



OPEN DOORS

The Newsletter of the Northern Illinois PFLAG Chapters

President's Column

South Side Shows Their Pride!

This past weekend I had the pleasure to join with other PFLAG volunteers and participate in a wonderful event at Oakwood beach called *Fahrenheit Chicago - Pride South on the Lake*; AIDS Foundation of Chicago and Equality Illinois organized the event.

The weather held out and it was a great day for the many community sponsors with tents lining the perimeter of the park to the east and west, with the main entertainment stage to the south. The event had headliner entertainment including CAKES DA KILLA and COR-ECE as well a variety of entertainers from the Baton Club and even a dance-off contest. The event drew lots of participants from the local community and all around Chicago. The day was filled with button making and conversation; laughs and hugs. We received a warm welcome as we engaged with folks throughout the day sharing our stories and hearing theirs, building bonds and seeing the real need for more support resources in the Chicagoland area.

The day underscored for me just how fortunate I am to have an amazing PFLAG chapter within a reasonable distance from my home. This is a privilege not available to everyone. I am happy to say we made many contacts at the event and have a long list of email addresses of folks interested in knowing more about PFLAG. Everyone we talked to seemed to see the value of a PFLAG family for themselves or their loved ones.

Sunday night, I couldn't help but recall the Starfish story and feel that this day, we made a difference.

PFLAG helps open hearts and minds. But it also has an empowering effect. Enabling folks to find their voice multiplies the impact through the magic of compounding. Seeing the love and connections made at *Fahrenheit Chicago* was heart-warming and it gives me hope that we might be able to someday extend the reach and benefit of PFLAG. Hopefully, with some persistence and the support of our local chapters, we can help plant more seeds that can one day grow into fruitful PFLAG chapters in more communities.

Let's continue to keep our eyes open for opportunities and to make a difference every day.

In Love and Solidarity,

John

PS- Special Thanks to Steve, Rita, Ron, Gail, Paul and /Mary Ann for hosting our table!

The Starfish Story

An old man was walking on the beach one morning after a storm. In the distance, he could see someone moving like a dancer. As he came closer, he saw that it was a young woman picking up starfish and gently throwing them into the ocean. "Young lady, why are you throwing starfish into the ocean?"

"The sun is up, and the tide is going out, and if I do not throw them in they will die," she said.

"But young lady, do you not realize that there are many miles of beach and thousands of starfish? You cannot possibly make a difference."

The young woman listened politely, then bent down, picked up another starfish and threw it into the sea. "It made a difference for that one."

~Adapted from the original by Loren Eiseley

LIFE'S A DANCE

Shared by Bernadette Whitfield at a meeting earlier this year.

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

Website Guru: Bonnie Clemens

www.pflagillinois.org

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www.pflagillinois.org/transgender

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on

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PFLAG volunteers managing the table at the
Fahrenheit Chicago Pride South on the Lake event

ANGLES *is now*
YOUTH SERVICES OF GLENVIEW/NORTHBROOK

Please note that Angles youth program is now part of Youth Services of Glenview/Northbrook.

Contact is Lizzy Appleby

847.724.2620 x121

lizzy.appleby@ysgn.org

A link to the most up to date programs offerings can be found [HERE](#).

The organization is still in the process of updating their website with current info, so please contact Lizzy for any questions you may have about who they are, what they offer and how they might be able to assist your needs.





McHenry CHAPTER

By Toni Weaver

We switched gears at our August meeting at the request of several of our members. Because many people who later join McHenry PTI begin their journey by attending PFLAG, our meetings have been

heavily transgender-focused. However, we set aside August to focus on the stories told by parents who have gay sons or lesbian daughters and on stories shared by our LGBT members. Since we ran out of time before we ran out of stories, this conversation will be continued next month.

That being said, there will also be a presentation given by Rose Iverson, a chapter member and nurse practitioner, on PrEP (pre-exposure prophylaxis), the drug regimen taken as a precaution in case one might be exposed to the HIV virus.

With the advent of a new academic year, we are receiving invitations to make presentations to local GSAs, and we plan to continue our tradition of giving every GSA in the area a Pride flag as well as our PFLAG resources.

In conjunction with the McHenry County Regional Office of Education, we will be involved with four workshops during the 2017/2018 school year. Our target audience includes school support staff, superintendents, administration, GSA advisers, athletic directors, and classroom staff, each workshop with its specific focus. Our presenters come primarily from Illinois Safe Schools, but we also feature panels made up of school staff and parents.



A joint project of the Crystal Lake HS GSA and PFLAG McHenry. Both 360 Youth Services in Naperville and the Sex and Gender Development Program at Lurie's will be recipients of these beautiful scarves.

Deerfield CHAPTER

By Janet Svatos

We were honored to welcome Kyle Bullock, MSW, a Senior Behavioral Research Coordinator at the Division of Adolescent Medicine at Ann and Robert H. Lurie Children's Hospital of Chicago (kbullock@luriechildrens.org).

With a master's degree in Social Work from the University of Chicago, Kyle has worked with LGBTQ youth since 2011 when he managed youth services at the LGBTQ Center of Long Beach, CA. Kyle's greatest achievement while working at the LGBTQ Center was creating "An Educator's Guide to Transgender Students" for the Long Beach Unified School District. For his work with the LGBTQ community, Kyle was honored as a Grand Marshall in the Long Beach Pride Parade in 2014.

At our meeting, Kyle presented a slide show providing a snapshot of what Lurie offers in the way of support for LGBTQ youth through gender and sexual development programs. Bullock expanded on the slides by way of ongoing remarks about the efficacy Lurie's programs and the many options it offers. Research is also a priority at Lurie. Bullock estimated that HIV prevention is 95% effective for teens who avail themselves of Lurie's testing and treatment. He described a 'wise' pill (enabled by a pill container with electronic connectivity that records use and provides reminders to take medications). Lurie is a participant in a National Institute of Health Program with a grant to develop information on HIV. Laurie's Division of Adolescent Medicine provides diagnostic assessments, individual and family counseling and group therapy. It specializes in gender identity, sex development, adolescent sexuality, transgender health, community outreach, and supporting adolescents and young adults living with HIV/AIDS. It is no wonder that Lurie is the first resource we suggest when parents of transgender children come to our meetings!

Hinsdale CHAPTER

By Marsha Prichason

Hinsdale PFLAG hosted Kim Hunt, Executive Director of Pride Action Tank on Sunday, August 6th. Ms. Hunt related that Pride Action Tank had its genesis in the marriage equality movement; those working on that issue wanted to make sure the momentum and energy continued with other issues concerning the LGBTQ community. Examples of this include their work toward changing Chicago's building code so all single stall bathrooms are labeled gender neutral, gun violence prevention, and raising

money and visibility for homeless youth, 40% of whom are LGBTQ. In 2014, this highly motivated and invested group held its first summit to seek ways to assist homeless youth in Boystown. As a result, the first funding they sought and received was for places for homeless youth to safely store their personal belonging. Since then, Pride Action Tank has taken on many projects of a significant scale. One illustration of this is their commitment to bringing “tiny homes” to Chicago. To accomplish their goal of making tangible things happen, Pride Action Tank partners with colleges, businesses, not for profits, and service providers. Pride Action Tank is an organization dedicated to making life better for LGBTQ people with measurable outcomes and real results.

We will not have a speaker in September because our meeting falls on the Labor Day holiday. We will, of course, have a meeting and be available for support and discussion.

DuPage CHAPTER

By Bernadette & Ron Whitfield

We had another well-attended meeting that included 4 new people. We began with a memorial of the tragic deaths in Charlottesville. Our education program was our own Linda Pierpoint and John Pierpoint. They discussed Mel White's book *Stranger at the Gate* and related it to their journey of friendship, marriage, children, divorce, hurt, depression, and renewed friendship. Their talk was deeply personal and very moving. We thank them for their courage and hard work on their presentation.

On July 24, 2017, after our July meeting, John Hickey made an excellent presentation at the Oak Lawn Public Library. The title was “Conquering Our Personal Bias.” Ron Whitfield accompanied John to lend moral support that he did not need! Although the number attending was small (7), it was a good meeting. Everyone was very engaged and most seemed interested in participating in a local chapter if one is started. A few of the attendees expressed interest in leadership. If you would like to have a copy of John's presentation, let us know.

Oak Park CHAPTER

By Nancy Johnson

Sandy, Phil, Gy and I marched in the Oak Park 4th of July Parade this year. (Well, I rode part way in the back of a hatch back car.) The Oak Park Area Lesbian and Gay Association (OPALGA) invited us to march with their

group, and the Lakeside Pride Marching Band. It was a lot of fun, as usual.

On July 22 we had our annual bake sale. Usually there is only one group having a bake sale at the Farmers Market, but this time, we were competing with the Girl Scouts! It was also rainy. But in spite of the weather and the competition, we took in more than \$750 with sales and donations.

We had a couple of visitors at our July 23rd meeting: My son David and his partner Chuck were in town for a week which Jimmie and I enjoyed. Our speaker was Jim Kelly, who did some research a few years ago about gays and lesbians in the Peace Corps. Because the Peace Corps is a federal employer, the members had to sign an application in which they were asked if they had homosexual tendencies. If yes, then not hired. So those who responded no, had to live deep in the closet, and often in a foreign country that had even less tolerance for homosexuality. Jim wanted to determine those factors that helped those gay and lesbian Peace Corps members to be successful in completing their term of service. Among the factors was having a support group, and someone you could talk to without danger. Eventually, the Peace Corps adopted Jim's ideas as actual policy to train staff in support for gays and lesbians and he was recently given a commendation from the Peace Corps for his work. Jim's email address is: jamesbkelly@comcast.net

On August 12, many of us went to the memorial service for our two hard-working members, George and Velna Kolodziej. They had moved to Iowa several years ago. George died in December and Velna in May. Their four children, daughters-in-laws, and 7 grandchildren were there.



On August 27, our speaker will be Owen Daniel-McCarter from the Illinois Safe Schools Alliance. He will be telling us all about what happened on Tuesday, August 22, when the OPRF high school board held a hearing about a proposed policy for transgender and gender non-conforming students. We're expecting several new people to come to our meeting to meet and hear Owen.

We have another annual event coming up on September 9: Barrie Fest. We hope to have the button

machine so people can make buttons. We'll also have the pin-making equipment there. This is going to be so much better than giving out candy to kids!

Rockford CHAPTER

By Karoline Olson

Rockford's chapter has been lucky enough to be recognized officially as a non-profit chapter, thanks in large part to its founder, Phyllis; PFLAG Rockford gained its official title in June. Before June, a multitude of dedicated volunteers, have worked diligently to raise awareness for the local LGBTQ community, and to create and support advocates and allies. Rockford's chapter has been busy this summer attending, planning, and executing community-based events, such as: monthly meetings at The Rockford Public Library, sponsoring a youth group, walking in Chicago PRIDE with the PFLAG Northern Illinois Council, an LGBTQ friendly cookout, and an upcoming resource fair. With all of the gained momentum, PFLAG Rockford will continue to inspire and educate the community well into the upcoming seasons.

Members of PFLAG Rockford worked together to establish a local youth group, DiversCity, to reach out to the teen population of the LGBTQ community in the area. DiversCity aims to provide a safe space and peer support for LGBTQ youth and their allies. In total, over the summer, they successfully completed their six summer sessions and they plan to continue their efforts through monthly sessions into the upcoming school year. They encourage the members to participate in healthy dialogue and to discuss the resources available to them. Of course, no youth group can be complete without pizza and prizes.

Spectrum of Rockford, who provides counseling for LGBTQ community, put on a potluck picnic August 13th and they graciously asked PFLAG Rockford to be apart of their festive celebration. A collective effort from various local organizations offered up a fun filled day for the LGBTQ community and their allies. The cookout was equipped with a pride dog fashion show, talent show, raffle for various services and goods, and at the close of the celebration, a captivating drum circle led by The Rainbow Warrior Society Native American Group. The day was a perfect combination of light-hearted relaxation with friends, education, and information pertinent to the members of the event.

September brings the First Annual Resource Fair, which will be held at the Rockford Public Library (East State Street Branch) on the ninth of the month. The three-hour event will include Rockford people, businesses and organizations that

support and promote tolerance and acceptance towards Rockford's LGBTQ community. The participants' booths will have information on the accessibility and relevance of their services. The following are set to appear on September 9th at the fair: Yellow Brick Road, Winnebago County Health Department, Rockford Sexual Assault Counseling, YWCA, Children's Home + Aid, Rockford Public Library, Unitarian Universalist Church, Rockford's Mayor, Tom McNamara, Open Door, and Spectrum of Rockford LGBTQ+ Counseling.

Heading into the fall, PFLAG Rockford will hold a membership drive in October and a holiday potluck in November. Although Rockford' chapter is in its initial stages, it has undoubtedly made great strides forward and will continue to set forth change and positivity within the community.

LGBTQ Related Movies

Straightlaced: How Gender's Got Us All Tied Up
(www.groundspark.org/straightlaced)

Unlearning Homophobia Series
(www.unlearninghomophobia.com)

Summer of Stonewall (www.inthelife.tv.org)

The Laramie Project (96 minutes)

Milk (2hr 9 min)

For the Bible Tells Me So
(www.forthebibletellsmeso.org) 98 minutes

Hannah Free with Sharon Gless (86 minutes)

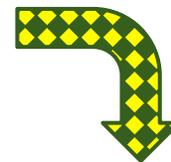
Gay Youth (www.newday.com) 30 minutes

A Jihad for Love (www.ajihadforlove.com) 81 minutes

Fish out of Water (www.fishoutofwaterfilm.com) 60 minutes

Stonewall Uprising (American Experience PBS) 90 minutes

Anyone and Everyone (www.ironzeal.com) 57 minutes

UPCOMING EVENTS YOU MIGHT BE INTERESTED IN....

- TREVOR the musical, now through September 17, 2017
(<https://www.writerstheatre.org/trevor-the-musical>)
- Saturday, September 9th, 1 pm to 5 pm, DuPage Unitarian Universalist Church, Naperville Activist Expo (Friends Who March) — John Hickey has registered the Council. Volunteers are needed. Come any time; stay as long as you can! (<https://www.evensi.us/activist-expo-dupage-unitarian-universalist-church/217826290>)
- Saturday, September 23rd, from 9:30 am to 1:30 pm, Chicago Modern Quilt Guild/Bloomington Normal Modern Quilt Guild Meet-Up: "Quilts and Human Rights" Exhibit at Pick Museum of Anthropology in DeKalb — If you like meeting new quilters and learning about quilts from around the world, then the Chicago MQG/Bloomington Normal MQG meet-up is for you!
(<http://thechicagomodernquiltguild.blogspot.com/2017/08/cmqgbnmqg-meet-up-quilts-and-human.html>)
- Sunday, October 1st, AIDS Run & Walk Chicago 2017, registration is now open!
(http://events.aidschicago.org/site/TR?fr_id=1420&pg=entry)
- Saturday, October 7th, 9 am to 3 pm, Nationwide Solidarity Peaceful March in Chicago — The hope is to give everyone a day to celebrate our differences while uniting together! Organizers encourage peace, no violence, and, above all, love for one another.
(<http://www.protestchicago.com/2017/08/20/nationwide-solidarity-peaceful-march-chicago/>)
- Monday, October 9th, The Illinois Safe Schools Symposium at the UIC Forum — This is a day-long gathering of students, parents, PreK-12 teachers and administrators, lawyers, healthcare professionals, and advocates to share skills and clarify shared goals for the work of the safe schools movement in the months and years ahead. You can register at <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/illinois-safe-schools-symposium-2017-tickets-37020189383?utm-medium=discovery&utm-campaign=social&utm->

GET INVOLVED!

OPEN DOORS encourages all members of the PFLAG community to share their stories, experiences and news in our newsletter. In doing so, it keeps us connected and informed and offers support in more ways than one!

If you would like to share something and have it published in an issue, please email to og4equality@gmail.com. If you prefer to remain anonymous, please indicate.

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

PFLAG Deerfield

Meetings held 2nd Thursday – 7:15 pm
 Congregation BJBE
 1201 Lake Cook Rd, Deerfield 60015
 pflagdeerfield@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
 www.pflag.wixsite.com/pflagdg
 pflagdg@gmail.com

PFLAG Hinsdale

Meetings held 1st 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 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)

Meetings are held the 4th Wednesday – 7 p.m.
 Tree of Life Unitarian Church
 5603 W Bull Valley Rd, McHenry 60050
 pflagptimchenry@pflagillinois.org

Parents of Transgender (North Shore)

Meetings are held the 3rd Sunday – 6 p.m.
 Winnetka Presbyterian Church
 1255 Willow Rd, Winnetka, IL

PFLAG Rockford

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.