



OPEN DOORS

The Newsletter of the Northern Illinois PFLAG Chapters

President's Column

Be a Visible Trans Ally



November is Transgender Awareness Month. This presents a great opportunity for us all to reflect on ways we might improve our personal depth of knowledge, experience and abilities. Let's commit together to improve our abilities and visibility as transgender allies. There are lots of ways for us to gain personal growth and maybe even help someone else along on their journey as well.

If you have not read it lately, check out the PFLAG publication: Guide to Being a Trans Ally. This is a great resource. Download it for free at <https://pflag.org/publication/guidetobeingatransally>

If it has been a while since you attended a PFLAG meeting, consider attending one this month. I am very proud of the support provided for transgender people, and their loved ones at all of our PFLAG chapter meetings. I am especially grateful for the support of our PTI meeting groups. Some of our PTI groups joined forces to create a very helpful Transgender resource page. Check it out at <http://www.pflagillinois.org/resources/transgender/>

Please note that November 20th is Transgender Day of Remembrance (TDOR), an annual day of observation that honors the memory of those whose lives were lost in senseless acts of anti-transgender violence. There are TDOR events scheduled worldwide. Look for an event near you.

As noted in prior Open Doors editions, the Arts are a great way to learn and grow. You might want to consider taking in a Transgender themed movie, play, or opera.... Chicago Fringe Opera is opening their season November 16-19 with the Chicago premier of *AS ONE- A Transgender Story*.

While the majority of the population is considered cisgender, and identifies with the gender that they were assigned at birth, there is a slice of the population that does not share that privilege. Those who do not identify with the gender they were assigned might consider themselves to be transgender or gender expansive. The reality is that the Trans community is a small minority. As a result, there are still many people who think that they don't have Trans loved ones, and that Trans issues are not their issues. So, maybe, together we can help to foster awareness and growth.

Whatever you choose to do this month, be visible, be an ally!

In Love and Solidarity,



CORRECTION TO LAST MONTH'S NEWSLETTER:

The information provided regarding Fun Home event should have read November 10th. Fundraiser donation code is PFLAG.

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:

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2017/2018 Membership Campaign

Dear PFLAG friends,

The new membership year is upon us, beginning on October 1! This means we have the chance to make a difference again, to stand up and be counted, to have our voices heard and to be there for others. When you make a membership donation to PFLAG, you affirm the work that this done by its talented national staff, you applaud the efforts of those involved at the local level and you cast your vote for a world where LGBTQ people are affirmed and celebrated!

You will find below a copy of our appeal letter for the 2017/2018 membership year. Our theme this year is "Let's be there ... tomorrow", emphasizing that our membership dollars insure that all of the Support, Advocacy and Education provided through PFLAG is there for those in the years ahead of us. It is our chance, those of us who have come to value our PFLAG friendships and resources, to Pay It Forward. I hope you will read the appeal and consider becoming a PFLAG member ... or renewing your membership.

Registering for a PFLAG membership is fast and easy, especially if you do so on line. Just go to www.pflagillinois.org. If you choose to send in a check, a membership form has also been included below which can be completed and mailed to: PFLAG Council of Illinois, P.O. Box 734, Elmhurst, IL 60126.

Thank you,

Don Donahue



Let's be there ... tomorrow!



We all remember when we found that PFLAG was there for us. And before long, we could see the support that others received when it was there for them. Information, Support, Advocacy, Friendship when it was needed most ... reachable ... in the moment. And as we became members, we could see how our membership dollars enabled our chapters to thrive, to provide for engaging speakers and access to information about resources in our community, for publications and programs and for the talented, committed staff in our national organization. And how great it is that we have these things now – when we need them.

But ... isn't our PFLAG dollar so much more about making sure all of this is there tomorrow? For those who need its continuing Support, for the tireless efforts of those who Advocate for a better tomorrow (which is so important in today's troubling political environment), and so that we can Educate ourselves and the communities in which we live in for future generations.

Isn't our membership dollar really about those who will rely on PFLAG for some time to come, for those who search for support and have yet to discover PFLAG, in fact for those who do not know they need the resources of PFLAG yet, indeed for those not yet born ...

Isn't our membership dollar really more about tomorrow?

And won't you help pay it forward?

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, 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.

Supporting Membership	\$60	PFLAG Hero	\$250
Parents Flag Waver	\$100	PFLAG Superhero	\$500

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.

Won't you help pay it forward?



DUPAGE CHAPTER

by Bernadette & Ron Whitfield

At the October 2017 meeting we were honored to have as guest speakers Mandy and Denika McMillan. They shared their lives with us: how they met, having children, life in

the city, and life in the suburbs. They moved to Naperville in part because of the high quality of the schools for their 3 children. By sharing their stories, they enriched our lives by their courage, resistance, and love.



Since our last meeting:

- Film Night, Friday, Oct. 7th, St. Paul — We viewed *Straightlaced: how gender's got us all tied up* and enjoyed a baked potato bar (thanks Gail!), salad, and desserts.
- We represented PFLAG at the Illinois Safe Schools Symposium at the UIC Forum on Monday, Oct. 9th. Special thanks to the Hansons (Gail, Paul, and Brittany) for staffing the table all day.



- We represented PFLAG at the Northern Trust Lunch and Learn panel discussion on National Coming Out Day, Wednesday, Oct. 11th. Thank you Steve and Jack Rothmund, Brittany Hanson, and Molly Malone (PTI) for accompanying us in Chicago.



- Thursday, Oct. 19th, 6:30 PM, Glen Ellyn Public Library — Showing of *The Gender Revolution: A Journey with Katie Couric*, sponsored by Glenbard Voices of Equity, Youth Outlook, and PFLAG DuPage. About 50 people attended the event. The panel discussion (Moms and youth) was very informative.

In the future:

Our next chapter meeting is Sunday, November 19th. Our guest speakers will be a panel of Carolyn Wahlskog's youths at Youth Outlook. They will share with us their school and life experiences.

HINSDALE CHAPTER

by Barbara Medley

Our speaker for October was Matt Lind from the Chicago Gay Hockey League. The League works with the NHL and college hockey to promote an inclusive environment at all levels. Of the major four sports organizations, the NHL has not had a current or former member come out. Matt played hockey from childhood but stopped in college. He talked about his happiness getting back to playing hockey in an accepting locker room environment, and described how the League sends an important message while accepting all



Matt Lind

players who have a passion for hockey. The League was founded in 2002. Players range from guys in their 50's to men and women in their 20's. They sponsor lessons, team essentials and team assistance. Of their 75 active members, 40% of the current roster identifies as LGBTQ. They have three levels of players – beginning, intermediate and advanced, and practice in Niles, at the McFetridge Park District facility, and at Johnny's Ice House on Chicago's west side. In 2016 they traveled for games to Toronto, New York, Madison and Columbus and in 2018 will participate in the Gay Games in Paris.

The League's partners include You Can Play and the Blackhawks. They marched in this year's Pride Parade. Their games are free to watch, and their website is www.Chicagogayhockey.org.

Our November speaker will be Amy Jakubiak, a social worker from Hinsdale Middle School who worked for five years before succeeding in setting up a GSA at the school. We are also continuing to accept donations for our holiday collection benefiting The Crib, the Night Ministry's North Side shelter that welcomes homeless people 18 to 24 years old and draws many LGBT young adults. We can use socks, travel size shampoo and other toiletries, and small-denomination gift cards for places such as Starbucks, Subway and Dunkin Donuts.

DEERFIELD CHAPTER

by Barb Levie & Janet Svatos

We had a nice turnout at our meeting despite it coinciding with the Cubs playoff game. We had 24 attendees.

We announced an event "Hidden Stories of Holocaust History" at Sidetrack Bar in Lakeview on 11/2 from 6:30 - 8:30, sponsored by the Holocaust Museum.

We announced youth activities currently going on at Glenview Youth Services 3080 W Lake Ave., Glenview, IL 60026, (847) 724-2620. This included: an LGBTQ support group (Fruit Loops) for 6th – 8th graders which meets on Tuesdays, from 4:30 to 6:00 from Nov. 7th to Dec. 12th, an LGBTQ Halloween Party for 9th to 12th grades on Oct. 21st from 6:30 to 9:00, and a group for Trans and nonbinary youth ages 14 to 19 on Tuesdays from 6:00 to 7:30 Nov. 7th to Dec. 12th.

3 attendees at the meeting described participating in the Safe Schools Alliance event, Coming Out Stories event, and the Writer's Theater Trevor play project.

Katie Slivovsky of the Chicago Children's Museum addressed the group. She told the PFLAG group that the museum celebrates and values diversity. She said that when someone with the authority of a teacher describes the world and you're not included there's a moment of psychic disequilibrium. Everyone needs to be celebrated, served and understood – no one should be invisible.

She suggested a number of ways to be more LGBTQ friendly. They included: use of the rainbow symbol, smiling and making eye-contact, showing signs of welcoming and inclusiveness to everyone - always, ensuring safe places (all-gender restrooms), generally avoiding binary (male/female) identification systems, and using inclusive images.

Chicago institutions she mentioned that have adopted LGBTQ friendly "out" inclusive imaging include the Chicago History Museum, the Aquarium, the Field Museum, and the Chicago Children's Museum.

She also did an interesting exercise with the group.

All in all it was a very educational and informative meeting.

MCHENRY CHAPTER

by Toni Weaver

Our much anticipated program on PrEP (pre-exposure prophylaxis) was presented by Family Nurse Practitioner Roseann Iverson. An additional speaker addressed PrEP from the point of view of one who has been following the drug protocol for two years. Theory and practice were combined to give us a detailed overview of the program, and it's one I highly

recommend for any PFLAG chapter. As parents we need to have this information in order to have one of those difficult discussions with our LGBT kids, and it's information needed by anyone who might not be practicing safe sex. If the use of PrEP were widespread, the incidence of HIV infection would be significantly lowered!



Bob, a parent and an educator who had attended the Illinois Safe Schools Symposium on Oct. 9, gave an overview of the day. It was really cool that his son also attended the day and took full advantage of the breakout sessions that were geared exclusively for youth, i.e. NO ADULTS ALLOWED!

Sadly, very few folks from the Northern Illinois PFLAG chapters attended the national convention which was held in Portland, Oregon this year. I can't begin to describe how marvelously these bi-annual conventions are organized. I think my head is hurting from being stuffed with so much useful information. More and more workshops are focused on transgender, and as I'm sure you all know, the parents of transgender individuals represent our fastest growing demographic.



One of the highlights for me was listening to Evan Wolfson, founder of the Freedom to Marry movement, talk about the struggles to get to where we are today with marriage equality being the law of the land. His is a name I've heard for years, and to actually see him and meet him in person, was awesome!!!

From Chocolate to PFLAG

By Toni Weaver

What began as a casual conversation at the Portland International Airport ended in typical PFLAG fashion – an outreach to a mom in need.

While standing in line waiting to board my flight back to Chicago after the marvelous PFLAG National Convention, I heard three of my fellow passengers discussing the merits of Hershey chocolate versus the darker, richer, and yummiier Ghiradelli. The chocolate discussion soon morphed into a conversation about the Chicago Bears versus the Green Bay Packers. Boy, did I lose big time on that one being a GB fan myself...

Well, when asked if I had watched the GB game on Sunday, I had to explain that I hadn't because of a conference I was attending. One of the ladies asked what conference I had been at, and I responded "PFLAG" and proceeded to explain what PFLAG is after seeing the quizzical look in her eye. (Much as we might like to think that PFLAG is a household name, it isn't...)

What happened next still gives me goose bumps when I think about it. Very quietly the lady said that she needed a group like that since her daughter had just come out to her as transgender, and she didn't know where to turn.

Since my group was boarding, I only had time to grab one of our council brochures from my backpack and hand it to her. After we were airborne and the "fasten seatbelt" light was turned off, I went in search of her to give her my contact info and some more information. I fervently hope that when she returns to Portland, she'll begin attending a PFLAG chapter there.

It just goes to show that when you belong to PFLAG, you're never off duty! It also goes to show that conversations about the merits of chocolate really pay off! ☺



Crystal Lake GSA & members of PFLAG McHenry donated over 20 rainbow & trans-colored, handmade scarves to 360 Youth Services.

Membership Form PFLAG Council of Northern Illinois

By becoming a PFLAG member, you support PFLAG in its ongoing mission of support, education, and advocacy. All information collected on this form will remain confidential and will only be shared within PFLAG. Please print Legibly.

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

Please check:

- New Membership
- Renewal Membership

Date: _____

Name: _____

Address: _____

Telephone: _____

E-Mail: _____

MEMBERSHIP LEVEL: (please circle)

- PFLAG Superhero \$500+
- PFLAG Hero \$250
- Parents Flag Waver \$100
- Supporting Membership \$60
- Household/Individual Membership \$45
- Other amount \$ _____
- Donation only – no membership \$ _____

Memberships and Donations are tax deductible. PFLAG is a 501(c)(3) organization.

SELECT CHAPTER:

<input type="checkbox"/> Aurora/Fox Valley	<input type="checkbox"/> Chicago	<input type="checkbox"/> Chicago PTI	<input type="checkbox"/> Deerfield
<input type="checkbox"/> Downers Grove	<input type="checkbox"/> DuPage	<input type="checkbox"/> Hinsdale	<input type="checkbox"/> Kankakee
<input type="checkbox"/> McHenry	<input type="checkbox"/> McHenry PTI	<input type="checkbox"/> North Shore PTI	<input type="checkbox"/> Oak Park
<input type="checkbox"/> Rockford	<input type="checkbox"/> Tinley Park		

Please return form and a check payable to PFLAG Council of Northern Illinois to your chapter leader or mail the form and check to:

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

Membership may also be started/renewed on-line at www.pflagillinois.org.

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

Contact Rev. Barbara Lohrbach
 revlohrbach@gmail.com
 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.