



## Fortunate Families: 2007 Annual Report

*“To break the silence is to come to terms with the truth that one holds in sacred trust. It opens the door to love and understanding of the true meaning of the gospel—Jesus’ good news of inclusive love, and extends that love in today’s world, family and society.”*  
Mother of lesbian daughters.

**F**ortunate Families’ philosophy is based on the belief that parents’ stories must be told...and heard. In March 2007, the New Ways Ministry Symposium in Minneapolis, MN provided parents with the opportunity to share their stories with two Roman Catholic Bishops. In a two hour session, facilitated by Fortunate Families, Archbishop Francis Hurley, (Ret) of Anchorage, AK, and Bishop Joseph Sullivan, (Ret) of Brooklyn, NY listened to the stories of more than 30 parents. They heard stories of anger and pain—caused by the Church, stories of faith in Christ’s teachings of love, and stories of perseverance and hope that the Church will someday come to affirm their gay sons and lesbian daughters as gifts from God just as the good Sisters had always taught us.

Impressed with the faith of these parents, Bishops Hurley and Sullivan responded with encouragement that parents continue to tell their stories. One mother, assuring the bishops that most parents feel fortunate to have an LGBT son or daughter, asked them to “take our hearts with you and share our stories with other bishops.” Both bishops agreed to do so, as they could.

With this session Fortunate Families modeled the kind of dialogue possible. Listening to parents talk of their beloved LGBT children adds a little-acknowledged facet to the stories of lesbian and gay Catholics.

What an inspiring beginning to the year!

### Fortunate Families 2007 Board of Directors



(L > R) Jean Kears, Casey Lopata, Mary Ellen Lopata, Jerry Furlong, Jim Buckheit, Ann Franczyk, Tom Nelson, Linda Karle-Nelson

**2007** was another year of growth for Fortunate Families. In addition to our involvement with the New Ways Ministry Symposium, we facilitated a caucus session for parents and staffed an exhibit table at Call to Action; five board members presented in two different sessions at the PFLAG Convention in Washington DC, where many new connections were made; we attended the annual East Coast New Ways Ministry Retreat; and presented at Equality Leadership Day in Rochester, NY. In addition, Days of Reflection for Parents were held in Detroit, MI, and Rochester, NY.

Nine issues of the *Fortunate Families Newsletter* were published in 2007. The Newsletter now reaches over 2000 people, in 50 states, the District of Columbia, five Canadian Provinces and six other foreign countries.

The two most exciting projects to come to fruition in 2007 were publishing the Parents Voice Project *Survey Report of Catholic Parents of Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender Daughters and sons* and the redesign and updating of the *Fortunate Families* website.

Thanks to a generous grant from **Mary's Pence**, we were able to send the Survey Report to: survey participants, LGBT ministry leaders, *Fortunate Families* donors and all U.S. Bishops. (Note: The report is available on the *Fortunate Families* website and there are still hard copy booklets available, some with appendices, as well as on CD ROMS. Contact us.)

After reading the report, one parent wrote:

*"Thank you so much for sharing this awesome information. I enjoyed reading the quotes and found myself in so many of them. We all are on a journey and loving each other as Christ loves us has to be part of it."*

Another grant, this one from **Dignity Detroit**, enabled us to redesign our website, making it more attractive, and most importantly, more user friendly. We are delighted with the results and hope you are too. If you haven't already, **CHECK IT OUT!**

The Board of Directors sends a heartfelt "thank you" to the 258 donors—from 38 states and Canada—whose generosity makes the continuation of *Fortunate Families* ministry possible. We are both humbled and energized by your support.

Hopes for 2008:

- ▼ Enhancing electronic resources: i.e. web-site, CD/DVD, written, audio, video formats.
- ▼ Developing a directory of Catholic LGBT groups, ministries, parents, and allies.
- ▼ Developing resource packets for priest/pastoral ministers, parents, and educators.

We received many nice notes about the Survey Report and the enhancements to the website—one person was so excited about the *Fortunate Families* "virtual support group." But what moves us most and keeps us energized are the emails and phone calls from parents who just need to make contact with other Catholic parents on this same journey. Whether we can put them in touch with other parents in their area, or have a good conversation with them ourselves, we know this is why *Fortunate Families* exists: to help parents explore their story, empower them to share that story with family, friends, their faith community and the larger society. That is how we all help to make the world and especially our Church more just and loving.

Always remember, "God sees with the heart."

*Mary Ellen Lopata*, President

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*Again, we thank you all and  
look forward to your  
continued partnership in  
this important work.*

## 2007 Income & Expense Report

### Ordinary Income/Expense

#### Income

Contributions	\$24,633.00
Book Sales	2,016.49
Grants	4,200.00
Other Income	171.59
<b>Total income</b>	<b>\$31,021.08</b>

#### Expense

Cost of Books	\$ 209.24
Administrative	1,818.23
Postage/Shipping	3,086.74
Print Material	6,568.19
General: fees, equipment, supplies, publications, etc.	4,755.76
Telephone/ Communications	640.04
Conference/Travel	6,663.97

**Total Expense \$23,742.17**

**NET Income \$ 7278.91**

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**Len Szumiloski Memorial  
Resource Fund**

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