School is back in session and with it comes the challenge of supporting our LGBTQ+ students. We might be tempted to believe that life for gay, lesbian, and bisexual students has improved significantly with all of the gains that have been made, but that’s simply not true. For a detailed report of the findings of the Center for Disease Control (CDC) please look for the article on our PFLAG Northern Illinois Face Book page. (You have “liked” the page, right?)

If LGB students are still facing a myriad of issues at school, imagine what life is like for transgender students! Last year we witnessed the debacle of Palatine School District 211 and the formation of the group Parents for Privacy. Now we see the issue of bathroom/locker room access being raised by a lone wolf board member in U-46 (Elgin). PFLAG must stand ready to respond, joining the Illinois Safe Schools Alliance, Youth Outlook, 360 Youth Services, and the ACLU in combating this affront to our trans kids.

I simply cannot urge you strongly enough to attend the “Cultivating Respect” workshop being presented by our PFLAG Regional Director, Brooke Smith, on Saturday, October 15, in Wheaton. To register, go to www.eventbrite.com and search for “Cultivating Respect.” Brooke will arm us with the tools we need to be more successful advocates as we go into our local schools. Only 33 people have signed up to date, but we know that there are more PFLAG members than that! Come for the camaraderie and the sharing of ideas. Be part of the conversation. Be a part of PFLAG’s mission to support, educate, and advocate. We need each and every one of you. Without you, PFLAG is diminished.

IT’S TIME TO RENEW OR BEGIN A MEMBERSHIP IN PFLAG! It’s a “Matter of the Heart”! Please be generous in support of our National office, the Council, and your local chapter. It’s fast and easy! Simply go to www.pflagillinois.org and click on “Membership.” Renew on-line or by mail, but please, just join us. We need you.
PFLAG is a non-profit, tax-exempt, all volunteer, local community-based organization of parents, relatives and friends of gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender 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:

OPEN DOORS Editor
og4equality@gmail.com

Editorial Board

Editor-in-Chief:
Maureen Goldin

Newsletter Team:
Arlene Collins and Jackie Frett

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www.pflagillinois.org
www.pflag.org

Be sure to like
PFLAG Council of Northern IL

“Cultivating Respect”:
A Workshop Presented by our PFLAG National Office

Our Safe Schools: Cultivating Respect workshop continues the tradition of pairing PFLAG community activists and leaders with proven strategies to improve school environments. As a result of the training PFLAG members will be ready to go directly into schools with community resources, training for the entire staff, model policy, and creative programs that address bullying in a comprehensive and effective manner.

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 you can leverage.
- Training on 3 specific programs that can be implemented in the school community.

Saturday, October 15
8:30 AM – 4:00 PM
Hosted by PFLAG DuPage

St. Paul Lutheran Church
515 S. Wheaton Ave.
Wheaton, IL 60187

Register through Eventbrite (http://www.eventbrite.com), and search for “Cultivating Respect.”
HINSDALE CHAPTER
By Eileen Matthies & Barb Medley

Our September meeting was held Labor Day weekend, and our guest speaker was Jamie Black. He is transgender and talked about his experiences transitioning from a female to a male. He is also an actor and has produced a talk show that he’s submitted to a TV station. He mentioned that they are considering airing it on a regular basis.

In October, we’re viewing a documentary during our meeting: *The Year We Thought About Love*. It is an insightful look into the life struggles of LGBT youth.

Our November speaker is Christopher Nolan. He is the co-founder and lead of Rush University Health System’s LGBTQ+ Health Committee and sits on the system’s Diversity Leadership Council. We’re also beginning our holiday project – collecting toiletries, candies and warm socks, gloves and hats for The Crib shelter run by the Night Ministry. We’ll fill Christmas stockings with donations during our December potluck celebration.

In Our Chapters?

welcome packet and distribute it to our all our members present, so we could better understand the terms, the challenges of both parents and kids, and to answer any questions that may surface. We are so lucky to have amongst our number, members who have been on the ‘front lines’ of transitioning. They alone were able to give a most insightful, direct, and eye opening explanation of THEIR experiences and advise our parents in a way that is so invaluable.

On more than one occasion, we have learned that sometimes, just having the luxury of time, we learn so much from each other….even more than when we have a speaker! So thank you to our member!! We really appreciate your being there to better educate and inform us all.

We begin our membership drive next month, so all were reminded to bring your checkbooks!!!

Deerfield CHAPTER
By Sue Ginsberg & Barbara Levie

Unfortunately, our speaker canceled at the last minute, but I thought it would be a great time to share some of the ‘hard copy’ information that I have gathered, thanks to Toni Weaver and Arlene Collins, on the subject of our transgender youth. We, at PFLAG Deerfield, have welcomed a good number of parents of transgender youth and so Barb and I have sought to put together a welcome packet for them, as we do for our parents of gay and lesbian youth. We have noticed that whenever we have a speaker who comes to speak on subjects relevant to our trans community, our numbers grow for the evening and so do the questions of the parents of our gay and lesbian children.

So in an effort to further our own education, I chose to duplicate some of the information we put into our

McHenry CHAPTER
By Toni Weaver

PFLAG McHenry welcomed actor, comedian, and producer Jamie Black, a transgender man who willingly shares his coming out story and experiences with PFLAG chapters across the greater Chicagoland area. Speaking in an engaging manner, Jamie captivated his audience and sparked a lively conversation as his listeners, especially the parents of trans kids, plied him with questions. Jamie may be contacted by e-mail: jblack.transformative.tv@gmail.com.

Michael Oboza, a bisexual activist, will make a presentation on bisexuality at our October meeting.

DuPage CHAPTER
By Bernadette & Ron Whitfield

We had a wonderful meeting on Sunday, September 19, 2016. Nearly 50 people attended, many for the first time. A
huge factor was the visit of our guest speakers — Theresa Volpe and Mercedes Santos, and their family. They shared their compelling story with us.

Theresa is a writer, author, editor, and, with her wife, Mercedes, co-founder of BrainWorx Studio Inc., an educational publishing development company. She is an LGBT family advocate, and mother of three. The Santos-Volpe family was instrumental in the fight for marriage equality in Illinois. They were plaintiffs in the LAMBDA Legal lawsuit filed against the State of Illinois. Theresa and Mercedes shared their story about how they testified before the Illinois Senate in support of the Illinois Marriage Equality Bill and lobbied legislators in Springfield. In recognition of their efforts, Theresa and Mercedes were among the first same-sex couples to be married in Illinois.

Theresa also serves on the Board of Directors of One Million Kids for Equality (http://www.OneMillionKids.com), which works to empower LGBTQ youth and the children of LGBTQ parents to share their stories to promote social and political change. She is Managing Editor for the online publication Proud Youth (http://ProudYouth.com/) and an advisor for the Chicago Children’s Museum’s LGBTQ Inclusion Initiative (Chicago Children’s Museum).

This year’s 360 Youth Outlook Family Picnic was very successful. About 75 people enjoyed hamburgers, hotdogs, salads, desserts, and the comradery. We also participated in Naperville’s Last Fling Parade on Labor Day. We had about 25 people marching with us. We are looking forward to participating again next year.

St. Matthew UCC in Wheaton sent an email announcing that, with 91.5% approval of their members, they are an open and affirming congregation. Their pastor, Allan Mothershed, says that they are glad to do weddings of LGBT persons and to support parents and family members struggling with any issues. The pastor has worked as a psychotherapist with LGBT individuals and their families. Their awesome Open and Affirming Statement was read by a parishioner who attended our meeting:

At St. Matthew United Church of Christ in Wheaton, Illinois, we believe that God is love. Following the example of Jesus, we strive to live by the great commandments to love the Lord our God with all our heart, strength, soul and mind, and our neighbors as ourselves. We affirm that our neighbors are people of all races, ethnicities, physical and mental abilities, family configurations, sexual orientations, gender identities and economic conditions. In Christ’s love, each person is welcome into the full life and ministry of our church. No matter who you are or where you are on life’s journey, you are welcome and accepted here at St. Matthew United Church of Christ.

It’s been heartwarming to hear from St. Matthew and other churches in the area the news about their decisions to be open and affirming congregations and their desire to learn more about the LGBTQIA community. With the help of such congregations there is increased hope that minds and hearts will continue to change in support of the LGBTQIA community. Another of those churches is the First Church of Lombard United Church of Christ. They are looking better understand the transgender community.

Downers Grove CHAPTER

By Gloria Walsh

PFLAG Downers Grove met on Sept. 14. Don Donohue gave a great presentation to the group about the many reasons membership in PFLAG is truly important. Aimee Bowman gave an interactive presentation on companies and where the Human Rights Campaign ranks them. An interesting discussion followed about using our consumer power to support LGBT friendly establishments.

Our next meeting will be Wednesday, October 12, 7pm at first Congregational UCC, 1047 Curtiss in Downers Grove. We look forward to hearing John and Mary Ann Hickey of the DuPage chapter share their story, from their son’s coming out to their lives as advocates in the LGBT community.
As LGBT people of faith, we are called to live the truth of our full selves. Come and be inspired by stories of courage, joy, and love. Join us and be supported by other LGBT Catholics who are proud to celebrate their spirituality and sexuality – all in an intimate, relaxed, and elegant setting.

**WHEN:** Saturday, October 22, 2016, 4-7pm

**WHERE:** Nookies Edgewater – 1100 W. Bryn Mawr Ave, Chicago, IL 60660

**SUGGESTED DONATION:** $20.00 (includes 1 drink and casual hor d'oeuvres)


This event is organized by Dignity/Chicago’s Spiritual Growth and Education Ministry. For more information, please contact dignitychicago@gmail.com or visit www.dignity-chicago.org.

Would you like to see more events like this one? Your support of time and treasure helps Dignity/Chicago build programs like this one to serve the Chicago LGBT community. Donate or volunteer today!
It’s a Matter of the Heart

In many ways, PFLAG is the extended family of the LGBTQ community. As such, our hearts rejoiced when marriage equality became the law of the land, swelled with the growing public affirmation of LGBTQ people and encouraged by the increase in the number of openly gay elected officials influencing our future. Our hearts beat strong as we continue to strive for workplace equality and greater respect for all. While we might be disheartened when we consider the work still to be done, fearful of losing what we have gained or outraged after Orlando, we must remember what is at the “heart of the matter”, to make life better in every way possible for all LGBTQ persons.

It’s more important than ever to continue to fight, to be vigilant, to advocate for justice, to educate an ill informed public, to influence change, to stand and be counted, to let our voices be heard, and to be there for each other!

It’s a matter of pride -- and it’s a matter of the heart!

Please join us -- or consider renewing your membership in PFLAG! Our membership year begins Oct. 1

Your membership donation of $45.00 goes a long way to educate, influence change and provide support. Shared by your local chapter, the Northern Illinois Council of PFLAG chapters and the national PFLAG organization, your contribution helps to:

- Support important community and national outreach efforts, work with local businesses and school districts and celebrate in the Chicago Pride parade and other local parades
- Run our help line and insure our chapters can provide meaningful support
- Maintain our website, print brochures and educational materials

Because the need is great, and there is so much more to do, please consider increasing your donation beyond the standard membership fee to help us further strengthen and broaden our efforts.

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<th>Supporting Membership</th>
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<td>Parents Flag Waver</td>
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It's fast and easy!

Simply go to www.pflagillinois.org and click on GIVE. Select a chapter and membership donation level.

or complete an enrollment form, mailing it and your check to: PFLAG Council of Northern Illinois, P.O. Box 734, Elmhurst, IL 60126.

Please stand with us ... It’s a matter of the heart!
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+   ___ PFLAG Hero $250
___ Parents Flag Waver $100   ___ Supporting Membership $60
___ Household/Individual Membership $45   ___ Donation $_________

SELECT A CHAPTER:

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

___ Aurora/Fox Valley  ___ Hinsdale  ___ PTI Chicago
___ Chicago Metro  ___ Joliet  ___ PTI McHenry
___ Deerfield  ___ Kankakee/Will/Iroquois  ___ PTI North Shore
___ DeKalb  ___ McHenry  ___ Rockford
___ DuPage  ___ Oak Park  ___ Sycamore / PTI
___ Downers Grove  ___ Palatine  ___ Tinley Park

PAYMENT:

___ 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 2nd Sunday – 2 pm
New England Congregational Church
406 W Galena Blvd, Aurora 60506
pflagaurorafoxvalley@pflagillinois.com

PFLAG Metro Chicago
Meetings held 3rd Sunday – 2 pm
Center on Halsted (Senior Room)
3656 N Halsted, Chicago 60613
pflagchicagometro@pflagillinois.org

PFLAG Deerfield
Meetings held 2nd 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 3rd Sunday – 2 pm
St Paul Lutheran Church
515 S Wheaton Ave, Wheaton 60187
pflagdupage@yahoo.com
www.pflagdupage.org

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

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

PFLAG Hinsdale
Meetings held 1st Sunday – 2 pm
Unitarian Church Hinsdale
11 W Maple, Hinsdale 60521
pflaghinsdale@pflagillinois.org

PFLAG Joliet
Contact Maria Prekop
maria.prekop@navigant.com

PFLAG Will, Kankakee, Iroquois
Meetings held 3rd Sunday, 2-4 pm
1045 W River St
Kankakee, IL
plagkankakee@pflagillinois.org

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

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

Parents of Transgender (Chicago)
Meetings are held the 2nd Thursday – 7 pm
Center on Halsted
3656 N Halsted, Chicago 60613
parentsoftransgender@pflagillinois.org

Parents of Transgender (McHenry) – NEW DAY
Meetings are held the 4th Wednesday – 7 p.m.
Tree of Life Unitarian Church
5603 W Bull Valley Rd, McHenry 60050
flynmb12@gmail.com
marygenzler@hotmail.com

Parents of Transgender (North Shore)
Meetings are held the 3rd Sunday – 6 p.m.
Winnetka Presbyterian Church
1255 Winnetka Rd, Winnetka, IL

PFLAG Rockford - NEW
Meetings are held the 1st 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.