

# **Invisible Families**

*By Terry Stewart*

*Heartflags Publishing*

This is the September, 2008 reprint of the book “Invisible Families: a New Zealand Resource for Parents of Lesbian and Gay Children, originally published 1993. It was revised and updated in 1996.

One of the things that parents of newly-out lesbian, gay, and bisexual (LGB) children need most is the assurance they are not alone; that they are NOT the only parents with an LGB child. By today’s standards, this seems obvious; in 1993 it did not. All PFLAG members know that this is still a problem for “new” parents – “Not my child!!” they insist. This book still fills a need to help these parents understand

Ms. Stewart blends her experience – which begins when her son comes out to her in 1987 – with excerpts from survey responses from parents, children, and siblings of GLB people. She also includes supportive information from respected medical professionals. She covers all aspects of the coming out process for the families – hearing those frightening words, “I’m gay,” trying to accept, telling extended family members and friends, and easing common fears for the children and their families. Ongoing questions and legal issues are also touched upon, although some of them no longer apply today.

There is no mention of transgender children. At the time this book was written, virtually everyone considered them gays or lesbians in drag. Even so, most of the discussion could apply equally to the transgender community members and their families.

Invisible Families is easy to read and understand. It is separated into 16 chapters, all interspersing Ms. Stewart’s and her family’s experience with the comments from gays and lesbians, their friends, their siblings, and their parents. Not all of the comments are supportive or uplifting; they are the real feelings of real people.

Families new to PFLAG often need this type of support. Invisible Families will be a useful addition to your Chapter library.

*Reviewed by Dave Parker*