



just
love?

*We're almost there, with your help
we can achieve Marriage Equality*

MARRIAGE EQUALITY
Civil Marriage for Gay and Lesbian People



*'All men are created equal.
No matter how hard you
try, you can never erase
those words.'*

Harvey Milk, Gay Rights Activist

Do you believe
*that Ireland is an equal society, where everyone is
afforded the same basic rights?*

**Most Irish people do and this is the vision
for Ireland they have**

On 1 January 2011 Civil Partnership was introduced in Ireland. This allowed same sex couples for the first time to form a legal partnership that recognized their loving, committed relationships. It gave same sex couples a number of rights, in relation to property, inheritance, taxation and pensions.

This historic step was welcomed by people across Ireland and marked a huge achievement for all those who had campaigned for it for so long.

**BUT - Civil Partnership is NOT
MARRIAGE and it is NOT EQUALITY**

There are huge differences, over 150 in fact, between the two which have an enormous impact on same sex couples and their families.

For this reason, **Marriage Equality** is continuing its campaign. We have made great progress and have built a close working relationship with the new government, a broad coalition of allied organisations and a wide base of supporters across Ireland.

But we need your help to continue our campaign and remove remaining discrimination against same sex couples.

We are currently facing an urgent funding need. Our primary funder, *The Atlantic Philanthropies*, has funded the campaign since we launched over 3 years ago but will cease funding at the end of this year.

Without your help in the next few months, **Marriage Equality** will have to close its doors.

We will not be able to finish our campaign that has been so successful to date. We will not be able to deliver marriage equality for every Irish person who wants to marry.

You can help us keep the campaign alive and support us, because we are *almost there!* You can help us win our fight for equality.

Civil Partnership and Marriage

***“Gay people want the freedom to
marry for the same reasons that
non-gay people do.”***

Evan Wolfson, CEO Freedom to Marry, USA

Marriage Equality has one simple belief - that civil marriage and the full range of civil rights it provides, should be available to same sex couples.

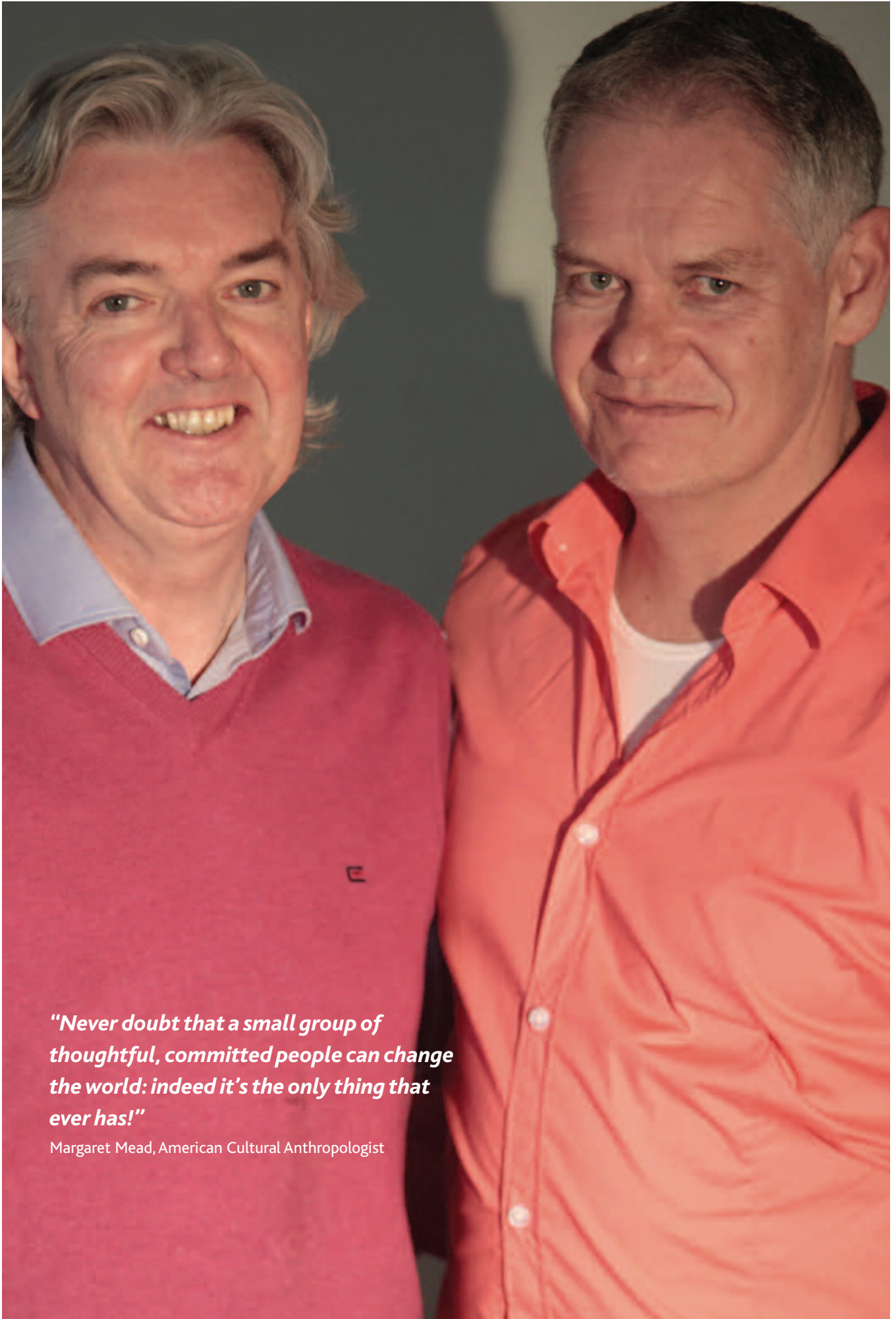
This is not about religion. Nor is it about wedding dresses and walking down the aisle. This is about fundamental human rights.

There are over 150 discrepancies between a Civil Partnership and a Marriage. Some will have a major impact on families. Others are smaller, but still represent discrimination.

Civil partnership

- does not permit children to have a legally recognised relationship with their parents - only the biological one. This causes all sorts of practical problems for hundreds of families with schools and hospitals as well as around guardianship, access and custody. In the worst case, it could mean that a child is taken away from a parent and put into care on the death of the biological parent.
- does not recognize same sex couples' rights to many social supports that may be needed in hardship situations and may literally leave a loved one out in the cold.
- defines the home of civil partners as a "shared home", rather than a "family home", as is the case for married couples. This has implications for the protection of dependent children living in this home and also means a lack of protection for civil partners who are deserted.





"Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed people can change the world: indeed it's the only thing that ever has!"

Margaret Mead, American Cultural Anthropologist



Moninne Griffith
Director,
Marriage Equality

About Marriage Equality

Marriage Equality grew out of an initiative set up to support the case of 2 Irish citizens, Katherine Zappone and Ann Louise Gilligan, to have their Canadian marriage recognised in Ireland. Marriage Equality argues that lesbians and gay men should have the right to marry and have the same legal rights associated with marriage for themselves and their families.

The organization is run by Moninne Griffith, a lawyer with 10 years' experience as a solicitor in Family, Employment and Property Law, and she is supported by 2 team members working on communications and policy and a Board of Directors who give their time and expertise to promote and achieve the goals of marriage equality.

Marriage Equality has achieved significant success to date

mobilizing supporters around the country to lobby their TD's and in raising awareness of marriage equality issues. As a result of this work and the dedication of many other committed organizations, Civil Partnership has been introduced and popular support for marriage equality has increased from 56% to 74% in the last 3 years. A major achievement.

Today, *Marriage Equality* has a clear 3 year strategy for its campaign to achieve full civil marriage equality for all Irish citizens. This will be achieved through a targeted communications and lobbying campaign that will:

- further educate the general public, the legal community, opinion makers and legislators about the need for equal rights for same sex couples

- mobilise support for legislation that will enable same sex couples to marry and establish legal recognition of children in their families
- monitor and encourage the legal cases taken at national and European level which support the granting to same sex couples an equality of status in Ireland that they already enjoy in a number of other European Union member states and globally.

Marriage Equality has an established track record and is keen to build on its successes

During its 3 year campaign, *Marriage Equality* has:

- demonstrated evidence of increasing positive support amongst the Irish general public for marriage equality by commissioning independently conducted attitudinal polls and mobilising allies to participate in public marches of support;
- increased the visibility of lesbian and gay people and their families via its 'We are Family' poster/postcard campaign, and positive media profiling of 'real-life' stories of why lesbians and gays should have the right to marry;
- mobilized grassroots support for the campaign and won support from dozens of TD's through an innovative 'Out to your TD' initiative;
- highlighted the difference between Civil Partnership and Civil Marriage in the media and in legal debates, offering examples of legal solutions and case law in other countries that support why marriage equality is so necessary and important.

The cumulative effect has been to advance the issue of marriage equality to an extent that would have been unimaginable even ten years ago.





***"We've chosen the path to equality,
don't let them turn us around."***

- Geraldine Ferraro (1984)
first woman vice-presidential candidate, USA

Become a Marriage Equality Champion

At the end of 2011, Marriage Equality will come to the end of its 3 year funding agreement with The Atlantic Philanthropies. We are extremely grateful for the support of Atlantic and for all it has enabled us to achieve so far.

This means that we need to raise sufficient funds by December 2011 to enable us to continue our campaign for marriage equality.

This is why we are launching the



Campaign

We are aiming to raise €100,000 and we urgently need your help.

We have set out a detailed financial plan for the next 3 years to enable us to deliver our goals and are currently seeking 10 MARRIAGE EQUALITY CHAMPIONS who can lead us through the final stage of our campaign.

As a Marriage Equality Champion, you will be demonstrating your support for marriage equality for same sex couples and your commitment to equality and human rights for all. We are asking each of our 10 Marriage Equality Champions to make a gift of €10,000 to the organization. The Champions Programme will run for one year.

As a Marriage Equality Champion you will

- be leading this historic human rights movement through its final stages
- be formally thanked at a launch event hosted by Senator Katherine Zappone
- be thanked and acknowledged on our website which receives around 2,000 hits per month
- have the opportunity to contribute to the content of our Facebook updates
- be thanked and recognized on our billboard campaign

Your donation will be used to fund

- extensive media and communications campaigns in 2011 and 2012
- lobbying activity and community engagement with politicians
- grassroots mobilisation and engagement of Marriage Equality supporters
- surveys of public support and attitudes
- engagement with the government's proposed Constitutional Convention at which marriage equality will be considered and recommendations made to government
- mobilisation of a platform of civil society allies for marriage equality

If you would like to play a leading part in bringing the Marriage Equality campaign to a successful outcome, please contact **Moninne Griffith**, Director of Marriage Equality on **(01) 8734183** or **monnine@marriageequality.ie**

MARRIAGE EQUALITY

Civil Marriage for Gay and Lesbian People



Do you believe?

'...I believe we should recognise that this [Civil Partnership] Bill is a milestone on the road to our desired destination. It seems the next step is to consider the issue of full equality and how this may be achieved.'

Deputy Joe Costello TD

'...the [Civil Partnership] Bill is a legal text. Sadly, it does not concern itself with feelings, love or the commitment made by one person to another. When it comes to love and commitment, who am I, and who are we in this House, to judge how people live their private lives, or what is deemed to be acceptable.'

Deputy Catherine Byrne TD

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