



## PRESENTER BIOS

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### **Rev. Joe Agne**

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Rev. Joe Agne is the pastor of the Memorial United Methodist Church in White Plains, NY. Rev. Agne is a persistent ally for LGBT causes and has built the Memorial United Methodist Church into a strong welcoming and affirming congregation.

### **Marissa Allis**

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Marissa Allis attends Poughkeepsie Day School and is entering 11<sup>th</sup> grade. She has been part of her school's GSA for the past three years. Besides being an active member of her GSA, Marissa is on the school's soccer team and captain for the varsity softball team. Marissa is part of the Jump-Start Program run by GLSEN, which connects youth to adults when trying to make safer schools. With the influence of her family and teachers, Marissa wants to stand up and be a leader in her community and within her peers.

### **Patricia Alvarado**

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Patricia is an active PFLAG Mom. She has volunteered at different health fairs and other events and is dedicated to reaching out, especially to the Hispanic community, to pass along educational information about LGBT issues. Reaching out and fighting homophobic issues in the community, she is also open to providing support to parents, families and friends. An active member of the only LGBTQA support group for Spanish speaking members in Westchester, Patricia was a co-presenter at PrideWorks 2007.

### **Chagmion Antoine**

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Chagmion Antoine is a CBS News Staffer and correspondent for Logo's *365 Gay News*. She is the first openly bisexual news correspondent to be featured on a national news broadcast. As a 23-year-old art-school graduate, she joined the fledgling MTV network at its debut in 2005 and quickly became one of its most familiar faces. As a correspondent on *365*, she uncovered original stories from the LGBT community—everything from transgender breast cancer to the return of Joan Jett. Viewers also got to know a more casual side of her as the co-host of *She Said What?*, the first ever online lesbian talk show, which gained a popular following worldwide. Episodes can still be seen at [www.afterellen.com](http://www.afterellen.com)

Curve Magazine has referred to her work as "a representation of the changing face of journalism." She is 27 years old and lives in The Big Apple.

**Sara Braun, LCSW**

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Ms. Braun is a seasoned Human Services professional with 10+ years experience working with adolescent and pre-adolescent populations. Employed at Westchester Jewish Community Services from 1995 until 2007, she worked in a variety of settings including: middle and high-school counseling centers and an after-school program for LGBT youth. Currently, Ms. Braun is a Social Worker for the Rye Youth Council, working with middle school students. Ms. Braun is also an adjunct professor at Fordham University, teaching courses in Social Justice, and Human Behavior. Ms. Braun was educated at Columbia University School of Social Work.

**Peggy Borgstede**

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Peggy Borgstede and Kathy Green: Interfaith Task Force for LGBTQ Homeless Youth.

In 2005, Peggy and Kathy held their first forum of 100 invited guests to advocate for homeless LGBT youth. During that first year, the Task Force opened five temporary winter shelters in cooperating churches throughout NYC. The Task Force provided cots, blankets and pillows for approximately 40 youth. Over the next four years, they opened three permanent shelters. Trinity Place at Trinity Lutheran Church, NYC is still in operation. They have raised money, food and other necessities for youth at Sylvia's Place, Ali Forney and Streetworks (Safe Horizon)—all shelters and drop-in centers in NYC. They are now assisting Center Lane in their own city of Yonkers.

The Task Force's focus has always been LGBT youth. It is committed to advocating and educating others about the problems facing LGBT youth in today's society.

Peggy and Kathy has been a committed couple since 1997 and live in Yonkers, raising their son Jeffrey and two dogs Cleo and Crackers.

**Brentin Brown**

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My name is Brentin Brown. I am a freshman at Mercy College studying in the Social Work Program. I am a member of Center Lane's Leadership Council as well as a member of the New York State Council for Youth in Foster Care. I am also a candidate for the Westchester County LGBT Citizens Advisory Board and I live in White Plains.

**Matthew Brunner**

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Matthew Brunner is the New York City Program Organizer based in New York City. Matt will be mobilizing volunteers and other activists for the Empire State Pride Agenda in NYC, with an emphasis on Queens, to help achieve LGBT equality throughout New York.

Matt began LGBT advocacy and organizing in 2004 when he founded the first LGBT rights group, called the Hoosier Rights Campaign, at Indiana University (IU) at Bloomington. After graduating from IU in 2007, he worked as a Field Organizer for the Human Rights Campaign (HRC) where he successfully organized Indiana's 2nd, 9th, & 8th congressional districts, leading to all three congressmen voting for ENDA. In addition, Brunner helped to secure the votes of Senators Evan Bayh and Richard Lugar for the Matthew Sheppard Hate Crimes Act. After leaving HRC, Matthew worked as a field organizer for the Hillary Clinton Campaign in West Las Vegas. In Vegas, he successfully organized 45 precincts that ultimately led to Clinton winning the Nevada caucuses on January 19th. Most recently, Matthew worked at Garden State Equality where he served as the North Jersey Field Director.

**Rex and Karen L. Butt**

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Rex and Karen L. Butt have been actively researching the parental reactions to and involvement with trans children for six years. Rex is an Associate Professor of Communication at Bronx Community College of the City University of New York and serves on the Board for the Hudson Valley LGBTQ Center in Kingston, NY. Karen is the Director of the Academic Support Center for Oakwood Friends Middle School in Poughkeepsie, NY. Together, they serve as the Trans-Gender Coordinators for the Kingston, NY chapter of PFLAG.

**Nicholas Calabro**

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Nicholas A. Calabro, LMSW, has provided individual and group psychotherapy as well as community advocacy and outreach throughout the Lower Hudson Valley and New York City's five boroughs over the past seven years. He is currently employed by two different agencies (VCNY & CHASI) where he partners with clients for mental health services. Nic also maintains a small private practice in Rego Park, Queens. In addition to substance use and trauma recovery counseling, Nicholas specializes in partnering with those exploring their gender identity and any processes to further concretize their feelings.

**Cadence Case**

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Cadence Case grew up non-denominational, un-patriarchal, and decidedly non-gender-normative. She hasn't changed, and she thanks her parents for all of the above. She lists attending a Weird Al Yankovic concert, being a life-long information sponge, and pitching a no-hitter as her greatest accomplishments.

**Rob Conlon**

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Rob Conlon is Co-chair of GLSEN Hudson Valley and serves on GLSEN's National Advisory Council. In addition to GLSEN, Rob has been an active volunteer for numerous organizations. He has facilitated support groups for people living with HIV/AIDS and various youth programs. Rob is employed by the New York State Unified Court System as the Statewide Program Manager for the Children's Centers in the courts, providing quality, drop-in childcare and linkages to services for over 56,000 children and their families annually. He is a graduate of New York University and holds a Masters in Counseling from Mercy College.

**Heather Dickson**

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Heather B. Dickson is a senior at Walter Panas High School located in Westchester County. Heather has been president of her high school GSA since her junior year and is in the Leadership Counsel for Center Lane and Skills USA. Heather is a potential artist taking advertising and design classes at PNW BOCES in Yorktown, NY. Heather is an active member in community service.

**Alyssa Fernandez**

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Alyssa Fernandez is a student at Sleepy Hollow High School and is currently beginning her senior year. She is president of her school's GSA, which she has been an active member of since her freshman year. In her GSA she has participated in the New York City AIDS Walk, as well as organized the Day of Silence and many Transgender Day of Remembrances at her school. This is her first year presenting at the PrideWorks Conference, as well as her first year working with GLSEN as a student leader, and is thrilled for the year ahead.

**Diane Gonzalez**

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Diane has been involved, for the past 21 years, in the planning and implementation of various school activities: Teen Scene Program, High School Peer Education Anti-Bullying Training, Multicultural Club, Year long No Name-Calling Program, CANDLE liaison, Anti-violence staff development training, Student Character Education Program, and School Tone Task Force. She is presently the chairwoman of NEA's SOGI committee, and a member of NYSUT's CHR committee.

**Scott Hirschfeld**

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Scott Hirschfeld is the Director of Curriculum for the Anti-Defamation League, a leading provider of anti-bias and diversity education training programs and resources. Before joining the ADL, Scott was Director of Education for the Gay, Lesbian and Straight Education Network (GLSEN). Prior to his work in the non-profit sector, Scott was a classroom teacher and staff developer in the New York City public school system, during which time he earned an M.S. in Elementary Education and an M.Ed. in Educational Leadership from Bank Street College of Education.

**Chip James, LCSW, CASAC**

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Chip is a school social worker, psychotherapist, and consultant based in Nyack, NY. He is a trainer for CANDLE (Community Awareness Network for a Drug-free Life and Environment), the NYS Office of Alcoholism and Substance Abuse Services, and the American Psychological Association. Chip lectures extensively to teachers, mental health professionals, and in college and postgraduate professional training programs. He is a facilitator for TRUST, a psycho-educational support group for LGBTQ teenagers, sponsored by CANDLE and the Rockland County Youth Bureau. Chip has been a planner and presenter for the Common Threads Youth Empowerment Project, an annual youth retreat for GLBT students and their allies. He is available for consultation and staff development.

**Jason Kane**

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Jason Kane earned his B.A. in Psychology from the University at Buffalo and his Ed.M. in School Psychology from Teachers College, Columbia University. He is currently in his 10<sup>th</sup> year as school psychologist at Putnam Valley High School. Jason helped create and is currently the co-advisor of the school's Gay Straight Alliance. He is a member of the Putnam/ Northern Westchester BOCES Regional Crisis Team and has worked with the P/NW BOCES Regional Character Education Team. He enjoys facilitating workshops about effectively dealing with GLBTQ issues in K-12 schools. Jason was a proud recipient of GLSEN Hudson Valley's Leadership Award in the Spring of 2007 and New York Association of School Psychologists 2008 Frank Plumeau School Practitioner of the Year Award.

**Anthony Marmo**

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Anthony has been involved with HIV/AIDS Outreach and Education work for 20 years and has done Sexuality/Community Education for almost five years. Prior to joining Planned Parenthood-Hudson Peconic, Anthony was a special education teacher in NYC schools, where he holds tenure. He also worked for Long Island Gay and Lesbian Youth, educating teens and adults around issues of diversity. He has created programs for young men in the Suffolk County probation system and conducts male involvement workshops. Anthony also does outreach on Smart Wheels, the PPHP mobile education van. He holds a B.A. in Sociology and Dual NYS Certification for Social Studies/Special Education.

**Nila Marrone**

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Nila Marrone is Bolivian American, coordinator of PFLAG for Families of Color and Allies in New York City, the first PFLAG chapter to reach out to families of color. She is Vice-President of The International Association of Sexually Diverse Families incorporated in Spain. Nila is featured in the documentary *De Colores* with her "love adopted son" Frank and in the documentary *Anyone and Everyone* with her niece, Maria. Her passion is educating families and society at large to move them from homophobia to acceptance to celebration of LGBT persons.

**Rev. Deb Morra**

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Rev. Deb Morra is an ordained Unitarian Universalist Community Minister affiliated with the Community Unitarian Church in White Plains, a Welcoming Congregation. A clinical social worker, Rev. Morra has spent a number of years ministering to underserved populations in the Bronx and as a psychotherapist working with the chronically mentally ill. She has specialized training in the areas of death, dying, bereavement, trauma, sexual orientation and gender identity issues and is an advocate for sexual orientation/gender identity civil rights. Her past ministries include chaplaincy, running a post-9/11 Project Liberty grant program and working with homeless veterans. She has been active in the struggle to achieve marriage equality, including participation in the 2004 New Paltz civil disobedience movement.

**Wilma Ruiz**

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Wilma Ruiz is a PFLAG mother, married to Medardo, with one child who also happens to be gay. During her son's second year of college, Wilma's son wrote his parents a letter telling them that he was gay, which would explain his behavior the previous few years. He knew that his parents would always love him, so he felt comfortable telling them that he was gay.

They were shocked and asked a lot of questions. Their conversation was difficult.

They searched for information and support and found PFLAG, which helped them immensely by providing information and support. Wilma attended a PFLAG convention in Uruguay entitled "Families of Diverse Sexuality" and there she saw where families were moving along the path of tolerance for future generations. Wilma and Medardo are thankful to have a gay son, which has helped to make them more understanding.

**Austin Saiz**

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Austin Saiz is a senior at White Plains High School and has been out since seventh grade. Austin is currently President of White Plains High School GSA and is an active member of Center Lane and has been on Center Lane's Leadership Council for the past two years. Austin loves theatre, music and the arts and plays guitar.

**Diane Schneider**

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Diane is a high school health educator in Spring Valley New York. She is very active with GLSEN in the Rockland County area, where she is its co-chair. She is also proud of the GSA that she advises in her high school. She is an online professor and has been active with the Health Education Leadership Team for NY State. She brings you this workshop as part of her training from the National Education Association's (NEA's) LGBT Trainer of Trainers.

**Dr. Jim Stenerson**

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Dr. Jim Stenerson currently works at Pace University in Pleasantville where he teaches a course in Queer Culture once a year. He has been an advocate for LGBTQ rights at the University and is advisor to the student club—Gay-Straight Alliance. Jim is currently a member of the Westchester County's LGBT Citizen's Advisory Board where he represents the local colleges and universities. Jim lives in Yonkers with his partner of 34 years, Phillip.

**Michael Tuner**

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Michael Turner lives in White Plains and grew up in Putnam County. He received his Bachelor of Business Administration from Pace University. Michael is an account manager in the Diabetes Care Division for Roche Diagnostics. He has participated in two Equality Marches in DC, the most recent on October 11th of this year. Michael is a member of the LOFT. He is an advocate for LGBTQ people and volunteers for ARCS as a committee member for the annual Valentine Charity Ball.

**Alan Van Capelle**

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Alan Van Capelle became the Executive Director of the Empire State Pride Agenda and the Empire State Pride Agenda Foundation in 2003. The Pride Agenda under Alan's leadership has won passage of a number of statewide measures extending protections to LGBT New Yorkers and their families. The organization has also initiated programs for the labor, workplace and religious communities emphasizing grassroots organizing. The Pride Agenda has also doubled its budget and assembled a staff of professional community organizers with experience in building alliances—a model that LGBT groups across the nation seek to replicate.

Prior to joining the Pride Agenda, Alan worked for nearly ten years for the Service Employees International Union. A native of Commack, Long Island, he received a B.S. in Public Policy from Queens College of the City University of New York.

**Rabbi Scott Weiner**

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Rabbi Scott B. Weiner joined Temple Israel of New Rochelle as Senior Rabbi this year. Rabbi Weiner is a dynamic and innovative leader who is working to expand and enhance the role of the synagogue and its activities, specifically social justice and youth programs. His commitment to LGBT issues includes outreach, spiritual and community involvement. Temple Israel has developed a Kulanu group to specifically welcome and support our LGBT members, friends and family. He is a co-founder of "Running Rabbis," a group who participate in road races for charity.

Rabbi Weiner holds a B.A. in Judaic Studies from the State University of New York at Albany. He earned his M.A. in Hebrew Literature and was granted rabbinic ordination from the Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion.

**Steven Welch**

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Steven Welch, LCSW, CASAC, is a psychotherapist in the heart of New York City with over 23 years of experience in the field of human services. Mr. Welch is currently working at Harlem United Community AIDS Center in Manhattan for over six years as psychotherapist. Specialty areas are: Addictions, LGBTQ issues, depression/anxiety, couples counseling and adolescent issues.