

## **Member Feature – Joanne Carroll, President, TransCentralPA**

**CPGLCC President and CEO Harry Young recently caught up with Joanne Carroll, President of TransCentralPA, to talk business and inclusion in Central PA, and to learn about Keystone Conference, A Celebration of Gender Diversity, hosted annually by TransCentralPA.**

***About Joanne: Joanne M. Carroll is the President of TransCentralPA; and also serves as a member of the Governor’s LGBT Working Group, the PA LGBT Leadership Council, the Millersville University - President’s Commission for Gender and Sexuality, and the PA Medical Society LGBT Health Disparities Task Force, and is a former Vice-President of EqualityPA. She is also a member of the Transgender American Veterans Association and is an ordained minister.***

**Harry Young: Tell me a bit about TransCentralPA and its mission, and the up coming Keystone Conference.**

**Joanne Carroll:** TransCentralPA is 501 (c ) (3), nonprofit corporation, registered in the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania; and exists to provide support to the transgender community of Central Pennsylvania and provide advocacy and education to outside individuals, groups and organizations.

The Keystone Conference “A Celebration of Gender Diversity” is hosted annually by TransCentralPA in Pennsylvania’s capital city of Harrisburg. This conference is now in its tenth consecutive year and allows members, allies, supporters, spouses, and friends of the Transgender Community to come together for an informative, inspirational and joyous experience. The agenda annually features workshops, seminars, noted Keynote Speakers, as well as guided excursions into the City of Harrisburg and its environs. The Keystone Conference allows friendships to form and renew in a safe place.

**HY: What does membership in CPGLCC mean to you?**

**JC:** TransCentralPA is a proud member of the CPGLCC because it allows us to interact and connect with the greater LGBT community in Central Pennsylvania. Together, we have forged friendships that will be lifelong; both within and without the organizations we serve.

**HY: In your opinion, what is the most pressing issue facing LGBT business owners and professionals in Central PA?**

**JC:** The most pressing issue facing LGBT business owners and professionals in Central PA is the same issue that all LGBT persons face in the Commonwealth - comprehensive protections from discrimination. This will only become a reality with the passage of the “Fairness Act” which prohibits discrimination in employment, housing, education, health care and public accommodations based on sexual orientation or gender identity or expression.

**HY: In your opinion, to what extent is LGBT inclusion important to the success of businesses?**

**JC:** The LGBT community contributes millions to the economy of the Commonwealth and billions to the economy of the USA and this impact is overlooked or unknown by the public at large.

**HY: How do you view our region in terms of LGBT inclusion? In your opinion, is it an inclusive place for members of the LGBT community to live and do business?**

**JC:** Central PA is a generally good place for LGBT+ individuals to live, work, and play at least in the major communities of Harrisburg, Lancaster and York. These three, along with a couple others, have adopted local non-discrimination ordinances that protect our LGBT+ family. Much work still is needed to expand non-discrimination not only to the communities in the region but to the Commonwealth as well. The combined efforts of the CPGLCC, coupled with TransCentralPA and EqualityPA as well as other organizations should be directed toward this as a priority.