The Massachusetts Commission on LGBTQ Youth

Commission Face Book Directory

2015

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Dominique Wilkins, Vice Chair
Alex Zafris, Vice Chair

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Landen Motyka
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Officers

Julian Dormitzer, R.N., B.S.N.
Commission Chair

Julian joined the Fenway Institute at Fenway Health and now works there as a clinical research nurse on the Adolescent Trials Network Team. She serves as a member of the Young Leadership Council of Fenway Health and tutors youth at the Hyde Square Task Force. Julian graduated from Grand Valley State University in May of 2011 with a Bachelor's degree in nursing, where she wrote a senior thesis on HIV incidence among young men who have sex with men (MSM). Originally from Traverse City, Michigan, Julian resides in Jamaica Plain.

Vilma Uribe
Commission Vice Chair

Vilma Uribe received her Bachelor of Arts in American Studies and Gender, Sexuality, and Feminist Studies from Oberlin College in 2011. Since moving to Boston, she has worked with Renewal House and Fenway Health to support survivors of partner abuse, sexual violence, hate crimes, and police misconduct. She has also volunteered with the Hispanic Black Gay Coalition as a HUES board member. Currently, Vilma serves as the Community Organizer for The Network/La Red. She has served on the MA LGTBQ Youth Commission since 2012, working with state agencies to improve the quality of services and support for LGBT youth in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts. In her spare time, she enjoys spending time with her cat Dinosaur.

Dominique Wilkins
Commission Vice Chair

Dominique completed her undergraduate and graduate work at Clark University in Worcester, focusing on City Planning and Youth and Community Development. Upon finishing, Dominique served for 2 years as an Americorps member for a play-based youth development non-profit, and stayed for another 2 years after her service ended. She is currently a Boston public school teacher at an elementary school in Dorchester. Dominique also volunteers with the Hispanic Black Gay Coalition (HBGC) and is a passionate about vocalizing the presence and concerns of people of color in queer communities. Originally from suburbs of Washington DC, Dominique now resides in Roslindale.

Alex Zafris
Commission Vice Chair

Alex currently works in the Office of Governor Deval Patrick as scheduler and briefing coordinator and previously served as assistant director of the Governor's personnel office. He graduated in 2012 from the University of Massachusetts Boston with a Bachelor’s degree in political science. Alex lives in Boston.

Commission Members

Coco Alinsug
Community Relations Committee

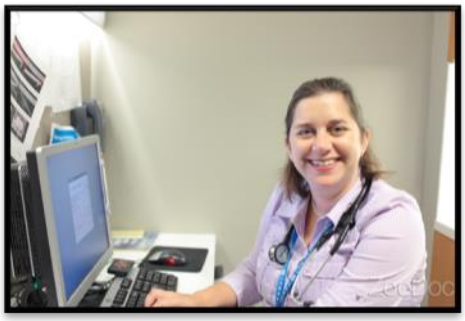
Coco devotes himself to social justice, HIV/AIDS prevention, and LGBT youth issues and receives recognition both nationally and internationally for his relentless work. He has served as Executive Director of the North Shore Alliance of GLBT Youth (NAGLY) for nine years and the Outreach and Insurance Manager of Fenway Health. He consults various HIV and STD Outreach Programs located in the North Shore and Boston. Coco and his team travel around New England, educating people about HIV and STD transmission. He also attends international conferences around the world as a polyglot fluent in nine languages. Originally from the Philippines, Coco resides in Lynn with his husband Peter.

Michel Anteby, M.P.A., Ph.D.
Safe Schools Committee, Co-Chair

Michel serves as an Associate Professor in the Organizational Behavior unit at Harvard Business School. He has taught in the School's M.B.A., doctoral, and executive programs. His research examines organizational and occupational cultures. Michel studies the building of meaning at work and the sustaining or moral order, documenting the processes by which individuals and organizations sustain their chosen identities. He holds a joint Ph.D. in sociology from the Ecole des Hautes Etudes en Sciences Sociales in Paris and in management from New York University. Michel grew up in France and previously volunteered as a mediator at the LGBT Community Center in New York.

Ron Ardizzone
Community Relations Committee

Ron works as a university administrator at Bentley University and is currently the Director of Student Systems. For the last eleven years he has been the staff advisor to PRIDE (People Respecting Individuality and Diversity through Education), a student organization which provides support and social activities for Bentley's LGBTQ and Ally community. He co-chairs the faculty and staff LGBTQ@Bentley Steering Committee and collaborates with his colleagues to promote campus educational and awareness programs such as the Annual Day of Silence, Student Ally Trainings, Annual Rainbow Luncheon and LGBTQ affinity alumni networking events. In the spring of 2013 Ron was appointed to the board of directors of Greater Boston PFLAG (GBPFLAG) and is member of the executive committee. He previously chaired the communications and technology committee and in July 2014, Ron was elected board chair. Ron holds a Bachelor's degree in international culture and economy, and an MBA from Bentley University.



Miranda Balkin
Government Relations Committee

Miranda Balkin is a family physician in practice at Fenway Community Health Center. She is a graduate of Oberlin College, Albert Einstein College of Medicine, and the Tufts University Family Medicine Residency. She is a former board chair of Medical Students for Choice and has extensive volunteer experience in the LGBTQ community. She hails from New York City and western Massachusetts and currently lives in Cambridge.

Aliya Bean
Government Relations Committee

Aliya Bean is currently an undergraduate student at Brandeis University studying History and Women, Gender, and Sexuality Studies. She works as a volunteer for Greater Boston PFLAG where she speaks at public schools throughout the Massachusetts area as part of the Safe Schools initiative. She also works as a Research Assistant at the Schuster Institute for Investigative Journalism, researching human trafficking and modern day slavery. Originally from the suburbs of Needham, Massachusetts she is presently living in Waltham, MA at Brandeis University.

Jesse Blue Glass Begenyi
Government Relations Committee

Jesse Begenyi works as the Director of Community Advocacy at the Massachusetts Transgender Political Coalition (MTPC) where they coordinate the Trans Suicide Prevention Working Group, collaborate on the Trans Youth and Parent Summit with the Boston Alliance of Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, Transgender Youth (BAGLY), and provide resources and support to community members. Jesse is also an experienced trainer, and facilitates workshops on topics related to trans identities. Jesse is also a Master of Social Work Candidate at Simmons College and is a clinical intern at the Waltham House, a group home for LGBTQ identified youth. Jesse provides a supportive space for young people to explore gender identity and sexual orientation, identify and work towards future goals, and move towards living in the world in healthier and more authentic ways. Jesse also holds a BA in Visual & Media Arts with a specialization in Documentary Video Production from Emerson College and is producing a feature length documentary about partner abuse in trans and LGBQ communities. Last and certainly not least, Jesse enjoys long walks, knitting cozy things, petting cats, and watching the Lifetime network.

Roger Bourgeois
Safe Schools Committee

Roger spearheads efforts in schools to create supportive environments for LGBT students and speaks to school communities as a parent of a gay son. He is Assistant Superintendent for the Technical/Vocational Network at Boston Public Schools. He has over 30 years of experience in vocational, technical, and agricultural schools as a teacher and an administrator. He serves as Co-Chair of the Massachusetts Vocational Technical Education Advisory Council to the Board of Education and is the immediate past-president of the Massachusetts Association of Vocational Administrators (MAVA). Roger and his wife Robin live in Middleton.

Zac Brokenrope
Safe Schools Committee

Zac Broken Rope is employed as an English teacher in suburban Boston. He has worked extensively with Greater Boston PFLAG through their safe schools programs and was actively involved with LGBTQ causes while a student at Boston University, where he graduated from in 2012 with a degree in Education. He cares passionately about creating safe schools for students and working to create LGBTQ inclusive curriculum. He currently resides in the Allston-Brighton neighborhood of Boston and is originally from Nebraska.

Sean Cahill, Ph.D.
Government Relations Committee

Sean is Director of Health Policy Research at the Fenway Institute in Boston, and also teaches public policy at the Wagner School of Public Service at New York University. At Fenway, Cahill is Co-Investigator on a community-based participatory research project addressing health disparities among LGBT youth of color in the Boston area, funded by the National Institute of Minority Health and Health Disparities. He wrote two books on LGBT family policy and coauthored LGBT Youth in America's Schools (2012: University of Michigan Press), as well as more than two dozen peer reviewed journal articles and book chapters on LGBT and HIV policy issues. Previously Cahill held leadership positions at the National Gay and Lesbian Task Force Policy Institute and Gay Men's Health Crisis. Sean chaired the Lesbian and Gay Political Alliance of Massachusetts in the 1990s.

Bryce Celotto
Government Relations Committee

Bryce J. Celotto is a 23-year old queer identified, transmasculine person of color and full-time student at the University of Massachusetts Boston-Honors College studying History and Public Policy & Philosophy. In addition to serving on the commission, Bryce will be working as the New Leaders Institute Program Manager at the Hispanic Black Gay Coalition starting in February, and is the National Program Fellow at the League of United Latin American Citizens. Bryce holds an Associates Degree in Liberal Arts & Science from Holyoke Community College, and in the past has worked for national LGBTQ organizations such as The Gay, Lesbian and Straight Education Network (GLSEN), The National Center For Transgender Equality and The National LGBTQ Task Force. Bryce is passionate about creating research and policy based solutions in LGBTQ communities

of color, especially amongst youth and transgender populations. His previous work has specifically focused on safe schools initiatives, trans* rights and best practices when working with the transgender community, and LGBTQ youth leadership development. Additionally Bryce served in the Army National Guard for four years and has a deep interest in full LGBTQ equality in the military-including advocating for open transgender military service. He is originally from Charlotte, North Carolina and when he isn't working he enjoys cooking, picking out new fabulous bow-ties, slam poetry and reading. Some of his biggest inspirations and role models are bell hooks, Audre Lorde, Cesar Chavez, Bayard Rustin and Rep. John Lewis.

Mellisha Culpepper
Safe Schools Committee

Mellisha Culpepper is a 5th grade teacher at the Shady Hill School in Cambridge, MA. Previously, she taught grades 4 and a 3rd/4th combined grade class at the Cambridge Friends School also in Cambridge, MA. Mellisha was the Outreach Coordinator for Electric Company at Sesame Workshop where she supported the development of outreach materials. Mellisha received her Master of Education in Childhood Education from New York University and her Bachelor of Arts in Child and Adolescent Development from San Francisco State University. Mellisha enjoys spending time with her one-year-old daughter, indoor rock climbing and skateboarding. Mellisha has a passion for raising awareness with students around issues of diversity and inclusivity. She also loves nature and learning about outer space!

Julian Cyr
Government Relations Committee, Co-Chair

Julian Cyr has broad experience in public policy, health advocacy, and politics. He has served on the Commission since January 2011 and was elected Chair in December 2012. Julian is currently Director of Policy and Regulatory Affairs for Environmental Health at the Massachusetts Department of Public Health. Prior to this post, he was Deputy Director for Government Affairs at the Department. He organized on Governor Patrick and President Obama's successful re-election campaigns, and worked as a Harm-Reduction Counselor at the AIDS Support Group of Cape Cod. Previously, Julian interned at the White House, contributing to green jobs policy and energy efficiency at the Council on Environmental Quality in the Executive Office of the President. He has also worked for the William J. Clinton Foundation's Clinton Global Initiative. Julian studied public policy and community health at New York University, where he also led undergraduate student government. He is a native of Truro, Massachusetts.

Kristen Davies, L.M.H.C.
Government Relations Committee

Kristen Davies serves as Director of the In Home Therapy program at Child & Family Services-Hyannis. She comes to the Commission by way of the MA Society of Suicide Prevention. Kristen's clinical expertise includes working with LGBT youth and families. The *Lesbian Study Journal* published her research in the area of woman coming out later in life. Now a Ph.D. candidate, Kristen is working on her dissertation.

Lee Doyle
Safe Schools Committee

Lee is the Research Project Manager at The Network/La Red. They work with survivors of partner abuse and sexual violence, facilitate trainings, educate on violence prevention and LGBQ/T competency, and organize communities around violence prevention as a public health issue. Lee has been working in sexual violence and partner abuse prevention for the past five years and has been doing youth work for over ten years. Lee is passionate about youth empowerment, violence prevention, trans* health, and glitter. Lee graduated from UNC Asheville in 2011 where they graduated with degrees in Women, Gender, and Sexuality Studies and Africana Studies. Originally from Mississippi, Lee now resides in Jamaica Plain with their two cats.

Athena Edmonds
Government Relations Committee

Athena's poetry has appeared in literary journals such as *The Massachusetts Review, Connotation Press,* and *The Sugar House Review.* She has been awarded writing residencies at Ragdale, the Atlantic Center for the Arts, the Kimmel Harding Nelson Center for the Arts, and Hedgebrook. In the '90s, she founded and managed a series of early stage software venture funds. She holds degrees in Materials Science from MIT and Cambridge University and in Management from the MIT Sloan School.

Dan English
Safe Schools Committee

Dan is a high school student in Southeastern Massachusetts who began their work in LGBTQ activism following their coming out as trans at the end of their freshman year of high school. They have spoken about their experience as a transgender student in Massachusetts in several high schools across the state as well as in classes at Harvard Graduate School hoping that sharing their story will help educate and motivate school faculty to make their own schools more welcoming to transgender/non-binary youth. They hope to continue this work as an activist and advocate for transgender/non-binary youth in schools through the Commission and other projects.

Paul Gels
Community Relations Committee

Paul works as the communications coordinator for Planned Parenthood League of Massachusetts and the Planned Parenthood Advocacy Fund. He completed his undergrad at the University of Massachusetts, Amherst. During his time there, Paul served as the co-president for a reproductive justice youth organizing group and volunteered at the campus-based women's center. Paul's passions include queer media, sexuality education, and youth organizing. Born and raised in Boston, Paul currently resides in Fenway.

Sasha Goodfriend
Safe Schools Committee

Sasha Goodfriend recently graduated from Boston University's International Relations program. At BU, she is most proud of her time as Co-Director of the Center for Gender, Sexuality, and Activism. In 2011, she co-led a successful mobilization effort to demand that the University take an active stand against rape culture and open a fully staffed Sexual Assault Response & Prevention Center. Currently, Sasha is the administrative coordinator at Simmons for the Sociology, Women & Gender Studies, Gender & Cultural Studies, Public Health & Social Justice programs, and teaches English as a second Language at Boston Life. She is also Vice President of Action on the executive board of Mass NOW. Sasha is a native of NYC, and is now a resident of a collective house in Allston.

Zuleny Gonzalez
Safe Schools Committee

Bio coming soon!

Frank Giuliano
Safe Schools Committee

Frank has been a professor at Westfield State University for 18 years. His courses, field experiences, and research interests all focus on pre-service teachers and students at the K-12 level. He is currently working with a colleague on a research project that examines the efficacy of teacher preparation programs with regard to fostering the knowledge, skills, and dispositions related to bullying prevention. He co-presented the results of this work at the Auburn University Anti-Bullying Summit. He has provided many workshops, panel presentations, and guest lectures with regard to LGBTQ issues on campus, and he has served as a faculty advisor to the QSA. Frank also has experience as a K-12 public school teacher.

Scott Hadland
Government Relations Committee

Scott Hadland is an adolescent physician and researcher at Boston Children's Hospital. He was born outside Vancouver, Canada, and attended McGill University before moving to the United States to study medicine at Washington University in St. Louis. He obtained his Masters in Public Health from the Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health and is currently studying Health Policy and Management at the Harvard School of Public Health. Scott's work has focused on at-risk youth, including homeless and LGBTQ adolescents, and he is eager to improve the health of young people in Massachusetts through his work on the Commission. Scott and his husband live in Boston and enjoy cooking, traveling and watching good (and bad) television.

Susan Hollins
Safe Schools Committee

Susan is an advocate for inclusion and respect for all students. Her career has involved music/theater, K-12 and college teaching, collaborative directing, school superintendencies, statewide legislation, and education consulting. In all career stages, she has been an activist for vulnerable youth and change/improvement at local, regional, state, and national levels. Known for entrepreneurship and innovation, recent accomplishments are spearheading the first public virtual school in Massachusetts, an option for students who do not feel safe in brick and mortar schools, and leading Greenfield's school system through its revival which included more support for LGBTQ students. Her academic background includes a Bachelors in Music from Boston University and then a Masters in Special Education and Ph.D. in School Leadership from Boston College. Her only child is a transgender activist.

Nicolas John
Operations Committee

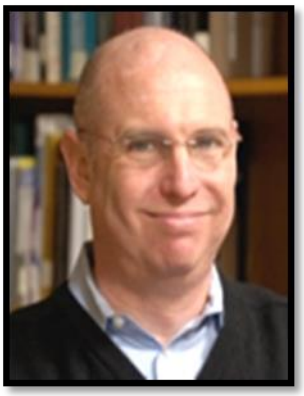
Nicolas serves as Legislative Aide to the Vice-Chair of the Joint Committee on Election Laws and assists with the daily functioning of the Commission. He also served as the Committee Clerk for the Massachusetts House Committee on Public Service. He holds a Bachelor’s degree in political science from Northeastern University. Nicolas resides in Boston.

Harold Jones
Safe Schools Committee

Harold is an attorney at the American Federation of Teachers Massachusetts. He graduated from the University of Pittsburgh and Northeastern University School of Law. Harold resides in Cambridge.

Rachel Kahn, M.A.
Community Relations Committee

Rachel is a mental health clinician and expressive therapist who works with adolescents in residential treatment and intensive day stabilization services. She has piloted innovative therapeutic programming integrating social justice, diversity issues, and expressive arts into the treatment milieu. Rachel currently works as a Day and Residential Clinician at Wayside Youth and Family Support Network's Framingham campus, where she facilitates a gay-straight alliance (GSA). Rachel is also a freelance writer and performer. She performs as part of The Femme Show, a Boston-based collective performance troupe creating work about queer femininity and femme identity. Rachel has performed and facilitated workshops all over the east coast. She has served as the volunteer coordinator for the 2009 International Expressive Arts Therapies Association (IEATA) conference and as a steering committee member/the volunteer chair for the 2012 Femme Conference. She holds a Master's degree in expressive therapies and mental health counseling from Lesley University, and a Bachelor's degree in English from Mount Holyoke College. Rachel resides in Jamaica Plain.



Stewart Landers, J.D., M.C.P.
Community Relations & Operations Committee

Steward consults at John Snow, Inc. on issues related to HIV & AIDS, substance abuse treatment, lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender (LGBT) health, health care reform, chronic disease, and wellness. He has led research projects with several federal organizations such as the federal Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA) and the HIV/AIDS Bureau. From 2007 until 2009, Stewart served as Senior Program Director at the Massachusetts Department of Public Health. In addition to his consulting duties, Stewart serves as an Associate Editor of the American Journal of Public Health and has authored or co-authored many articles on LGBT health. He teaches Evaluation of Health Services at the Tufts University Graduate Program in Public Health. Stewart received his B.S. and Master's degree in city planning from MIT in 1978 and his law degree from Harvard in 1982.

Arthur Lipkin, Ed.D.
Safe Schools Committee

Arthur served as the Commission Chair from 2010 until 2012. He taught the first course on GLBT school issues at the Harvard Graduate School of Education. Arthur directed the Safe Colleges Program of the Governor's Commission on Gay and Lesbian Youth; the state Project for the Integration of Gay & Lesbian Youth Issues in School Personnel Certification Programs; and Project 10 East at Cambridge Rindge and Latin School. He authored *Beyond Diversity Day: A Q & A on Gay and Lesbian Issues in Schools* (Rowman & Littlefield, 2004) and *Understanding Homosexuality, Changing Schools* (Westview Press, 1999) and stood on the editorial board of the *Journal of Gay and Lesbian Youth.* Arthur also taught in the Cambridge Public Schools for 20 years.

Alexander Armand Nally
Government Relations Committee

Alexander Armand Nally is currently an undergraduate student at the Massachusetts College of Art and Design where they are earning a BFA in Graphic Design. Alex grew up in Springfield, attended high school in Chicopee, and worked with LGBTQ youth through Generation Q/T.R.E.E. in Northampton where they focused on HIV/AIDS Risk Reduction and Suicide Prevention. Alex aspires to use their degree in Graphic Design to improve the quality of educational and campaign media for public health, HIV/AIDS prevention, and LGBTQ youth. After moving to Boston in 2012, they have since been an active member of the Fenway Health Youth Community Advisory Board and also serves on the Stigma Subcommittee of the Boston chapter of Connect 2 Protect. Additionally, they have presented on and trained student leaders in "LGBTQ 101" to improve the quality of campus climate for LGBTQ Students at MassArt and continue to improve other aspects of the college through their role as Student Trustee on the Executive Board of the Student Government Association and as a voting member of MassArt's Board of Trustees.

Brett Nava-Coulter
Government Relations Committee

Brett studies as a Ph.D. student in sociology at Northeastern University. His schoolwork specializes in gender and sexuality, public health, and cultural competency for service providers. His experiences include a combination of research, policy, and political work. Brett received his Bachelor’s degree from UC Berkeley and now works with undergraduates as an adjunct instructor at Tufts University and Northeastern University. Brett resides in Jamaica Plain.

Robyn Ochs

Robyn speaks on bisexuality and other non-binary identities as an LGBT educator and activist. She is engaged with various community organizations, including MassEquality and the Bisexual Resource Center. She edits *Bi Women*, a quarterly publication. She has facilitated programs with the Boston Alliance of LGBT Youth (BAGLY), the North Shore Alliance of LGBT Youth (NAGLY), and other community based-youth and college groups. Robyn resides in Jamaica Plain.

Susan S. Rees
Safe Schools Committee, Co-Chair; Operations Committee

Appointed to the Commission by the Massachusetts Association of School Superintendents, Susan co-chairs the Safe Schools Committee. She has over thirty years of professional experiences in public education dedicated to working in collaboration with teachers and administrators to advance the rights and lives of children. She has served as executive director of ACCEPT Education Collaborative, a nonprofit agency serving 15 school districts in Metrowest to promote excellence and innovation in educational practice. Her previous experience also includes classroom and university teaching and school administration. Currently, Susan is an educational consultant specializing in leadership and teacher development to build capacity in general education to serve students with diverse learning needs. She is a past member of the board of the Massachusetts Federation for the Council for Exceptional Children (CEC), serving as their Child and Youth Advocacy Network representative in Washington, D.C., the Learning Disabilities Network (LDN), and the Massachusetts Organization of Education Collaboratives (MOEC). She has six grown children and resides in Brookline, MA with her husband.

Jonathan Reveil

Community Relations, Co-Chair

At The Fenway Institute (TFI), Jonathan works as an Evaluation Associate within the Center for Population Research in LGBT Health. His cultural background and focus on community collaboration has led him to a number of volunteer opportunities and various community leadership roles. Currently, he serves as 2nd Vice-Chair of the Ryan White Planning Council, an independent federally required planning body that works to organize, evaluate, prioritize, and allocate Ryan White Part A HIV funding in the Boston Eligible Metropolitan Area (EMA) for people living with HIV/AIDS. Moreover, he sits on the Steering Committee of the Young Leaders Council at Fenway Health. Jonathan aspires to use his voice to foster constructive dialogues between LGBTQ people and faith institutions in order to educate and lessen the discrimination, and the religion-based prejudices that keep young LGBTQ people feeling safe and supported. He challenges others to do the same.

Erika Rickard, J.D.

Government Relations Committee, Co-Chair

Erika works as a Research Associate at Harvard Business School. She has expertise on juvenile justice, youth homelessness, and child welfare issues. She has worked to implement the Massachusetts Bullying Prevention Law. A current member and former Vice Chair of the Commission, Erika previously co-chaired the Oversight Committee and spearheaded the FY2014 Recommendations. She holds her J.D. from Harvard Law School and her Bachelor's degree from Mills College. Originally from Tucson, AZ, Erika resides in Cambridge.

Deborah Sheehan
Community Relations Committee

Professionally, Ms. Sheehan is a social worker, currently the Director of Professional Education Program at Boston University School of Social Work. She Joined the BU School of Social Work in 2004, assuming the role of Director of the Southeastern Massachusetts MSW Program. In this role, she was responsible for the program's two satellite locations. Her 30-year professional career began as a child care worker at New England Home and includes social work in both private and public human service agencies. Ms. Sheehan has also taught social work classes at the BSW and MSW level. Ms. Sheehan received her MSW from Boston University, is an ABD at Boston College Graduate School of Social Work. Throughout her career, she has been dedicated to the elimination of racism and the oppression of disenfranchised groups. Currently she is a board member of the Massachusetts Chapter of the National Association of Social workers. Ms. Sheehan lives in Brookline and is the mother of two children.

Kelly Simon
Safe Schools Committee

Kelly currently teaches high school students in English Language Arts and co-advises the Gender & Sexuality Alliance (GSA; formerly Gay Straight Alliance) at Westfield High School in Westfield, MA. In 2003, she began teaching at Westfield Vocational Technical High School; when a student approached her about starting a GSA, she had no idea how to go about doing that! During a brief leave to complete her M.Ed. in Social Justice Education at the University of Massachusetts Amherst, she studied GSAs in vocational technical schools, gender and sexuality, size oppression, multicultural organizational development (MCOD), and intergroup dialogue (IGD). She was fortunate to work as the graduate assistant and Speakers Bureau Coordinator for the Stonewall Center at the University of Massachusetts Amherst; upon return to teaching in Westfield (this time at the high school), she was not only ready to take on

the work of advising a GSA, but also more knowledgable and prepared to facilitate an English Language Arts classroom from the lens of promoting social justice and diversity. Prior to teaching, Kelly was an AmeriCorps member working as the Legal Referral Program Coordinator and a Counselor/Advocate at Safe Passage, an agency serving survivors of domestic violence. When hired full-time at Safe Passage, she worked as a SAFEPLAN advocate in the Probate and Family Court. When not teaching, grading papers, or chaperoning GSA students at conferences and regional meetings, she enjoys writing, running, dancing, and playing softball. Originally from Colorado, Kelly now resides in Easthampton.

Grace Sterling Stowell
Community Relations & Operations Commitee

Grace has been a pioneering activist and leader in the social justice and lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender (LGBT) youth communities for over 35 years. She is the founding executive director of the Boston Alliance of Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, Transgender Youth (BAGLY), one of the oldest and largest LGBT youth organizations in the nation. She is a founding member of several local and national LGBT youth advocacy organizations, and she currently serves as an Executive Committee member of the Massachusetts Commission on LGBT Youth and Steering Committee member of the Massachusetts Transgender Political Coalition (MTPC). Grace is also a nationally known advocate and leader on the issues facing transgender youth and young adults. Grace received a B.A. in English from Curry College in Milton, MA and a M.A. in Counseling Psychology from Lesley University in Cambridge, where she resides. While Grace has served many roles in her community work over the past three decades, she is particularly honored to be known as “Mother” (and now “Grandmother!”) by three generations of greater Boston’s LGBT youth.

Colby Swettberg, Ed.M., L.C.S.W.
Community Relations Committee

Colby's career began in education as a high school teacher. She went on to earn a Master's degree in Education from the Harvard Graduate School of Education and later turned her focus to child welfare and social services after earning a Master's degree in Social Work from the Simmons School of Social Work. Colby worked for The Home for Little Wanderers for seven years, where she opened and oversaw the nation's first group home for LGBT teenagers; partook in clinical work in adoption and family stabilization team services; facilitated support groups for LGBT foster and adoptive families; and provided training and consultation nationwide on sexual orientation and gender identity issues. Colby now serves as Executive Director of Adoption & Foster Care Mentoring, a non-profit organization that mentors and teaches life skills to youth in the foster care system.

Phil Veysey
Safe Schools Committee

Phil is a retired science teacher of Dearborn Middle School in Boston. At the American Federation of Teachers (AFT) Massachusetts, he co-chaired the Career in Teaching Panel and worked for the Lead Teacher and Mentor Teacher program. At AFT, he serves as Director of Education Policy.

Lawrence Vinson
Community Relations Committee, Co-Chair

Lawrence originally hails from Georgia where he attended Morehouse College and has spent the last few years working as a Case Manager at Boston Medical Center and Codman Square Health Center here in Boston. In these roles, Lawrence provided case management services to HIV

infected clients who were in-care, falling-out-of-care and not-in-care, worked with ID Clinic, STD Clinic, and inpatient HIV testers doing HIV/STD counseling for positive patients, interfaced with medical and mental health providers, community agencies and financial and health insurance agencies, and developed and co-facilitated a weekly support group for young Black HIV+ men who have sex with men (MSM) from Dorchester and surrounding communities. Lawrence is currently pursuing a nursing degree with the hopes of eventually becoming an MD or NP and brings a tremendous amount of enthusiasm about working with HIV infected/affected young people in the Boston community and creating structural change.

Alexander Walker
Safe Schools Committee

Alex is an elementary math and cognitive development teacher, primarily for students with special needs. Originally from the Midwest, he attended college at DePaul University completing Elementary Education and Music Education degrees. After beginning his career as a public school teacher in Chicago, he sought out ways to create more inclusive classrooms and resources for students who were LGBTQ. He began volunteering with the Illinois Safe School Alliance on their Youth Committee. While volunteering, he helped organize and empower youth to run youth summits on topics such as how to start a GSA, Trans 101, and creating inclusive pride alliances for gender variant youth. Alex is currently completing a Master's degree in Special Education at Lesley University. He teaches children in grades 1-5 in a school for students with Language Based Learning Disabilities and also serves as a founding member of the school's diversity committee.

Rachel Wallack
Community Relations & Operations Committee

Rachel currently works at the Administrative Office of the Juvenile Court, and has been with the Juvenile Court for 7 years. In addition to expertise in the areas of juvenile delinquency and child welfare, Rachel has significant experience working with youth in both secure detention and residential placement programs. Rachel volunteers as a big sister through Big Sister Association of Greater Boston and resides on the North Shore.

Ashley Waterberg, M.S.W.
Safe Schools Committee

Ashley works a school social worker in an elementary and middle school with Revere Public Schools. She serves as one of three representatives of the National Association of Social Workers (NASW) on the Commission, and she also serves as a co-chair of the LGBT Special Interest Group through the National Association of Social Workers (NASW) Massachusetts Chapter. During her spare time, she enjoys hiking, biking, dancing, snowshoeing, road trips and exploring new places. Ashley received her Master's degree in social work at Washington University in St. Louis and her undergraduate degree in human development and family studies at the University of Vermont.

Brian Yeh
Government Relations Committee

Brian is a legal assistant at Gay & Lesbian Advocates & Defenders, which he joined in May of 2014. He also volunteers part-time as a clinic escort at the Planned Parenthood League of Massachusetts. Originally from Stow, Ohio, Brian graduated from the Ohio State University in May 2014 with a Bachelor of Science degree in economics. He plans to attend law school in the near future and eventually pursue a career in public interest law with a focus on LGBT rights and reproductive justice.

Commission Staff

Karter Blake
Safe Schools Promise Fellow

Karter Blake is a 24 year old man of trans experience. He is a vocalist, public speaker, facilitator, and LGBTQ activist. Karter served as a youth leader and Board member at the Boston Alliance of GBLT Youth (BAGLY) for two years. In 2012 he was honored by BAGLY and the Massachusetts Transgender Political Coalition (MTPC) with an award for Youth Activism. Karter is also heavily involved with The Theater Offensive. He is a True Colors alumni and now serves as one of three coordinators for the True Colors' Leadership & Inclusion Council. Karter's passion for social justice is fueled by the famous Audre Lorde quote "When I dare to be powerful, to use my strength in service of my vision, then it becomes less and less important whether I am afraid."

Landen Archibald Motyka
Commission Coordinator

Landen began working with the Commission in June 2014, after a yearlong internship in Community Outreach and Engagement at the Massachusetts Transgender Political Coalition (MTPC). While interning at MPTC, he acted as the lead coordinator and co-founder of the community event CAT MAGIC, a quarterly dance night and social event for transgender and gender non-conforming people of Boston. Landen now serves as the Chair of the Events Committee at MTPC, and continues to contribute to planning CAT MAGIC. He has a Bachelor's degree in Illustration from the Massachusetts College of Art and Design, and while attending he completed a senior thesis focused on transgender and gender non-conforming identities. Landen is passionate about sexual health and education, trans rights, and cats. He is eager to continue learning and hopes to attend graduate school for social work in the fall.

Jeff Perrotti
Safe Schools Program Director

Jeff Perrotti is the founding director of the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education's Safe Schools Program for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender Students. He is the co-author of *When the Drama Club is not Enough* (Beacon Press, 2002). Jeff is a graduate of Northwestern University, University of California at Santa Barbara, and the Harvard Graduate School of Education. He has conducted numerous workshops on sexual orientation, gender, anti-bullying, resilience, and suicide and violence prevention for school administrators, counselors, nurses, coaches, teachers, parents, and students. For the past six years, Jeff has worked closely with vocational technical schools to support students who are interested in careers that are nontraditional for their gender. Jeff teaches and advises students at Harvard University, where he has received several awards for excellence in teaching. Jeff is a consultant for the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education and the Commission.

Jason Wheeler
Safe Schools Program Manager

Jason Wheeler has been professionally committed to youth development and leadership for the past 17 years, beginning with his extensive involvement in National Service programs that focused on issues related to education, disability inclusion, and social justice. Jason now provides national training and technical assistance on a variety of topics ranging from youth engagement to strategic planning and organizational development. He has worked extensively with LGBTQ youth, veterans, and disabled people. He is a graduate trainee of the Leadership Education in Neurodevelopmental and Related Disabilities (LEND) Program at Children's Hospital Boston, a graduate-level interdisciplinary training for health professionals. Jason serves as a Board Member and the Conference Chair for the Gay, Lesbian and Straight Education Network (GLSEN) of Massachusetts.