

# COMMUNITY VOICES

A BIASHELP NEWSLETTER • SPRING 2013

## **DECISION TIME** Defense of Marriage Act and Proposition 8

PAGE 3

## **IMMIGRATION REFORM** The Long Road to Citizenship

PAGE 5

## **THE DIGITAL AGE** and Sexting

PAGE 7

## **Putting a Stop to CYBERBULLIES**

PAGE 9





## Message from the Executive Managing Director

**Media** headlines, at the end of March, were dominated by historic news from the Supreme Court. The Court heard oral arguments on laws related to same sex marriage: DOMA and California's Proposition 8 (details inside). The Court will rule on these separate laws in June.

It would take at least a dozen newsletters to reprise the main legal positions argued during two days of hearings, but lacking that kind of space and (indeed) expertise, I'd like to focus on one important background issue: the appalling record of anti-gay discrimination and violence throughout most of human history. I know this might seem obvious, but it's worth keeping in mind, given questions raised by certain justices. On a number of occasions, the more

conservative justices asked questions of constitutional precedent. Justice Scalia, for example, asked where the Constitution states that gay and lesbian people have the right to marry. Some of the justices also seemed uncomfortable with making a broad ruling in favor of same-sex marriage given the fact that the institution of same-sex marriage (confined to a few states) is so new and untested. What they didn't sufficiently address is the sad fact that, until recently, GLBT people were so invisible, persecuted, hated and subject to onerous laws that they didn't have a chance to develop precedents and institutions or a visible public life.

The GLBT civil rights movement is barely forty years old. We are just beginning to see the kind of contributions to society that an Open and Self-Accepting

community can make – the kind of institutions we can form if given half a chance. One example is the intelligent and compassionate response of the GLBT community to the AIDS epidemic. In the face of death, despair and institutional indifference, the community developed institutions to care for the sick and dying, institutions to advocate for and carry out medical research and, where necessary, institutions to force change in public policy. All of these initiatives benefited the larger community and medical research as a whole. The GLBT community wants equality and fairness – that's all. I have no doubt, with regard to marriage, the community will honor the institution.

*John Haigney*

# OUR PROGRAMS

### WORKSHOPS

Specially tailored workshops and trainings are available on a wide variety of topics including bullying, technobullying, cultural sensitivity/stereotyping, NYS Hate Crime law, the continuum of prejudicial behavior, violence prevention, suicide prevention, anger management, Dignity for All Students Act (DASA) compliance and more.

### OLWEUS

Through a joint project with the Long Island Network of Community Services, Inc. (LINCS), BiasHELP has certified trainers available to work with schools on the implementation of the foremost bullying prevention program available, the Olweus Bullying Prevention Program (OBPP). OBPP is a whole school program that has been proven to prevent or reduce bullying throughout a school setting.

### MIRROR IMAGES

This landmark DVD series, highlights the rich history, the challenges and the lives of America's diverse populations. The series is being distributed nationwide and is being used in conjunction with Diversity Done Right's widely acclaimed diversity trainings.

### A VOICE

*Against Violence & Oppression in Communities Everywhere (A VOICE)* is a BiasHELP project that fosters unity and respect among diverse communities by making an impact among vulnerable children and their families at 4 levels: the individual, family, agency and community.

For more detailed information on these programs or to see what else BiasHELP has to offer please visit us online at [BiasHELP.org](http://BiasHELP.org), follow us on Facebook or call us at 631-479-6015.



# SPOTLIGHT ON LOIDA SANTOS ASSOCIATE DIRECTOR OF AGENCY PROGRAMS

Loida Santos, Associate Director of Agency Programs for BiasHELP, Inc. has dedicated the past 24 years to educating and providing assistance to

disenfranchised populations battling stigmas, helping families, and developing communities. Ms. Santos who performed on Broadway

for many years, created innovative techniques to reach young people around issues of self-esteem and decision making through the performing arts. She is currently working with Family Voices at the Saxton Middle School in Patchogue, which is designed to help youth at risk do better in school and to strengthen the bond between parent and child. Her commitment to the families of Long Island won her the Hispanic American Award of Distinction for Outstanding Community Services, as well as proclamations from local and state representatives.

## Q&A

### WHAT DO YOU LIKE THE BEST ABOUT YOUR JOB?

*"Being able to provide families with the necessary tools and strategies to navigate through the hard times in their lives."*

### WHAT MOMENT DO YOU REMEMBER THE MOST?

*"When you provided a workshop and months later you bump into someone that says they have been making a conscious effort to unlearn their biases."*

### WHAT DO YOU FEEL IS IMPORTANT TO GET ACROSS TO THE KIDS YOU WORK WITH?

*"Focus on what you want to accomplish and do not permit your peers to steer you away from following your dreams."*

### WHAT DO YOU FEEL PARENTS NEED TO KNOW MOST?

*"Kids need structure and consistency in their lives. Parents should provide it in both good times and bad."*

### WHAT HAVE YOU LEARNED FROM DOING THIS JOB?

*"When you present caring and showing passion for your work, the audience listens and hopefully walks away with valuable lifesaving information."*

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Toll-Free Hotline: 1-877-END-BIAS (363-2427)

### EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES

BiasHELP, Inc. is looking for qualified individuals to join their professional team of employees. BiasHELP, Inc. is a 501(c)(3) not-for-profit agency dedicated to prevention of bias crimes, hate-related harassment, bullying, technobullying/cyberbullying and discrimination. Located on Long Island, BiasHELP provides programs and services locally, regionally and nationally. BiasHELP considers an action to be discriminatory when a person or group is targeted, in whole or in part, because of their perceived differences, including race, color, national origin, ancestry, gender, religion, age, disability or sexual orientation. We offer a competitive salary and benefits package. BiasHELP is an equal opportunity employer committed to diversity in the workplace. Please forward your cover letter and resume to:

BiasHELP, Inc.  
Attention: Robert Nicoletti  
Human Resources  
60 Adams Avenue, Suite 102  
Hauppauge, New York 11788  
or you can fax them to:  
Fax: (631) 656-7235  
Email: [rnicoletti@biashelp.org](mailto:rnicoletti@biashelp.org)

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## Defense of Marriage Act & Proposition 8

# Decision Time

Story By  
Eric Intravaia



The Defense of Marriage Act, or DOMA, was a bill passed in 1996 by Congress and signed into law by the Clinton Administration. The law prevents the federal government from recognizing any marriages between gay or lesbian couples for the purpose of federal laws or programs, even if those couples are considered legally married by their home state. It also states that individual states do not legally have to acknowledge the relationships of gay and lesbian couples who were married in another state. A strong argument can be made that singling out certain types of legal marriages for unequal treatment

violates the constitution's "equal protection" promise. DOMA denies to same-sex couples federal employment, health and tax benefits that are available to all married heterosexual couples. DOMA denies death benefits, spousal disability benefits and survivor benefits to same-sex spouses. DOMA prevents same-sex spouses from taking family medical leave.

In 2008, the state of California passed a ballot proposition that not only did not recognize same-sex marriages from other states, but also explicitly defined marriage as a state between a man and a woman. This definition eliminated the rights of same-sex

couples to get married in California. The proposition known as Proposition 8 has been a contested issue across the courts of the United States. On February 7th, 2012, the federal appeals court ruled against California's Proposition 8, asserting that the law on same-sex marriage is unconstitutional and singles out same-sex couples for discrimination.

The constitutionality of these two pieces of legislation has been a concern, over the years, for the Obama Administration. The administration declared in 2011 that the Justice Department would no longer defend DOMA in the courts

on the grounds that Section 3, which forbids federal recognition of same-sex marriages, is unconstitutional. President Obama also spoke about being opposed to California's Proposition 8 but has not addressed whether he believes the U.S. Constitution prohibits states from banning same-sex marriages.

The U.S. Supreme Court stated on January 4th, 2013, that it will hear challenges in March to both the Defense of Marriage Act and California's Proposition 8. The Supreme Court will issue a ruling sometime in June. Lower federal courts have already ruled against both laws. Two federal

appellate courts have ruled that the Defense of Marriage Act (DOMA) unjustly discriminates against gay and lesbian couples who are legally married under the laws of the states where they live. A ruling against Section 3 of the Defense of Marriage Act will ensure that married same-sex couples enjoy equal access to a huge range of benefits that heterosexual couples currently have in place.

## Family Voices A Mother's Testimony

**A**s a mother of 2 children, I have searched for help in becoming a better mom every day to provide my children with trust, respect and above all, the love and values I did not have when I was a child because parents in my country were reared differently.

One day in the Patchogue-Medford Library, I found information about Family Voices. My family has attended for 3 years and have found not only support, but received information that I did not have previously. For example: I did not

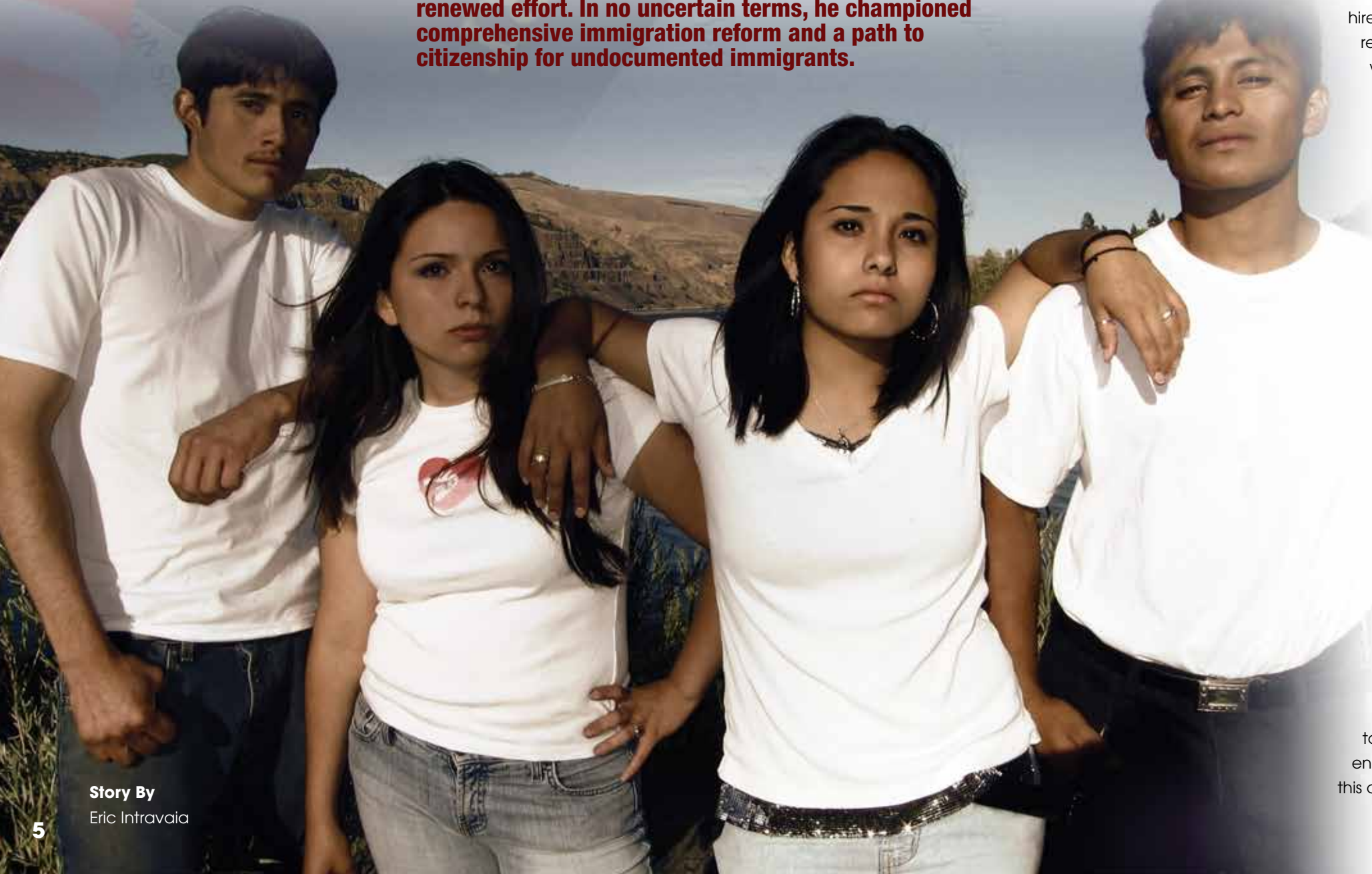
continued on page 6



# IMMIGRATION REFORM

## THE LONG ROAD TO CITIZENSHIP

**President Barack Obama attempted, but failed, in his first term as President to address the issue of immigration reform. He admitted as much on November 14, 2012 when he called the lack of reform the biggest failure of his first term in office. In his second inaugural address, the President committed his administration to a renewed effort. In no uncertain terms, he championed comprehensive immigration reform and a path to citizenship for undocumented immigrants.**



Story By  
Eric Intravaia

Immigration reform initiatives have, in the past, enjoyed bipartisan support. Both President George W. Bush and Senator John McCain voiced support. Hopefully, some of this spirit will rule the current debate. In January 2013, a bipartisan group of Senators reached an agreement on key principles for an overhaul of the nation's immigration laws, including a path to citizenship for the 11 million undocumented immigrants already in the United States. Republican Senator, John McCain, said "There is a new appreciation on both sides of the aisle that we have to enact a comprehensive immigration reform bill."

There are four goals in the reform bill currently under discussion: Create a path to citizenship for immigrants already here, contingent upon securing the border and better tracking people here on visas; reform the legal immigrant system, including awarding green cards to immigrants who obtain advanced degrees in science, math, technology or engineering from an American University; create an effective employment verification system to ensure that employers do not hire undocumented immigrants in the future, including requiring prospective workers to verify legal status and identify through a non-forgable electronic system; and allow more low skill workers into the country by allowing employers to hire immigrants if they can demonstrate they couldn't recruit a U.S. Citizen; and establish an agricultural worker program.

President Obama said on January 30th, 2013, that "now's the time" to replace a system the President called "out of date and badly broken". The President touched upon the steps to citizenship and said undocumented immigrants must first pass a background check, learn English, pay a penalty and then get "in the back of the line" behind people trying to come to America legally. Only after those steps occur could undocumented immigrants already in the country begin the process of getting permanent residence status and green cards. Some conservatives immediately voiced their opposition to the reform bill. Republican Lamar Smith argued that, "The American people should not be fooled. When you legalize those who are in the country illegally, it costs tax payers millions of dollars, costs American workers thousands of jobs and encourages more illegal immigration."

Immigration reform will continue to be a focus of President Obama and his administration in the coming weeks. Legislators on both sides of the aisle will weigh in on the potential benefits and disadvantages of a comprehensive reform to immigration. Genuine reform cannot come soon enough for the 11 million illegal immigrants already in this country and for the American people as a whole.

## Family Voices, continued...

know the significance of the word bully. Today I know that it is a big problem in the schools. Other workshops on drug and alcohol addiction were very informative for the youth. Also there was a good orientation on how to treat your child as an adolescent. I could mention many more positive things that Family Voices does as they are excellent in supporting the Latina families. The most important testimony I can give is that my children, Natalie & Jason, like attending Family Voices very much. Every time Family Voices rolls around they are the ones that remind me and say "Mami, today we have to go to Doña Loida's meeting". I know they enjoy having their own support group and sharing their concerns with their peers and facilitator. My family also enjoys the meal time before starting the workshop.

Although my husband cannot attend due to his work schedule, he's supportive and for him we are his voice. He is very interested in what we have learned every time we attend Family Voices. For me, Family Voices has been a continuous lesson in how to communicate with my children. At the end of the workshops, we are given an evaluation which assists in the development for the following Family Voices workshop agenda. We all wish it would be a weekly session because the Patchogue/Medford families really desire to overcome problems facing immigrants. We wish to resolve these issues through the education we receive at Family Voices. Above all, love and communication should exist in all families.

*Sincerely,  
The Velasquez Family*



Story By  
Eric Intravala

# AND THE DIGITAL AGE SEXTING

We live in a day and age where information is at your fingertips. Teens and young adults can access the internet through PCs, laptops, tablets and even cell phones. Through these devices, pictures and information can be shared with anyone at any time. Nearly one out of every two 10-13 year olds and 83% of 13-18 year olds own a cell phone. The cell phone has been a tool utilized by parents to keep in contact with their children while they are not home. As technology has become more advanced, the cell phone has become a tool for teens and young adults to keep in contact with one another through text messaging and the usage of social media sites like Facebook and Twitter. The average teen generates 50-70 text messages a day or about 18,000 messages a year. About 27% of teens who own a cell phone use it to access the internet.

While this does not look like a big deal, the type of information being shared over these text messages and social media sites is. Over the years, there has been a rise in the amount of cyberbullying taking place over electronic devices among teens

and young adults, but a new frontier has come along that parents and teens should be made aware of: Sexting. Sexting is the act of sending sexually explicit messages or photos electronically, between cell phones and on social media sites like Facebook and AOL Instant Messenger. About 20% of teens between the ages 13-19 have posted or sent nude/semi-nude photos of themselves. Teens send sexually suggestive content to be fun and flirtatious, to be sent as a "sexy present" or a "joke", but what teens do not realize is that these messages can be damaging to any of the parties involved in the act.

Sending sexually explicit pictures and messages to someone can lead to several different outcomes such as; the messages or pictures that were sent can be shared with others who are not meant to see them; the pictures or messages can be posted on social media blogs and sites for an entire audience to see. States are being forced to apply adult laws to teens for sexting and if the person who receives these messages/pictures shares them with others, this person can face

criminal charges for child pornography and have to register as a sex offender.

The reason for the growing concern about Sexting is due to the pitfalls and misconceptions that surround it. A misconception that is common among teens and young adults is that what they send will remain private but about 40% of teens and young adults say they have had sexually suggestive messages shown to them. There is also a misconception that any sexually explicit messages, posting or pictures will go away once deleted, but what teens do not realize is, even when you do hit the delete button, it can still be accessible in cyberspace. One of the reasons why teens send these sexually suggestive messages or images out is to impress a potential boyfriend or girlfriend, but sending these messages can have legal consequences such as sex offender charges or jail time.

There are ways to prevent teens and young adults from sexting and suffering the consequences that come from this act. Parents can talk with their children about sexting and the legal consequences that can come from it; teach your child that just because you

deleted a photo, does not mean it is gone forever; monitor the text messages being sent and the social media sites your children are on; and talk with your cell phone provider about plans that

can eliminate the type of texts your child can receive and the amount of access your child can have on their phone to the internet.

**Teens caught sexting may be charged with production, distribution and/or possession of child pornography – all are federal crimes.**

**53% of teens who sext are girls**      **47% of sexters are boys**

**17 percent of the sexting recipients report that they have passed the images along to someone else. 55 percent of those who passed the images to someone else say they shared them with more than one person.**

### THE TRUTH ABOUT TEEN SEXTING

**86% OF SEXTERS ARE NOT CAUGHT**

**48% OF TEENS HAVE RECEIVED A SEXUALLY SUGGESTIVE MESSAGE**

**39% OF TEENS HAVE SENT A SEXT**

**PERCENTAGE OF TEENS THAT HAVE SEXTED NUDE OR SEMI-NUDE PHOTOS OF THEMSELVES:**

**22%**      **18%**

**AND**

**11%**  
OF YOUNG TEENAGE GIRLS, AGES **13 to 16** HAVE SEXTED NUDE OR SEMI-NUDE PHOTOS OF THEMSELVES.

**Teens most often sext:**

Text messages	55%
Instant messaging	25%
Facebook	15%
Twitter	5%
Other social media sites	10%
Other	10%

**TO LEARN MORE ABOUT SEXTING AND HOW TO PROTECT YOUR CHILD VISIT:**  
[www.uKnowKids.com](http://www.uKnowKids.com)

**References:**  
PCs n Dreams: <http://www.pcndreams.com>  
American Osteopathic Association: <http://www.osteopathic.org>  
The Pew Charitable Trusts: <http://www.pewcharitable.org/>  
Enough is Enough: <http://www.internetsafety101.org>  
Designer: Brigit Gilbert

# Chef's Secrets 8

Despite the fact that Superstorm Sandy forced us to change the date, "foodies" and wine aficionados from all over Long Island were not deterred. Chef's Secrets 8 went on without a hitch at the de Seversky Mansion in Old Westbury on January 27, 2013



where guests experienced the tastes of a lifetime. Everyone who attended enjoyed a feast of the most superb food, desserts, pastries and wine. More excitement rounded out the evening with raffles and silent auctions which gave guests the opportunity to try their luck and win top quality prizes while in turn giving back to their community.

A VIP Cocktail Party for the event sponsors and honorees started at 5pm. This years honorees were Mr. Humberto Cruz, Director of the AIDS Institute, and Mr. Robert P. McBride, Vice President at Park Strategies. Our guests were entertained throughout the evening by the melodic voices of The Hempstead Select Choral, under the direction of Ms. Rachel A. Blackburn.

Fifteen specially-selected Master Chefs  
continued on page 10





# PUTTING A STOP TO CYBERBULLIES

Story By  
Loida Santos and Eric Intravaia

On July 1st, 2012, the Dignity for All Students Act or Dignity Act took effect in all schools across the state of New York. The law protects students from any form of discrimination, harassment and bullying based on a person's actual or perceived: race, color, ethnicity, religion, religious practices, national origin, weight, disability, sex, gender identity, sexual orientation. While the Dignity Act covers direct and indirect forms of harassment and bullying, it does not cover a form of bullying that has become a serious concern among schools, parents and the community: Cyberbullying. Cyberbullying is the use of electronic devices (cell phone, internet, social media, etc.) to harm other people in a deliberate, repeated and hostile manner.

Cyberbullying can come in many forms: trickery/outing, harassment, stalking and impersonation. These forms of harassment can have an effect on a student's academic achievement even though the act of bullying takes place outside of school. Due to these concerns, on July 9th, 2012, Governor Andrew Cuomo signed a bill into law that requires schools to respond to any incidents of harassment, discrimination and cyberbullying that take place outside of the school and have a significant effect on a student's academic performance.

The law recognizes that most cyberbullying originates off-campus, but nonetheless affects the school environment.

It disrupts the educational process, impedes the ability of students to learn and often has a devastating effect on a student's health and well-being. The law requires that the school designate a responsible person to receive reports of cyberbullying in the same way the Dignity Act Coordinator receives reports of bullying on school grounds. Students and parents can make either oral or written reports of cyberbullying incidents. School staff who receive an oral or written report must notify the designated School Coordinator who must then file a written report with the Principal and/or the Superintendent within two school days.

The Principal and/or Superintendent will lead or supervise the investigation of all reports of cyberbullying and will ensure that the investigation is completed promptly. The Principal will report on data and trends related to cyberbullying and will contact local law enforcement when any cyberbullying constitutes criminal conduct. He/she will provide guidance and educational materials to school districts on best practices and will help families and communities to work cooperatively with schools in order to address cyberbullying, on or off school property. Best practices will include instruction on safe, responsible use of the internet and electronic communications.

**The Cyberbullying Law goes into effect in New York State on July 1st, 2013.**

BiasHELP would like to thank the following Supporters for their generous contributions to help promote and continue the many important programs we have to offer the many businesses, families and community organizations throughout Long Island.

**Knapp Swezey  
Foundation**

**Senator  
John J. Flannigan**

**New York  
Community Bank**

If you are interested in making a contribution to BiasHELP please call 631-479-6015 for more information.  
Thank You!

## Important Numbers to Know IF YOU REQUIRE IMMEDIATE EMERGENCY ATTENTION ALWAYS REMEMBER TO DIAL 911 FIRST.

If you need help and the situation does not require immediate emergency attention, you can call the BiasHELP HOTLINE at 1-877-363-2427. If you are unable to contact the BiasHELP HOTLINE, there are agencies which can help you either address your issue or connect you with sources that can be of assistance. Below we have provided a convenient cut out information card that you can place somewhere for easy access.

IMPORTANT PHONE	NUMBERS TO KEEP
<p><b>IF YOU REQUIRE IMMEDIATE EMERGENCY ATTENTION ALWAYS REMEMBER DIAL 911 FIRST</b></p> <p><b>BiasHELP HOTLINE</b> <b>1-877-363-2427</b> Monday-Friday 9am-5pm Spanish Operators Available</p>	<p><b>REPORTING A BIAS/HATE CRIME:</b></p> <p>Nassau County Police Dept. <b>1-516-573-7000 (ext 7360)</b></p> <p>Nassau County Human Rights Commission <b>1-516-571-3663</b></p> <p>Suffolk County Police Dept. <b>1-631-852-6323</b></p> <p>Suffolk County Human Rights Commission <b>1-631-853-5480</b></p>

## Chef's Secrets, continued...

from Long Island donated their time and talent by graciously preparing and serving their mouth-watering signature dishes and desserts to over 250 guests in attendance. Outstanding wine, liquor, beer and coffee vendors provided tastings of their products which added a celebratory flair to the event. Local and nationwide companies made in-kind product/service donations that were used to create live and Chinese auction baskets.

Our emcee for the evening was the charismatic Stone Grissom, anchorman for News 12 Long Island. Mr. Grissom engaged our audience throughout the event. During the live auction he was joined by Robert P. McBride, who auctioned off a day of fishing on his 52' yacht and the lively Chef Robert Ehrlich, offering the winner his culinary services.

Held annually, Chef's Secrets is produced by the Long Island Network of Community Services, Inc. (LINCS) to benefit the Long Island Association for AIDS Care, Inc. (LIAAC) and BiasHELP, Inc. Chef's Secrets 8 raised over \$150,000 to help support programs and much needed services to individuals and families living on Long Island who are affected by HIV/ AIDS and other infectious diseases, bias-related crimes, poverty and hunger. This event would not be possible without the support and participation of the Chefs, Vendors, Sponsors, Donors, Guests, Volunteers and Staff. Please visit our website [www.chefssecrets.org](http://www.chefssecrets.org) to view more pictures from this event.

**SAVE THE DATE FOR CHEF'S SECRETS 9 SUNDAY NOVEMBER 3, 2013**

BiasHELP, Inc.  
60 Adams Avenue  
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