

I proposed to Melisa in an apple orchard. We loved the idea of using a similar site, either an orchard or farm, as our venue, so when we found out that Liberty Ridge Farms hosted weddings, we were so excited. We thought it was perfect. I had been there before with a group I volunteered with, so I knew it was a beautiful facility, and it had everything we were looking for. I remember being so excited when we found the venue that we called our mothers and told them we knew where we were getting married; that's how certain we were that this was our venue. When we called and spoke with Cynthia, everything sounded great until the moment she told us they wouldn't host our wedding because we were a same-sex couple. I almost couldn't believe what I had heard. I honestly didn't believe this kind of thing still happened in New York State. We were crushed that we wouldn't be able to host our wedding, and had a really hard time finding another location since we had our hearts set on that one. Beyond the heartbreak of losing what we thought was the perfect venue, though, I felt judged and dismissed for who I was and for my relationship. It put a damper on the excitement of wedding planning. When I called other venues after that, I felt like I had to explain myself and my relationship before I got any further into the conversation so I wouldn't suffer the heartbreak of thinking things were going well again if we were just going to be rejected.

Nobody should feel like that; you shouldn't feel like you have to start the conversation with "I'm engaged to a girl, is that going to be a problem?" That's why we decided to bring this to the Division of Human Rights. It wasn't a decision we took lightly, but we felt like we would be remiss if we didn't because by letting it go, we would be leaving someone else to have to deal with the same disheartening scenario we dealt with.