



# OPEN DOORS

## President's Column by Toni Weaver

Can you believe that summer is almost over? The corn and soybeans are beginning to take on the golden hues of autumn, and on the roadways school buses are once again carrying their precious cargo. With school in session, it's time for PFLAG members to plan their strategies for getting involved in the local schools.

First, we have to keep our eyes open and our ears attuned to local school board meetings. "Parents for Privacy," the group that formed in the Palatine School District 211 to try to keep transgender students out of the restrooms and lockers rooms that correspond with their gender identity, are infiltrating school board meetings with their paranoia and fear-mongering. We've got to be prepared to respond with our own message that transgender students are not a threat to the safety of anyone!

Next, we need to equip ourselves with the tools needed to work with our local schools on cultivating respect for ALL students. To that end, we've invited Brooke Smith, our PFLAG National Regional Director, to present a six-hour training, "Cultivating Respect," on October 15 in Wheaton. According to Brooke, the training consists of

- Learning to tell our story in an effective and appropriate way depending on the audience
- Using statistics and current events to build a stronger case
- Skill building on language, policy and problem solving in a school environment
- Understanding the different access points in a school that can be leveraged
- Training on 3 specific programs that can be implemented in the school community.

Finally, we should be reaching out to the gay-straight alliances (GSA) in our local schools, building relationships with the advisers and their students. If your school doesn't have a GSA, contact the Illinois Safe School Alliance for information and assistance. BTW, we congratulate Owen Daniel-McCarter as he takes over as CEO of ISSA.

Putting on programs is costly, and we rely upon PFLAG supporters to renew or begin memberships in PFLAG through the PFLAG Council of Northern Illinois so that we will continue to have those dollars for continuing our work. The Fall membership drive kicks off in September, and we hope to have it wrapped up by the end of the year. Membership chair Don Donahue is hard at work and will be reaching out to members old and new. We need your support to keep PFLAG alive and vital in Northern Illinois. Please be generous!



PFLAG is a non-profit, tax-exempt, all volunteer, local community-based organization of parents, relatives and friends of gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgendered persons. PFLAG is not affiliated with any ethnic, religious, economic or political group.

OPEN DOORS is a publication of the Northern Illinois PFLAG chapters. Articles that appear do not necessarily reflect the opinions of PFLAG, its Board of Directors or members. We reserve the right to edit any submissions. Priority is given to original work by the membership.

**Send submissions, comments and photos to:**

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on



# MORE GREAT PICTURES FROM THIS SUMMER'S EVENTS



## PFLAG DUPAGE

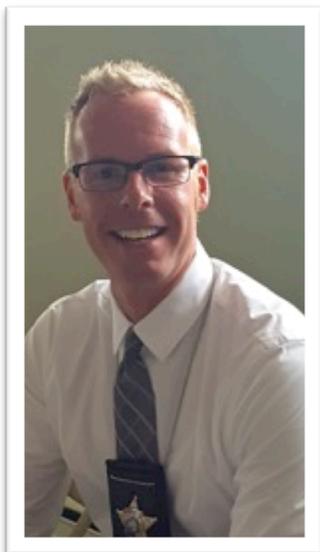


# WHAT'S HAPPENING NOW!!

## HINSDALE CHAPTER

By Marcia Prichason

The August meeting of PFLAG Hinsdale hosted Detective Lee Catavu, LGBT liaison for the Aurora Police Department. Detective Catavu has the distinction of being only one of three LGBT liaisons in the State of Illinois. He is very proud of the Aurora Police Department for supporting the LGBT community.



Detective Catavu stated that he has always been comfortable in his own skin and has personally never experienced any problems as a gay male in either his personal or professional life. He started attending Fox Valley PFLAG because he wanted to be a resource for those struggling with their sexual orientation or sexual identity and, also, because he wanted to become a liaison in his Police Department. Initially, he served as an informal liaison and, after training the liaison officer in Joliet, was recently appointed liaison in Aurora.

As the LGBT liaison, Detective Catavu speaks to recruits at the Police Academy, supports police officers who are gay, and presents at High School GSA's, College Criminal Justice classes, and PFLAG chapters. Clearly accepted by his peers, he also serves as a Union representative. His major focus is training and supporting Police Officers so that they acknowledge, respect, and treat with dignity members of the LGBT community.

Detective Catavu stated that a Police Department should reflect the community it serves and, while it is easy to determine if there are women and minorities represented, it is not so easy to point out who is gay. Therefore, having an LGBT liaison is an important aspect of facilitating greater understanding of the unique problems of the gay community.

## in Our Chapters?

Acknowledging the long history of Police prejudice and violence against the LGBT community, Detective Catavu stated that as society has changed, so has the Police. He notes that those who have authority and power must be careful when dealing with the public. Citing the Stonewall riot of 1969, Detective Catavu believes that every



encounter presents a unique challenge; having the potential of defining a career by setting off a movement that changes the course of history.

From the use of the preferred pronoun to understanding the hesitation of an LGBT individual to come forward, Detective Catavu strives to improve relationships and help members of the LGBT community feel compassion and understanding from the Aurora Police Department. He serves as a positive example of how one person can make a difference.

Our September speaker is Jamie Black, a transgender actor and speaker who has been involved with Transformative: The Talk Show.

## Deerfield CHAPTER

By Janet Svatos

Our monthly meeting was held on Thursday, August 11. This meeting was one of our more intimate gatherings. We did not have a speaker scheduled, and we had a small group of eleven people attending. This gave us the opportunity to spend more time than usual going around the circle and telling our stories. Even though many of us

had heard the stories before, it was great to hear more details about everyone's coming out process as individuals and families, and the twists and turns our lives have taken since coming out. The group included three new members who did not know what to expect and were a bit apprehensive. It brought back memories for the regulars of how it felt the first time they came and how quickly one feels accepted. Given the intimate nature of the meeting, the new members had a great opportunity to receive the support they were seeking.

We discussed the upcoming "Cultivating Respect" conference scheduled for October 15<sup>th</sup>, which is described elsewhere in this issue. There seemed to be a lot of interest in attending the conference.

Before we broke for refreshments we viewed a short inspirational movie created by the HRC (Human Rights Campaign) about fathers supporting their transgender children (<http://www.hrc.org/videos/dads-for-transgender-equality>). We then broke into two small groups, which provided the new members a better opportunity to discuss their issues. Although it was a small gathering, it was a very rewarding meeting for those who attended.

## McHenry CHAPTER

By Toni Weaver

It was our honor to welcome Brian Johnson, newly-appointed CEO of Equality Illinois, to our August chapter meeting. Since taking over in May, Brian has been on a listening tour throughout Illinois to acquaint himself with the needs, concerns, and priorities of the LGBT demographic and their allies. Brian brought his warmth and personality to the group, charming everyone who was there!

We are again looking forward to collaborating with our Regional Office of Education and welcoming a new partner, the McHenry County Mental Health Board, as we present another workshop, this one geared for school psychologists, guidance counselors, and school social workers, set for October 31. Dr. Bonnie Estensen, director of Guided Path Psychological Services, and AJ Jennings, Curriculum and Professional Development Director at Illinois Safe Schools Alliance, will provide valuable assistance to these school professionals particularly in the area of working with transgender and gender non-conforming students.

## Tinley Park CHAPTER

By Deborah Medina

PFLAG Tinley Park is going strong with new attendees each month. We're approaching our 1st year anniversary with excitement and anticipation of new activities in the coming year.

Brian Johnson, CEO of Equality, IL, attended our August meeting. We were honored to have him at our meeting to discuss our questions and concerns of the LGBT community in the south suburbs. Everyone in attendance commented on how enjoyable the discussions were.

Afterwards, we had time to share our stories of discovery and concern, exciting adventures and everyday life, covering an array of emotions from sadness to humor. This time is especially important to all members of PFLAG. We're happy to be able to have a PFLAG chapter in the southland.

## DuPage CHAPTER

By Bernadette & Ron Whitfield

At our August meeting, we were honored to welcome Jerry Pohlen of the Chicago Review Press. Jerry is an editor and travel writer whose travel writing has appeared in the Chicago Reader, Readers Digest, and TimeOut Chicago. He is the author of *Gay & Lesbian History for Kids*, the *Oddball* series, and *Progressive Nation*. He has been a regular contributor on travel and culture for the *Eight Forty-Eight Show* on WBEZ, Chicago's NPR affiliate. Jerry read some selections from his history book for kids (and adults!), added background on each, and shared his journey. Also, we had a lively question and answer session with him. You can purchase Jerry's book, which deserves to be in every public and school library, at [http://www.chicagoreviewpress.com/gay---lesbian-history-for-kids-products-9781613730829.php?page\\_id=21](http://www.chicagoreviewpress.com/gay---lesbian-history-for-kids-products-9781613730829.php?page_id=21) or Amazon.com. You can also request a visit by Jerry at <http://www.chicagoreviewpress.com/request-author-visit-pages-492.php?author=204203>.

Mark your calendars for our September 18<sup>th</sup> meeting. Our guests will be Theresa Volpe and Mercedes Santos. They live in Rogers Park with their two children, Ava and Jaidon. When Jaidon was hospitalized near death due to kidney failure, hospital administrators barred Theresa from entering unless she identified herself as a

"stepmother," telling her Mercedes was already inside and Jaidon could only have one "real" mother. They told their story at the Springfield March for Equality in 2013 and were instrumental in the passage of Marriage Equality in Illinois.

**Monday, September 5th.** We will, for the first time, be participating in Naperville's Last Fling Parade on Labor Day. Come march with us and represent our chapter and our commitment to the DuPage Community.

Place: Starting point is Naperville North High School, 899 Mill St, Naperville, IL 60563

Time: Forming 9:00 am.

Date: Monday September 5, 2016

Contact: Tom Rajcan, coordinator

Email: [tomrajcan@hotmail.com](mailto:tomrajcan@hotmail.com)

Phone: [630-220-7777](tel:630-220-7777) (Please leave a message with your contact information -- email and phone -- if you no one answers.)

Please let Tom know who is planning to participate so that we have enough water and snacks. In the past, the Wheaton July 4th Parade has been cancelled due to bad weather.

Please help us make a good impression in the Naperville community!

## Rockford CHAPTER

*By Heidi Huntress*

We are very happy to report that we are getting great turnouts for our meetings. New faces every meeting, and we've begun to have a share time/open forum discussion to close out our meetings. We're getting to know our members and are also getting great responses and ideas for future events and projects.

We're working on a system to reach out to local businesses for Safe Space knowledge and have also begun work on forming a Medical Committee to find doctors in our area who are familiar and accepting of patients who identify LGBT or are unsure of their true gender identity. We have made a contact at Crusader Clinic to help us get the ball rolling!

We had great success at the Library Summer Reading Kickoff Fair and at City Market where we were gatekeepers...2000+ people from the Rockford area attended these events and we saw genuine interest from many people and our Facebook Page is growing by the

day; 300+ Likes since its launch.

A few of us in the group will be doing GSA training to start helping out in our local middle & high schools. I'm most excited about this particular aspect as I feel our best work will be done by being in the school environment.

Our Chapter President Phyllis has just returned from Action Camp with her son, our next meeting is Monday and we are all so excited to hear what they learned while they were there!

## Downers Grove CHAPTER

*By Gloria Walsh*

Our August meeting included a lot of new faces to the group, which was wonderful! Our speaker talked about college searches including some information about looking for LGBT-friendly campuses. Our next meeting will be Wednesday, September 14 at 7 p.m. at First Congregational UCC, 1047 Curtiss St. in Downers Grove. Our speaker will be Aimee Bowman, who will talk about being a consumer advocate by using and supporting businesses with LGBT-empowering policies and initiatives. Join us!

## Oak Park CHAPTER

*By Nancy Johnson*

The Oak Park chapter raised \$270 by helping OPALGA with Donut Days at the Farmers' Market! Not bad for only 3 of us helping for a few hours. Next year we hope to have even more volunteers.

We are looking forward to Barrie Fest on September 10. We've had a table at every Barrie Fest since they were started when Barrie Park reopened in 2003!

We don't have a speaker for our August meeting, but on September 25 we are expecting Imani Rupert-Gordon, the new Executive Director of Affinity. They have moved to new offices in Bronzeville and we're interested to hear what they are doing now and what are their plans for the future.

The Chicago LGBTQ+ International Film Festival is Sept. 22-29, 2016 <http://reelingfilmfestival.org/2016/>. The

Festival is scaled down from what it has been, but I think they were trying for quality over quantity.

I've seen 3 of the films all of them documentaries. Last Men Standing is about several gay men who were diagnosed with AIDS back in the 80s or 90s. I recall we all assumed that it was a death sentence back then, and it was for so very many. But there were some who were able to live reasonably happy, healthy lives. Clip: <http://projects.sfchronicle.com/2016/living-with-aids/documentary/>



Memories of a Penitent Heart. A young woman filmmaker sets out to discover the history of her uncle who died 25 years ago from AIDS. She uncovers the interesting and sad story of a talented young man who was struggling with his gay identity in the face of the disapproval of the Catholic Church and his family who refused to accept him. Clip: <http://www.penitentheart.com/#about-section>

Southwest of Salem: The Story of the San Antonio Four. This is about four young lesbians who were accused of the vilest sort of sexual abuse of young children. The prosecution relied on the "recovered memories" of the children. This was probably the last of the "recovered memories" cases, and in the face of facts, these young women were tried and convicted and sent to prison. Homophobia largely convicted these women. It was a horrible miscarriage of justice. If you can only see one film, I recommend this one. Clip: <http://www.southwestofsalem.com/>

The last documentary of interest is Real Boy about a young transgender teen that is trying to discover how to be a man and fulfill his dream to be a songwriter and musician. Since it's the one I haven't seen, I'm planning to attend. Clip: <http://www.realboymovie.com/#/>

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By Debbie Medina

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Our August meeting was attended by *Brian Johnson, CEO of Equality, IL*. We were honored to have him at our meeting to discuss our questions and concerns of the LGBT community in the south suburbs. Everyone in attendance commented on how enjoyable the discussions were.

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## PTI Chicago CHAPTER

By Arlene Collins

PTI's August meeting welcomed Officer Jose Rios from the Chicago Police Dept., 19th District. Officer Rios is the LGBT Liaison between the Police Dept. and the LGBT community in Chicago. He has been a police officer for 19 years and served as Liaison for much of that time. He's a longstanding friend of PTI Chicago. He is the only liaison officer for LGBT in Chicago. There are a number of proud gay officers in CPD, including Jose. Presently, there are 4 trans officers.

The Chicago Police Dept. adopted a general order in 2012 that mandates the respectful treatment of transgender detainees. The policy had been a major goal of more than 30 community groups, which pushed for the order both within CPD and through a proposed city ordinance. Trans detainees must be assigned a cell of the gender they identify with. In the general order it was explained what it means to be transgender, how a person presents during stages of transition and how people should be addressed and treated fairly. Officer Rios agreed that more training needs to be given to CPD officers. He answered many questions from the group on safety for LGBT and what their trans kids need to do if they are pulled over by the police. One of the questions we asked is: "Can police culture lose its transphobia?". It may take some time, but the CPD are moving in the right direction.

After Officer Rios addressed our group, we continued with our regular meeting of sharing and discussing how we can add to the number of allies and why its so important to be an ally.

**IT'S NOT TOO LATE TO BECOME A MEMBER...SUPPORT PFLAG**

By becoming a PFLAG member, you will help provide support, education and advocacy. All information we collect from you on this form will remain confidential, and we will only share it within PFLAG.

Membership runs from October 1 to September 30; no partial-year membership is available.

Please check:

New Membership  Renewal Membership  Donation



(Name) \_\_\_\_\_

(Date) \_\_\_\_\_

(Address) \_\_\_\_\_

(City) (State) (ZIP) \_\_\_\_\_

(Preferred Phone  Home  Cell) \_\_\_\_\_

(E-mail Address) \_\_\_\_\_

(Notes or In Memory of  In Honor of) \_\_\_\_\_

**MEMBERSHIP LEVEL:**

PFLAG Superhero \$500+  Parents Flag Waver \$100  Household/Individual Membership \$45

PFLAG Hero \$250  Supporting Membership \$60  Donation \$ \_\_\_\_\_

**SELECT A CHAPTER:**

Donations are tax deductible to the fullest extent allowed by law.

Hinsdale  Aurora/Fox Valley  McHenry County  McHenry Parents of Transgendered Individuals  Deerfield  Chicago/Metro  Chicago Parents of Transgendered Individuals  Joliet  Kankakee/Will/Iroquois  Palatine  Oak Park  DeKalb County  DuPage  Downers Grove  Tinley Park

Check enclosed payable to PFLAG

Please charge my credit card ( Visa  MasterCard  Amex  Discover)

(Credit Card #) \_\_\_\_\_

(Exp Date DD/MM) \_\_\_\_\_ (CVV - V/MC/D 3 digits on the back - AX 4 digits on the front) \_\_\_\_\_

(Name on Card) \_\_\_\_\_

Please return form to your chapter representative or mail form and to:

**PFLAG Membership P.O. Box 734, Elmhurst, IL 60126**

**PFLAG Aurora/Fox Valley**

Meetings held 2<sup>nd</sup> Sunday – 2 pm  
 New England Congregational Church  
 406 W Galena Blvd, Aurora 60506  
 pflagaurorafoxvalley@pflagillinois.com

**PFLAG Metro Chicago**

Meetings held 3<sup>rd</sup> Sunday – 2 pm  
 Center on Halsted (Senior Room)  
 3656 N Halsted, Chicago 60613  
 pflagchicagometro@pflagillinois

**PFLAG Deerfield**

Meetings held 2<sup>nd</sup> Thursday – 7:15 pm  
 Congregation BJBE  
 1201 Lake Cook Rd, Deerfield 60015  
 pflagdeerfield@pflagillinois.org

**PFLAG/PTI Sycamore**

Meetings held LAST Tuesday – 7 pm  
 Federated Church of Sycamore  
 612 W State St  
 Sycamore, IL 60178  
 pflagdekalbcounty@pflagillinois.org

**PFLAG DuPage**

Meetings held 3<sup>rd</sup> Sunday – 2 pm  
 St Paul Lutheran Church  
 515 S Wheaton Ave, Wheaton 60187  
 pflagdupage@yahoo.com  
 www.pflagdupage.org

**PFLAG Tinley Park**

Meetings held 2<sup>nd</sup> Sunday – 2-4 pm  
 Zion Lutheran Church  
 17100 69<sup>th</sup> Ave.  
 Tinley Park, IL 60477

**PFLAG Downers Grove**

Meetings held 2<sup>nd</sup> Wednesday – 7p.m.  
 First Congregational UCC  
 1047 Curtiss  
 Downers Grove, IL 60515

**PFLAG Hinsdale**

Meetings held 1<sup>st</sup> Sunday – 2 pm  
 Unitarian Church Hinsdale  
 11 W Maple, Hinsdale 60521  
 pflaghinsdale@pflagillinois

**PFLAG Joliet**

Contact Maria Prekop  
 maria.prekop@navigant.com

**PFLAG Will, Kankakee, Iroquois**

Meetings held 3<sup>rd</sup> Sunday, 2-4 pm  
 1045 W River St  
 Kankakee, IL  
 plagkankakee@pflagillinois.org

**PFLAG McHenry**

Meetings held 2<sup>nd</sup> Tuesday – 7 pm  
 Tree of Life Unitarian Church  
 5603 W Bull Valley Rd  
 McHenry 60050  
 pflagwoodstockmchenry@pflagillinois.org

**PFLAG Oak Park**

Meetings held 4<sup>th</sup> Sunday – 3 pm  
 First United Church  
 848 Lake St, Oak Park 60304  
 pflagoakpark@pflagillinois.org

**Parents of Transgender (Chicago)**

Meetings are held the 2<sup>nd</sup> Thursday – 7 pm  
 Center on Halsted  
 3656 N Halsted, Chicago 60613  
 parentsoftransgender@pflagillinois.org

**Parents of Transgender (McHenry) – NEW DAY**

Meetings are held the **4<sup>th</sup> Wednesday** – 7 p.m.  
 Tree of Life Unitarian Church  
 5603 W Bull Valley Rd, McHenry 60050  
 flynnmb12@gmail.com  
 marygenzler@hotmail.com

**Parents of Transgender (North Shore)**

Meetings are held the 3<sup>rd</sup> Sunday – 6 p.m.  
 Winnetka Presbyterian Church  
 1255 Winnetka Rd, Winnetka, IL

**PFLAG Rockford - NEW**

Meetings are held the 1<sup>st</sup> Monday – 6:30 pm  
 Rockford Public Library  
 215 N Wyman St, Rockford, IL  
 (use entrance off Mulberry St.)

**Please join us for any chapter meeting.**

**If you are not comfortable meeting in a large group, arrangements can be made to meet one-on-one.**

**Contact any one of our chapters for more information.**