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Troy, MI Mayor and Gay Parents--And Uncles

Last month, the mayor of Troy, Michigan, Janice Daniels was held accountable for a homophobic statement she made on Facebook. She said, "I think I am going to throw away my I love New York carrying bag now that queers can get married there." See article here <http://troy.patch.com/articles/facebook-gay-marriage>.

It caught my attention for a number of reasons. First I am a watchdog for homophobia, second it made national news, third I live in Michigan and fourth my sister lives there with her 4 children and Troy is a place where I spend a lot of my time as a result of caring for and about my niece and nephews. The births of my nephews and niece brought me into a world of children that I never imagined would change my life forever. I love them as my own children and I have grown to love Troy, Michigan as well.

I am a very active uncle in that ever since my first nephew was born 14 1/2 years ago, I attended many of his school events and have continued to do so for each new nephew and niece. I always worried about discomfort of teachers and if they discovered my being gay and being around their children. I am from the generation where gays were equated with pedophiles and still live with that worry that another parent will be concerned that as a gay man I want to "recruit" their child. Coming out is a lifelong process and here I was in the closet once again--or so I thought.

As out as I am and as outspoken as I am, I never came out in any of their settings. I didn't have to because my nephews and niece outed me themselves! I discovered as my second nephew entered Kindergarten that he informed his teachers that I was his gay uncle. My third nephew found it novel to tell all the class and teachers that I was gay and that I kissed a boy, my husband Mike. And my niece also has enjoyed telling her teachers and classmates that I am gay.

The parents and teachers in Troy have been nothing but kind to me and accepting. I stopped hiding the fact that I was married to a man and began openly talking about my husband Mike. When I enter my niece and nephews classrooms the teachers and classmates know me as the favorite uncle JoJo. I am referred to as Uncle JoJo because my oldest nephew stuttered when he first started to speak and called me that and it has stuck ever since.

Back to the story of this homophobic mayor, her apology was nothing of the sort. She stated she was sorry for using an "unfortunate word" such as "queer" but that she still believe that marriage is between one man and one women. Her stance on gay marriage was not invited nor in question. Her gay bashing comment was what she needed to focus on. She was wrong.

I was outraged and planned to attend a city council meeting in Troy to speak with along with others about her gay bashing comment. I am glad I did not go as I would have been too angry and not have done as eloquent of a job as these lesbian moms did here as you will see in this video from that evening.



Lesbian moms address Troy, Michigan Mayor, Janice Daniels at a city council meeting about the mayor's derogatory comment that she posted on Facebook stating that she will 'now have to throw away her I Love NY carrying bag now that queers can get married there'. This family's message to the mayor, "Love is the ONLY answer."

<http://youtu.be/Qj8YauXLik8>