



Fortunate Families: 2006 Annual Report

“This survey makes me acknowledge that I need to embrace my son’s homosexuality to a much greater extent if I am to consider myself a fortunate mom. May God bless your work.”

Comment on a Parents Voice Project Survey

The quote above highlights the importance of one of Fortunate Families’ major endeavors in its second year, i.e. the Parents Voice Project. Phase one of the project was launched in July by sending parent surveys to 4540 people and organizations. The 229 returned by the deadline were analyzed and a report will be published in 2007. Surveys continue to arrive and they are laying the basis for phase two, creating a network of Catholic parents nationwide to connect with each other and do whatever each one can to make our Church welcoming and affirming of our LGBT daughters and sons.

In November, the U.S. Bishops’ document, *Ministry to Persons with a Homosexual Inclination*, presented Fortunate Families with an opportunity to challenge the hierarchy to reflect carefully on the language they use to describe our LGBT children, but more importantly, to urge them to listen to our stories and our children’s stories. Letters were sent to every U.S. Bishop. Fourteen Bishops responded. One wrote, “*I hope many [bishops] will...accept your offer to begin a dialogue with gay and lesbian Catholics. These men and women have much to offer the Church. Their exclusion is our loss.*” (All their responses are posted on the web site: www.fortunatefamilies.com.)

Fortunate Families continues to be a presence nationwide: presenting at Call to Action in Milwaukee, and the Creating Change Conference (National Gay and Lesbian Task Force) in Kansas City, MO; hosting exhibit tables at Call to Action and at the National Association of Catholic Diocesan Lesbian and Gay Ministries Conference in Brooklyn; and participating LGBT/Parents retreats in Pennsylvania and Ohio. We also facilitated the annual Day of Reflection for Parents in Rochester, NY.

The *Fortunate Families Newsletter* published 10 issues in 2006 and nearly doubled its total mailing list to approximately 2000 (about 66% by email), reaching someone in all 50 states, D.C. and six foreign countries. (Newsletters are on the web site: www.fortunatefamilies.com.)

A heartfelt “thank you” goes out from the board of directors to the 195 donors—from 31 states and Canada—whose generosity keeps the Fortunate Families network going and growing. We also thank Mary’s Pence for its generous \$2500 grant for operating expenses. We are delighted to be partners with them in their work for justice. And we thank the Human Rights

Campaign’s Religion and Faith initiative for its grant for Fortunate Families’ exhibit table at Call to Action.

2007 will focus on

- ▼ developing the parent network, specifically by enhancing our electronic capabilities
- ▼ publicizing Fortunate Families resources
- ▼ publishing the survey results and getting a report to every diocese

As always the most memorable moments are personal. For me (and Casey) the work of Fortunate Families became most real at the Baptism of our Godson, Joseph. At that Sunday mass, as we stood at the Baptismal font with Joseph’s fathers and his brother, John, we were witness to the Spirit of God at work in this family and in this Catholic faith community. As theologian, James Alison said, and I paraphrase: There may not be cause for optimism, but there is great reason for hope.

Always remember, “God sees with the heart.”

Mary Ellen Lopata, President

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NOTE: Tom Ferrarese resigned from the Board in February 2006;
Rosalie Muschal Reinhardt resigned from the Board in June 2006.

*Elected to the Board of Directors June 2006

Fortunate Families, Inc.

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Ordinary Income/Expense

Income

Contributions	18,443.00
Book Sales	2,301.58
Grants	2,900.00
Other	<u>237.08</u>
Total income	23,871.66

Expense

Cost of Books	1,562.42
Administrative	696.08
Postage/Shipping	2,958.03
Print Material	3,560.75
General: fees, equipment, supplies, publications, etc.	3,948.08
Telephone/	
Communications	198.66
Conference/Travel	<u>4,883.03</u>

Total Expense **17,807.03**

NET Income **6,064.63**