Quebec. “He was not afraid to go counter to the established positions of the church,” she said. “He added a voice of wisdom, humanity and compassion to the debate.”

## Canada News

**June 12** - Ontarians elected the first openly gay premier in Canadian history. Liberal Kathleen Wynne, dogged by scandal and hobbled by more than a decade of skeletons in the closet, managed to pull out a decisive win, giving her a majority government.

Wynne’s big win was a thorough spanking for Progressive Conservative Leader Tim Hudak, whose austerity platform proved controversial and resulted in huge losses for his party. Hudak announced his resignation as it became clear just how badly his party had done.

Polls leading up to election day left the door open to everything from a Conservative majority to an NDP minority, but few surveys predicted the extent to which Wynne would sweep the province.

The Ontario results mirror a national trend of rebounding Liberal parties.

**June 17** - Underscoring a significant shift in Canadian law, a 12-year-old transgender boy in Alberta has been granted a new birth certificate officiating his status as male. The certificate was publicly presented to Wren Kauffman as part of an Edmonton pride brunch hosted by the city’s mayor — the result of a complaint Wren filed with the Alberta Human Rights Commission based on the inability to amend his listed sex.

Before, Alberta only allowed a person’s sex to be switched legally if gender reassignment had been performed, an outdated practice that was also shot down by a local judge who ruled that doing so violates the rights of transgender people.

Similar human rights complaints have also been filed in four other provinces: Ontario, British Columbia, Saskatchewan and Manitoba, signifying a possible sweep in transgender rights victories across Canada.

**July 25** - Nova Scotia’s first gay-friendly mosque is set to open in August. The Halifax Unity Mosque is an expansion of the Toronto Unity Mosque, also called el-Tawhid Juma Circle. The mosque is a “gender-equal, LGBTI/queer-affirming” place for Muslims to worship, according to its Facebook page. Syed Adnan Hussein has been building support for the Halifax Unity Mosque for a while. He has found a space for the mosque and hopes to start worship by August. He hopes it will welcome people with a range of sexual identities. Many

Muslims live in countries where being gay is a crime. Often, they come to Canada to escape persecution.

## LGBT Marriage News

**May 28** – The **American** Bureau of Statistics begins to count homosexual couples as families in their statistics reflecting the fact that American society is evolving on this issue and that an increasing number of states allow same-se marriage.

**June 5 - Slovakia's** parliament amends its constitution to define marriage as a union between man and woman, effectively closing the door to same-sex marriage and stirring protest among rights groups. No form of same-sex civil union is legal in Slovakia, where more than 70 percent of the population of 5.4 million is Christian.

But a 2012 opinion poll showed that 47 percent of Slovaks supported civil unions for same-sex couples while 38 per cent were opposed. Same-sex marriage is legal in a handful of the 27 other EU states including Britain and France, while civil unions are recognized by the Czech Republic, Germany and others.

**June 19** - Lawmakers in **Luxembourg** overwhelmingly approve changes in the small European nation's legislation governing marriage that will allow people of the same sex to wed and to adopt children.

Xavier Bettel, who became Luxembourg's prime minister in December, is openly gay.

Argentina, Belgium, Brazil, Canada, Denmark, France, Iceland, the Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Portugal, South Africa, Spain, Sweden and Uruguay allow same-sex marriage nationwide. The United States, the United Kingdom and Mexico allow it in some regions.

**June 25** - After a federal judge in **Indiana** strikes down the state's ban on same-sex marriage, couples rush to county clerks' offices across the state to get married. The Indiana attorney general's office however indicates it will appeal the decision.

**June 25** - In a huge win for the legal struggle over equal marriage rights in **Utah** and nationwide, a federal appeals court sides against the state's marriage ban. The United States Court of Appeals for the 10th Circuit agrees with a lower court that Utah's marriage ban violates the U.S. Constitution's guarantees of equal protection and due process.

"Today's ruling marks the first time a federal court of appeals has ruled that excluding same-sex couples from the freedom to marry is unconstitutional," says NCLR executive director Kate Kendell in a statement. "The court makes clear that the promise of equality embedded in our revered U.S. Constitution includes the lives and loves of lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender Americans. That recognition marks an indelible milestone in our nation's journey to full inclusion — and one that will undoubtedly influence other courts in the months to come."

**June 27** - A mass wedding for lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer and two-spirited couples, considered the first of its kind in **Canada** takes place during World Pride. The Grand Pride Wedding involves couples from across Canada, as well as participants from countries where same-sex marriage is illegal. Approximately 1,000 people attend the Grand Pride Wedding, which is believed to be the largest of its kind in North America.

**July 1** - A federal judge strikes down **Kentucky's** constitutional ban on same-sex marriage, though the court issues a stay with its decision, meaning couples cannot yet apply for marriage licenses in the state. Kentucky's Democratic governor, Steve Beshear, is expected to file an appeal on this latest order.

**July 7** - The United Nations decides to recognize the gay marriages of all its staffers, UN secretary general Ban Ki-moon announces. Previously, the United Nations only recognized the unions of employees who came from countries where gay marriage is legal. The new policy applies to the UN's approximately 43,000 employees worldwide.

**July 15 - Croatian** lawmakers adopt a long-awaited law allowing gay couples to register as life partners, enjoying the same rights as their heterosexual peers except on adopting children.

**July 17** - A woman from **Finland** who came out as transgender during her marriage should be allowed to be legally recognized as a female without changing her marital status, says Amnesty International after the European Court of Human Rights rules against her. Because of Finland's prohibition on same-sex marriage, Heli, 49, is not able to obtain legal recognition of her gender unless she converts her 18-year marriage into a civil partnership. She has already had to undergo a psychiatric assessment and sterilization as part of the Finland's legal requirements for gender recognition.

"With this deeply disappointing and unjust ruling, the European Court of Human Rights is condoning Finland's repressive laws affecting transgender people and reinforcing harmful gender stereotypes," said Jezerca Tigani, Deputy Director of Amnesty International's Europe and Central Asia Programme.

**July 18** - The U.S. Court of Appeals for the Tenth Circuit rules that **Oklahoma's** ban on marriage equality is unconstitutional, and that couples should be able to wed. The state of Oklahoma will have the chance to request an appeal. As of now, marriages for same-sex couples in Oklahoma will remain on hold.

**July 23** - U.S. District Judge Raymond P. Moore rules against **Colorado's** constitutional amendment banning marriage equality. In *Burns v. Hickenlooper*, attorneys sued the state on behalf of six same-sex couples who argue that Colorado's ban on marriage equality violates the U.S. Constitution. Judge Moore stays his ruling until August 25 to allow the state time to appeal to the U.S. Court of Appeals.

There are over 70 court cases challenging discriminatory marriage bans across the US in 30 of the 31 states where such a ban exists, plus Puerto Rico. In total, 33 states either have marriage equality or have seen state marriage bans struck down as unconstitutional in court. Same-sex couples can legally marry in nineteen states and the District of Columbia.

**July 26 - Florida** Circuit Court Judge Sarah Zabel strikes down Florida's ban on same-sex marriage, ordering Miami-Dade County clerks to allow loving, committed same-sex couples to marry. The court stays the order pending an appeal. The ruling is the second in July in favor of Florida's same-sex couples.

**August 13** — A federal appeals court denies a request to delay its ruling striking down **Virginia's** same-sex marriage ban. A panel of the 4th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals in Richmond denies the request by a county court clerk in northern Virginia to stay the decision while it is appealed to the Supreme Court. That means that without intervention from the U.S. Supreme Court, same-sex couples can begin marrying. In July, the court ruled that Virginia's gay marriage ban approved by voters in 2006 is unconstitutional.

## International News

**May 30 (Advocate News) South African** member of parliament Zakhele Mbhele has made history as he was sworn in as a member of the South African National Assembly, becoming the first openly gay black member of parliament in any African nation.

"One of the most damaging things about homophobia is its destructive effect on a young LGBT person's self-esteem," Mbhele said. "That was certainly one of the issues I grappled with when I was coming to terms with my sexuality in my teen years."

Mbhele's arrival on the African political scene, could not be more timely for those looking for any sign of good news for LGBT people facing brutal, draconian policies targeting LGBT Africans — like Uganda's crushing new antigay law, which imposes lifetime prison sentences for consensual sexual activity between two adults of the same gender.

As Washington Post contributor Andrew Reynolds noted, Mbhele is the 203rd openly gay parliamentarian elected worldwide, since Coos Huijsen of the Netherlands became the world's first in 1976.

**June 2 (Gay Star News)** The **World Health Organization (WHO)** has joined forces with UN Women, UN AIDS, UNICEF, the United Nations Population Fund, the United Nations Development Programme and the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) to condemn the forced sterilization of transgender and intersex people in a groundbreaking report.

The report, 'Eliminating forced, coercive and otherwise involuntary sterilization - An interagency statement,' is a strong statement in support of the rights of transgender and intersex people to be recognized as the gender they identify with without having to undergo invasive surgical procedures.

'Sterilization without full, free and informed consent has been variously described by international, regional and national human rights bodies as an involuntary, coercive and/or forced practice, and as a violation of fundamental human rights, including the right to health, the right to information, the right to privacy, the right to decide on the number and spacing of children, the right to found a family and the right to be free from discrimination.

**June 1 (Associated Press)** Two women have been taken by police after participating in a small, but vocal demonstration in support of LGBT pride and against Russia's antigay law in Moscow. A video posted on YouTube appears to show the two protesters being attacked by at least one plainclothes thug just minutes before police apprehend them.

The small demonstration was held near the Moscow mayor's offices. A permit to hold the demonstration had been sought by organizers of the demonstration, but Moscow city officials denied the application.

While homosexuality itself was decriminalized by Russia nearly two decades ago, most public expressions of pride in their sexual-orientation and/or gender-identities by LGBT people have fallen under a de facto ban since Russia's so-called "antigay propoganda law" was signed by President Vladimir Putin last year.

**June 26 (RFI)** The **European Court of Human Rights (ECHR)** has ordered **France** to recognize children born to surrogate mothers abroad even though surrogacy is banned on French territory. Refusal to do so undermines children's identity, the court ruled in cases brought by two French families. France has the right to ban surrogate parenthood but not to refuse the legal recognition of parent-child relationships of children born to surrogate mothers, the ECHR has ruled.

The ECHR ruled that the French decision was an infringement of the children's right to respect for their private life, while recognizing France's right to declare surrogacy illegal on its territory and its concern that French parents' might go abroad to use the procedure.

The status quo "undermined the children's identity within French society", the court found and meant that their inheritance rights were less favourable than those of other children.

The French government has been loath to tackle the question since the right-wing campaign against its gay marriage bill, when opponents accused the Socialists of undermining the family and wanting to legalize medically assisted procreation.

**June 27 (The Advocate)** Hundreds of LGBT refugees — whose existence has been criminalized under **Uganda's** draconian Anti-Homosexuality Act — have fled Uganda for neighboring Kenya after facing threats and being blackmailed, kidnapped, arrested, evicted and assaulted because of their sexual orientation or gender identity, says a Kenyan activist and LGBT community organizer.

According to activist Nikki Mawanda, a transgender Ugandan man currently living and seeking asylum in the United States, decades of work and hundreds of billions of dollars of investment in the fight against HIV and AIDS in Africa are now threatened by the newly magnified stigma against LGBT people, caused in part by Uganda's Anti-Homosexuality Act.

Uganda's antigay law and the general rise in African homophobia currently being stoked by politicians who are looking for distractions from their own poor performance are reawakening old stereotypes, leading people to believe that only LGBT people get HIV and AIDS.

"The common LGBTI person in Uganda is struggling to even make ends meet," Mawanda says. ... is homeless, because they were evicted from the small homes where they were living before the law was passed, because the law says their landlord had to evict them. The average LGBTI person in Uganda cannot go to hospital to get anti-malaria or anti-retrovirals because the doctors fear being jailed because of the new law." That law prescribes seven-year prison sentences for landlords who don't evict LGBT tenants.

Mawanda says the law has also essentially given homophobic people in Uganda license to assault or even kill LGBT people, making it unsurprising that many LGBT Ugandans are seeking safety and asylum in the U.S., Canada, Sweden, Scotland, Kenya, and even Rwanda.

**June 29 (DW News) Turkey's** LGBT community turned out in droves on Istanbul's main pedestrian street, Istiklal Avenue, for this year's gay pride parade. Police were on the scene to intervene in the event of violence, but the march remained peaceful. Participants waved rainbow flags and carried signs calling for an end to homophobia in the Muslim country. "Love knows no gender," "Another kind of family is possible," and "Stop homophobia," some of the signs read.

Homosexuality is not illegal in Turkey. However, homophobia remains firmly in place among the Middle Eastern country's deeply conservative population. In 2010, the Minister for Family and Women, Selma Aliye Kavaf, called it a "disease" that "needs to be treated."

The parade drew criticism from Islamists on Twitter. They reportedly took issue with both the fact that the government allowed the LGBT community to hold its event and that the parade coincided with the start of the Muslim holy month of Ramadan.

**July 7 (Washington Post)** Children of same-sex couples fare better when it comes to physical health and social well-being than children in the general population, according to researchers at the University of Melbourne in Australia.

"It's often suggested that children with same-sex parents have poorer outcomes because they're missing a parent of a particular sex. But research my colleagues and I published in the journal BMC Public Health shows this isn't the case," said lead researcher Simon Crouch.

Crouch and his team surveyed 315 same-sex parents with a total of 500 children across Australia. About 80 percent of the kids had female parents and about 18 percent had male parents, the study states. Children from same-sex families scored about 6 percent higher on general health and family cohesion, even when controlling for socio-demographic factors such as parents' education and household income, Crouch wrote. However, on most health measures, including emotional behavior and physical functioning, there was no difference compared with children from the general population.

Crouch suggested the greater social cohesion among same-sex families comes from an equal distribution of work. He said same-sex couples are likely to share responsibilities more equally than heterosexual ones.

**July 31 (Al Jazeera)** Gay rights activists have launched legal proceedings in a **Beijing** court against a clinic that advertises "conversion therapy" in Chongqing. "Homosexuality doesn't need to be cured!" about ten activists chanted outside the court as the case opened.

Homosexuality was de-classified as a mental disorder in China in 2001 but widespread intolerance towards gays and lesbians remains, and activists hailed the unprecedented case as a significant step forward. The plaintiff, who is gay and has given his name only as Xiao Zhen, says the Xinyu Piaoxiang clinic in Chongqing traumatised him when he was electro-shocked after being told to have sexual thoughts involving men. Those who come out to friends and family in China often face significant pressure to undergo sexuality "treatment" or marry a partner of the opposite sex.

"It is the first case of its kind in China. Before, Chinese courts would have never taken on such a case," said Xiao Chuan, a member of the Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender Rights Advocacy China rights group. He uses a pseudonym to avoid government retribution. "It's a sign of tolerance" on the part of the Chinese government towards LGBT Chinese, he added.

Zhang Rui, who is in charge of the Beijing LGBT Centre's psychological counselling programme, said advocates hope the case will help change Chinese public perceptions of gays as suffering from mental illness.

**July 31 (Advocate News)** A lesbian couple in **Mexico** is vying for the parental rights. In March, Alejandra Bandera Rosales and Claudia Brizeiry López Ramos became the first legally married same-sex couple in the Mexican state of Michoacan. Since then, the couple has been fighting against a federal Family Code that would leave them at risk of losing custody of their children if they traveled to states without equal marriage rights.

The couple recently learned that their home state ruled in their favor, agreeing that the policy violated the Mexican Magna Carta and the Treaty of International Human Rights; however, Congress' disagreement with the decision may limit the victory to Michoacan.

**August 6 (Daily Extra)** **Uganda's** attorney general has filed notice that he will appeal the August 1 court ruling that struck down the Anti-Homosexuality Act. It is not yet known on what grounds the government will appeal the ruling. On August 1 the court had invalidated an anti-gay bill signed into law earlier this year, saying the measure is illegal because it was passed during a parliamentary session that lacked a quorum.

The law provided jail terms up to life for those convicted of engaging in gay sex. It also allowed lengthy jail terms for those convicted of the offences of "attempted homosexuality" as well as "promotion of homosexuality. Although the legislation has wide support in Uganda, it has been condemned in the West and rights groups have described it as draconian.

Nicholas Opiyo, a Ugandan lawyer who was among the petitioners, welcomed the ruling but said there is a missed opportunity to debate the substance of the law. "It may take a long time for the appeal to be heard — if it is heard at all," Opiyo said, noting that the Supreme Court could refuse to hear it. Should the Supreme Court rule in favour of the government, it could also order the lower court to hear the rest of the petition, which also challenged the Anti-Homosexuality Act on a number of human rights grounds.

Alternatively, if the Supreme Court upholds the Constitutional Court's judgment, then a new anti-gay bill could be introduced. But Opiyo doesn't think the government's executive has the appetite to follow through with the law, because of international sanctions, aid cuts and suspensions. Still, he observes, things in Uganda can change very quickly, noting that elections are due in two years. For MPs in many constituencies, the issue would be a very important pillar of their campaigns.

**August 14 (Gay Star News)** **Taiwanese** lesbians Chou Shu-chi and Wang Shu-yi are suing the Taiwanese Government after it refused to recognize them both as legal guardians of the twins they are raising together. The couple have been together for 15 years since meeting in college and four years ago they decided they wanted to start a family so Chou traveled to Canada to undergo an assisted reproduction procedure. The couple were told there was a 60% chance the procedure would not work so they were blown over when they discovered they were having twins - a boy and a girl. But while birth mother Chou has legal guardianship of the children, Taiwan does not allow people in same-sex relationships to adopt their partner's children, so Wang

has no parental rights. The couple are now suing to try to get Taiwan's civil code regulations relating to step-parents extended so that they will allow Wang to be recognized as their children's stepmother.

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

### **UPCOMING MEETINGS**

#### **AUGUST/SEPTEMBER 2014:**

◆ **SATURDAY AUGUST 30TH FROM 11-5 P.M.**  
**LGBT PRIDE COMMUNITY DAY (QUEBEC CITY)**

The LGBT Family Coalition will have our kiosque in Quebec City on the rue St-Jean.

◆ **SATURDAY AUGUST 30TH FROM 5-7 P.M.**  
**COCKTAIL TIME FOR LGBT PARENTS AND FUTURE PARENTS (QUEBEC CITY)**

Details to follow via e-mail...

◆ **SUNDAY AUGUST 31ST FROM 11-3 P.M.**  
**FÊTE ARC-EN-CIEL BRUNCH (QUÉBEC CITY)**

The LGBT Family Coalition and GLBT-Québec, would like to invite you to a family brunch at the Place d'Youville  
Details to follow via e-mail...

◆ **SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 13TH FROM 11-3 P.M. (RAIN DATE SUNDAY SEPTEMBER 14TH)**  
**PICNIC AT EBY AND JENNA'S ORGANIC FARM**

The LGBT Family Coalition would like to invite all LGBT family members with or without children, as well as all our allies and friends, to a huge Family Picnic. Join us to relax and exchange with family and friends, at the organic farm of our dear members Eby and Jenna. There will be music, sports and games.

**Please bring your own lunch!**

**Place: 398, route du Canton Brownsburg-Chatham**

**(See attached flier for directions and details)**

#### **OCTOBER 2014**

◆ **WEDNESDAY OCTOBER 15<sup>TH</sup> AT 7 PM**  
**DISCUSSION AND ACTIVITY: "SHARING OUR STORIES ABOUT TRANS-PARENTING"**

In the spring of 2015 the LGBT Family Coalition will be publishing a book about our families with Les Éditions de rémüe-menage. Many chapters in this book cover issues around transparenting. We would love to have your input and testimonies to make the book really reflective of the lives of trans parents. We want to hear your stories: Did you transition before or after having kids? Are you a future trans parent? What were the victories and the obstacles? Have times changed? Is our society evolving? How did your kids and/ or your partner react to the news about your transition? Has your identity as a parent changed because of your transition? Are you mom, dad or a bit of both? What was your greatest support? What do health care providers need to know about trans-parenting? Please come and help us by sharing your knowledge in a safe space... [RSVP at info@famillesLGBT.org](mailto:info@famillesLGBT.org)

**Place: Centre St-Pierre, room, 203**  
**1212 rue Panet**

◆ **SATURDAY OCTOBER 18<sup>TH</sup> AT 11 A.M.**  
**HALLOWEEN ACTIVITY: PUMPKIN PICKING AT THE LABONTÉ ORCHARDS**  
**(See attached flier for directions and details)**

## **NOVEMBER 2014**

### **◆ SATURDAY NOVEMBER 8TH AND SUNDAY NOVEMBER 9TH INTENSIVE WEEKEND IN MONTREAL FOR FUTURE LGBT PARENTS (IN FRENCH)**

Advanced registration is necessary: (514) 878-7600 ou [info@famillesLGBT.org](mailto:info@famillesLGBT.org)  
Please note : the number of places is limited (see attached flier for more details).

### **◆ SATURDAY NOVEMBER 8 from 9:30-11:00 a.m. WORKSHOP FOR PARENTS OF BABIES AND YOUNG CHILDREN**

Discussion about the role of each parent after the baby arrives  
**Place: 3162 Masson (plateau Mont-Royal)**

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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-Francis. Briser l'isolement, favoriser l'échange, l'identification et l'affirmation de soi.

Info: [margelleboisfrancis@hotmail.com](mailto:margelleboisfrancis@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.dorsheimet.com](http://www.dorsheimet.com)**, 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@famillesLGBT.org](mailto:info@famillesLGBT.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](mailto: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.

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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@famillesLGBT.org](mailto:info@famillesLGBT.org) or by post to CFH, 110, rue Ste-Thérèse, bureau 405, Montreal, Quebec, H2Y 1E6. 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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