



## Author discusses her book on raising a gender-creative son in Forest Hills

Wednesday, January 25, 2017

This event is open to all identities.



Julie Tarney **will discuss her new book**, “My Son Wears Heels: One Mom’s Journey from Clueless to Kickass,” at the Central Queens Y in Forest Hills on Thursday, Jan. 26, at 7 p.m. There is no admission fee, but a \$5 donation is suggested.

During a casual conversation in 1992, the Milwaukee resident’s 2-year-old son, Harry, announced that he felt like a girl. At first, Julie didn’t understand what he meant, but she quickly learned that her only child simply couldn’t live within a male/female binary notion of gender identity.

Julie raised Harry with unconditional support and love, but it was a long, complicated journey. She had no role models or mentors and had to do a lot of on-the-spot guesswork. Many experts hypothesized that the boy was reacting to a domineering mother.

In **her memoir-style book** (University of Wisconsin Press, September 2016), Julie delves into her fears, mistakes, triumphs and full-fledged embracement of Harry’s uniqueness. At one juncture, a young Harry

wants to wear wigs at his birthday party. At another, he walks across his high school graduation stage in high heels. Throughout his childhood, students call him a “hermaphrodite.”

There’s a happy ending, though, as Harry goes on to become a director, photographer and drag artist in New York City. Meanwhile, Julie moves to the Big Apple, too, where she becomes an educator, speaker, writer and LGBTQ activist.

Currently, Julie edits the Queer Voices and Parents pages at the Huffington Post and contributes articles to [My Kid Is Gay](#) and the [True Colors Fund's Give a Damn Campaign](#). She is on the board of the [It Gets Better Project](#) and she’s very active in [PFLAG NYC](#), volunteering regularly as a speaker for its [Safe Schools Program](#).