Night. But after talking to Mommy, Mama Lu, and Ms. Marston, Molly does some hard thinking and realizes that even if a family is different from others, it can still be a happy, loving - and real - family."

-Molly’s Family

Gay and Lesbian Parenting

Gay and Lesbian Parenting by Deborah F. Glazer, PhD and Jack Drescher, MD (editors)

"Traditionally, coming out as gay or lesbian meant abandoning any hope of becoming a parent or keeping your children if you already had them. But with the "gayby boom" in full swing, more and more gay and lesbian couples are having new babies, adopting children and continuing to raise the offspring of previous heterosexual relationships.

"Gay and lesbian parents still face unique challenges in building and rearing a family, as well as the usual problems heterosexual couples encounter. Gay and Lesbian Parenting unflinchingly examines these concerns and offers positive suggestions and ideas for dealing with these difficulties."

- Gay and Lesbian Parenting

Profiles of Pioneering Families of Value: Personal Histories of GLBT Parents

Compiled and Edited by Larry Dane Brimner

The author has compiled essays by writers of wide-ranging experiences and viewpoints to give the next generation of out homosexuals a chance to hear and a chance to socialize with gay and lesbian elders. The letters offer solutions, wisdom, and experience learned from those who have gone before.

Postcards from Buster

Buster Baxter is the infamous cartoon rabbit who stirred up so much controversy in 2005 for an episode of his show, Postcards from Buster, in which he visited a family with lesbian moms. Episode number 133, entitled Sugartime!, is about Buster's trip to Vermont (one of the first states to legalize civil unions) during the maple syrup harvest. Sugartime! came under heavy criticism by then-U.S. Secretary of Education Margaret Spellings, claiming that "many parents would not want their young children exposed to the lifestyles portrayed in this episode." In fact, the episode deals with the issue very naturally and simply, which suits the intended audience, young children, well. The words "lesbian" and "homosexual" are never used in the episode, and there is no complicated explanation of the family's composition - just the statement of one child in the family, "I have two moms." However, the controversy was so intense that PBS was forced to pull the episode. Sugartime! will never appear on PBS again (unless policy changes), but it is available on the VHS/DVD collection of Postcards from Buster entitled Busters' Outdoor Journeys. A book adaptation of the episode, entitled Buster's Sugartime!, by Marc Brown, is also available.

If you are interested in ordering any of these books, please use NSRF’s Amazon.com Associates program and up to four percent of your purchase will be donated to NSRF. Just follow the link from our website, www.nsrfharmony.org!

Sarah Childers can be reached at schldre@nsrfharmony.org
Atfieh Daniels can be reached at ardanie@indiana.edu

NSRF’s Living History is a series of interviews with members about our past, our present and our hopes for the future. In this issue we hear from Kevin Horton, who shares his story with Debbie Bambino of Connections."

How would you describe your goals and early work with NSRF?

I got involved with the Coalition of Essential Schools (CES) in 1993 as a Social Studies teacher at Paul Robeson high school. Back then we had the Nine Common Principles and we focused a lot of our energy on the size of the school and our classes, teacher isolation and the way we were using our time. I attended a lot of conferences, went to Fall Forum and got lots of good ideas about changes we needed at our school.

In 1996 when I was trained as a CFG coach in San Francisco, I felt that the protocols and processes brought me the facilitative tools I needed to put the CES ideas into practice. My CFG training really helped me get the ideas out and on the table with colleagues.

Did your coaching lead to the changes you thought were needed?

It was exciting when meetings felt productive. We had two groups with about eight teachers in each CFG and some changes were made, but it wasn’t enough. Test scores started to improve but I wanted a bigger response for all kids, not just the kids in the classes of the CFG members. CFGs were kind of a back-door approach, because they were voluntary and didn’t pull everybody into the change. We had about a hundred folks on the staff and only 16 of us were involved. We needed something that would make an impact on the whole school. We needed to collaborate across the disciplines throughout the school.

How did you try to expand the lessons you were learning in the CFGs?

We started using something called “Cognitive Coaching” across the school. It took three years to reach everybody but eventually everyone had the training and was scheduled for peer visits during the school day. Teachers had pre-conferences, reciprocal visits and feedback sessions.

What impact did the cognitive coaching have at Robeson?

Initially, the results of cognitive coaching were good, the test scores were improving and I was optimistic. But then we had a change of administrators and the progress dwindled. Our new principal wanted higher scores and wanted them faster. “Teaching to the test” pulled the collaborative progress we had begun to make backwards.

You’ve been involved in Small Schools work in Chicago and around the country. What’s the connection between that reform and the CFG and cognitive Coaching initiatives?

The Small School tie-in is that the small school structure provided the structure to create CFGs across the whole school. In small schools you have a smaller staff that should share a common vision and have the opportunity to collaborate with their peers regularly around the issues of improved teaching and learning.

How would you describe your current goals and how are they aligned with NSRF’s mission?

My goals are still pretty similar. I’m still committed to working with disadvantaged students and I still think adult collaboration is critical. I call myself a school transformation coach now. Today I’m hoping to join the staff of a small, college prep charter high school as a vice-principal. As an administrator I hope to initiate CFGs across disciplines at the school. I hope the CFGs will work as structures that introduce and support distributed leadership practices and shared instruction.

NSRF’s mission speaks of empowering all people and reflective democratic communities and it talks about all of it in support of educational and social equity. It’s my greatest hope that the staff at my new school will share the values of this mission and support their passion for the students through the use of collaborative

(continued on page 17)
Introducing Inequities

Developed by Dave Lehman with thanks to friend and colleague Anne Rhodes for the original version of these adapted activities.

Purpose:
• To gain a deeper awareness of hurtful heterosexist and homophobic things being said and done among students and staff in your school (the focus could be adapted to address racist, sexist or classist remarks and practices as needed).
• To work on ways to effectively interrupt inequitable behaviors that are biased and unfair to students and your school community.

Time: 1-2 hours depending on the size of the group and the number of incidents discussed.

Part I Recognizing Heterosexist & Homophobic Incidents of Bias

The following is a list of actual homophobic or heterosexist incidents of bias which have taken place in middle and high schools. (Participants may read these silently at first, then add their own examples of incidents they have witnessed or heard about at their school (10-20 minutes depending on whether participants add their own incidents).

The Incidents

1. You hear students walking down the hall together using the word “faggot” as a way to put each other down.
2. A staff member is overheard in the office referring to the student-organized day to address homophobia as “sexual confusion” day instead of an “infusion” day.
3. A boy in the school reports that his father objects to his learning about homosexuality in school and says that “Gay men and their homosexual activities are the cause of AIDS.”
4. Male staff members overreact in embarrass-ment and have to joke about it and slap each other on the shoulder when they accidentally say “gay.”
5. Student is overheard saying that: “...all dykes hate men; they’re all hail-busters.”
6. You hear through the grapevine that some young women in the school are upset because someone yelled “Dykes are ugly,” and everybody laughed.

7. A staff member at a staff social event is talking about what he perceives to be a lack of empathy among students for the work that teachers do. He says “when they get married and have kids and have a full-time job, maybe then they’ll understand.”
8. In a class discussion, a student of color says that “all gays are white,” and that homophobia is not an issue for people of color.
9. In an informal discussion, one student confronts another about a homophobic comment, and it is told they were just kidding and to “lighten up.”
10. A staff member says that homophobic harassment and violence are not a problem here.
11. Students discussing another student who is not present comment on her black boots and short hair, and laugh when somebody says she’s probably a lesbian.
12. Staff members covering historical or current events fail to mention that some of the prominent people discussed are gay or lesbian.
13. Staff member teaching Sex Ed in a Health class does not mention gay, lesbian or bisexual sexuality, and only talks about heterosexual intercourse.
14. Gay and lesbian students come into school extremely upset because a gay student at another local high school was beaten up. Other students tell them that it was his own fault because he “should have known not to dress like that and tell people he was queer.”
15. Students are encouraged to ask their mothers about date rape and violence from a completely heterosexual perspective.
16. Staff attitudes about heterosexual romances at school are positive and supportive, but lesbian dating is seen as a “fad” or as another way for girls to rebel or be “different,” like getting a nose ring.
17. Students in school are spreading a rumor that a gay student is suicidal after being rebuffed by another boy. Neither boy is out to the staff.
18. A presenter from a local organization talks to students about date rape and violence from a completely heterosexual perspective.
19. Staff person questioning why staff has to go to diversity sessions says they “don’t understand why we are taking so much time to focus on this issue.”
20. Staff members are talking about a practice. I hope folks will move from seeing it as all about their subjects to seeing that it’s all about the students.

What’s your greatest fear?

My greatest fear is that teachers will pay lip service without really changing their practice or improving instruction. I don’t want to be involved in lots of planning unless it leads to changes in the classroom.

What’s your greatest hope and greatest fear for NSRF in the next period?

I think the organization is evolving and needs to continue to find ways to reach all students and not just the kids in the classrooms of the teachers who are the first ones to volunteer for CFGs. I think we need to expose everyone to best practices continually. My hope and fear for NSRF are related to my hopes and fears for my school. I hope we continue to connect our ideas to real changes in practice. I’m always worried about talk without action and hope we will hold ourselves accountable to each other in support of our students.

Kevin Horton may be contacted at kh Horton@aol.com. Debbie Bambino may be contacted at dbambino@earthlink.net

Rachel Kliegman is a middle school English teacher at San Francisco Community Alternative School – a San Francisco Small School. Gregorio Peters may be contacted at gpete@sfcess.org.