



# OPEN DOORS

The Newsletter of the Northern Illinois PFLAG Chapters

## President's Column

**It's when you no longer feel the need for PFLAG, that PFLAG needs you the most.**

Though I have heard it over a hundred times, I still listen closely each time the opening statement is read at a PFLAG Chapter meeting. It is a great reminder of our mission and the reason we gather together. One part that especially resonates with me is the reminder that "...it's when you no longer feel the need for PFLAG, that PFLAG needs you the most...". Not only does this remind me of the day I realized that I had crossed that threshold, but, more so because I have witnessed over and over, that amazing transformation in others.

PFLAG is not just about getting the support we need and getting on our way. PFLAG is about being a part of something bigger. It's about being a member of a nurturing group that provides us with opportunities for growth, friendship and the ability to make a difference in the lives of others and in our communities.

I know that many of us probably attended our first PFLAG meeting because we were trying to move from an uncomfortable place to a place of comfort, from a place of darkness to a place of light. But, in my experience, the common bond seems to be that we are all moved to action from a place of love and caring. Sometimes navigating the coming out process takes a while and is not easy. We know that emotions can run a broad spectrum including fear, despair, sadness, confusion and much more. But, there is light at the end of that tunnel. And it is amazing to experience and participate in the transformative power of PFLAG. It brings me great joy and hope seeing people progress to a place of unconditional acceptance, affirmation, hope and celebration.

That's the power of PFLAG. Together we can create a welcoming space to come together and share our joys, sorrows, concerns and victories.

Whether you are a veteran PFLAG-er or just beginning your journey, stay active with your PFLAG chapter. You are making a difference not only in your life, but also in the lives of others.

In Love and Solidarity,

John



## CHECK THIS OUT

For more on Positive Change, check out the 17 ½ minute, 2013 TED Talk by Rosabeth Moss Kanter - Six Keys to Leading Positive Change, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=owU5aTNPJbs>

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.

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www.pflagillinois.org  
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## New PFLAG Chapters Coming Soon!

I am happy to announce that we have two new chapters in the formative stages. Huge thanks to Chris Raap of Oak Lawn and Hal Sloan of Grayslake for their leadership and initiative! It is really great to see PFLAG chapters becoming accessible to more families.

**PFLAG Oak Lawn** plans to begin open meetings starting March 18th. They will hold meetings on the third Sunday of the month at 2 pm, at Pilgrim Faith UCC located at 9411 S 51st Ave, Oak Lawn, IL 60453

**PFLAG Grayslake / Round Lake** plans to begin their meetings soon too! They will be meeting on Wednesday night (specific time and week of the month TDB- stay tuned). The planned location is the Grayslake Teen Center at 151 Hawley Street, Grayslake IL 60030.

## DUPAGE CHAPTER

By Ron & Bernadette Whitfield

We had a wonderful, well-attended meeting on : PowerPoint presentation that summarized our ac for our December meeting and we wanted to sh January. If you missed it and would like to see it, l

An unexpected visitor was Chris Bowlay-Williams, Chris will be our guest speaker in February. He spc planned talk.

A historical note is that 2018 marks the 45<sup>th</sup> year for PFLAG! Follow highlights throughout the year at PFLAG Voice (<https://www.pflag.org/tags/pflagvoice>).

The educational portion of our meeting was a summary of the 2017 National PFLAG Convention in Portland, Oregon. Peter and Kristen Shulman attended and graciously prepared a PowerPoint presentation on what they saw, heard, and learned. Thank you, Kristen and Peter, for your excellent summary. A PDF version (2.0 MB) of their presentation is attached. It has links to interesting information and educational videos.

In the very near future, our previous chapter president, John Hickey, will be on a panel discussion entitled "Open Hearts, Open Doors" focused on the LGBTQ Community and the Church. John is the current President of the PFLAG Council of Northern Illinois. The event is being hosted at Southminster Presbyterian Church (916 E Central Rd., Arlington Heights) on Sunday February 11th from 2:30 to 5:00. For more information visit <http://spcah.org/openhearts/>. Please RSVP to Jan Tossman ([SilkPalette@gmail.com](mailto:SilkPalette@gmail.com)).

As a final note, our next chapter meeting is Sunday, February 18. We hope to see you there.



## DEERFIELD CHAPTER

By Sue Ginsburg & Janet Svatos

Night Ministry provides housing and open doors for lesbian, gay and bi-sexual youth, and assembles Goodie Bags containing items including: socks, underwear, towels, gift cards from K-Mart, Target, McDonald's, Subway, 1-way bus cards, and feminine hygiene products.

National Mall Aids Quilt – Public Fact/Private Grief

A 24 year old woman, Rachel, from DuPage PFLAG, presented a paper she wrote 2 years ago for her senior thesis paper: *Aids Art – the Aids Quilt*.

Her presentation related that the Aids Quilt was constructed on the National Mall in 1987 by families, friends and lovers of Aids victims. She offered a comparison of it to the National Viet Nam War Memorial. The panels that comprised the quilt were 6' x 3' – the same size as graves. The quilt brought the Aids Epidemic to the forefront in the minds of American Public. 500,000 Americans visit the National Mall annually – and those that did that year viewed the quilt. Clive Jones was the spokesperson for the quilt.

Donald Trump has disbanded the HIV/Aids Committee. It was urged that PFLAG members contact their Congress People to protest and demand it be reinstated.

The Illinois Safe Schools Alliance Summit for high school and middle school GSA leaders was held on Jan. 20 at DeKalb High School.

PFLAG Deerfield will begin to collect 'goodie bags' containing items needed for Night Ministry donations. They will include socks, underwear, towels, feminine hygiene needs, gift cards from Kmart, Target, McDonald's and Subway. We'll collect them, bag them and bring them to Night Ministry.

We were honored to welcome Rachael Schwabe to our January meeting. Rachael shared her research from her senior project before she graduated from Loyola University, the subject of which was the AIDS QUILT! Also called the Names Project, this massive mourning/friendship quilt was often compared to the Viet Nam Memorial; as to be named is to be remembered! The size of each quilt is the size of a grave. This amazing quilt began in the San Francisco Gay Community, which was terribly hit by the large

number of deaths due to AIDS. It was the handiwork of the mourners there. There were locations all around the country that gathered these pieces, to be put together for its first showing. The Quilt itself was displayed level with the ground, simulating a cemetery, on the Mall in Washington, symbolizing the bodies which were ignored by those making policy in our government. It was a dark part of our country's cultural history, that this disease, which was for so long ignored by our government and misunderstood, now brought attention and humanity to those lives that were lost through the attention and beauty of each part of the Quilt.

Rachel's presentation was timely in that the Trump administration just dissolved the Advisory Board on HIV/AIDS. It is gone! This is a great chance for all of you to write to your Congress people and tell them how upset you are that this was done. AIDS is still a deadly disease. We need government oversight! I hope you'll choose to write a letter.

## HINSDALE CHAPTER

By Marcia Prichason

Our December meeting, as always, was our annual pot luck, followed by assembling holiday stockings for young adults who stay at The Crib, the Night Ministry's North Side shelter that welcomes homeless people 18 to 24 years old, most LGBT. It's always a wonderful way to start the holiday season.

At our Sunday, January 8<sup>th</sup> meeting, PFLAG Hinsdale welcomed Rodrigo Anzures-Oyozabal, Advocacy and Policy Manager with Illinois Safe Schools. Illinois Safe Schools addresses three major needs for LGBTQ+ youths. The first is statewide youth services for pre-K through 12<sup>th</sup> grade schools and park districts. They also organize youth programs. A recent example of this was the 5-day sleep-away "Action Camp" held annually for 8<sup>th</sup> – 12<sup>th</sup> graders. Additionally, ISS is involved in policy and advocacy for students, parents, teachers, and administrators to help improve inclusion in schools and establish school policies. Rodrigo then explained sex to the Hinsdale members. That is, that the term "gender" is referred to the sex assigned at birth (intersex refers to the internal factors that have to do with human sexuality including chromosomes, hormones, etc.), "gender identity" is the individual's identity of self, and "gender expression" is the individual's outward appearance. Our guest speaker also provided us with an update on the development of school districts affirming transgender students' use of facilities, specifically 3

restrooms and locker rooms. The meeting then broke for refreshments and conversation.

Our speaker on February 4<sup>th</sup> is Katie Thomas, a member of PFLAG Oak Park, and she'll talk about her work towards removing the "one-size-fits-all" approach to being transgender. She'll also share her own personal story.



**Hinsdale Vice President & President:  
Deb Smollen and Suellen Cook**

counseling. Medical assistance is even available, and no one is turned away for lack of funds. In addition, we continued to collect a few dozen socks, hats, and scarves, as well as a pair of boots and a jacket for the homeless youth "close" at the Center on Halsted. This project will be ongoing throughout the year.



**Mayadet Patitucci-Cruz**



40 holiday stockings filled for The Crib  
[Chicago Tribune article about The Crib](#)  
THANK YOU, PFLAG Hinsdale!!!

### PTI CHICAGO CHAPTER

By Jo Peer-Haas

In January, our PTI group was back to hosting a guest speaker. Mayadet Patitucci-Cruz, in charge of the Peer Advocate Project at the Broadway Youth Center, gave a talk about the organization. The BYC is part of the Howard Brown Clinic, located in the Lakeview neighborhood, and is a drop-in center aimed at homeless LGBTQ teens and young adults. As Mayadet explained, this means street-based homeless people. The Center provides many much-needed services, from laundry to food GED completion to



On December 14<sup>th</sup> PTI Chicago held its annual Holiday Potluck Dinner at Center on Halsted. It was a festive event with 31 members, family members and kids in

attendance. The evening's highlight was honoring Arlene Collins, the founder of PTI with a cake and flowers and a new project. Betty Guilfoile, the new president of PTI Chicago discussed the new project in honor of Arlene's son Quinn who passed away in a tragic car crash in 2010:

We are starting a project called "A Mother's Love: the Quinn Collins Project". As parents we have all come here to find support for ourselves so we can support our child. We have a great capacity to love our child, and I believe, as we come to realize that our journey as a parent hasn't been derailed, but has taken on new and important track, we have an ability to share that love with others.

There are countless homeless trans youth in

Chicago, many of them who have been turned away from their own families, who couch surf, who sleep on trains, who are living on the streets, enduring the cold. A number of them come here to Center on Halsted. We have been sharing goods with them, such as socks and gloves and hats, but I think that we could take on a bigger project. It could be by anonymously “adopting” a young person for the holidays – providing some items that they may need personally, some holiday trinkets, cosmetics, but mostly, a personal letter of love and support. Ultimately, down the road we could develop a fund for the trans youth community to help these young people with surgery or procedures that they need, just as our kids have had, but cannot afford.

To kick off this project, tonight we are asking you all to look inside, and channel your inner Arlene, and see if you might be able to adopt a young trans person for the holidays.

To learn more about “A Mother’s Love: the Quinn Collins Project”, contact Betty Guilfoile at [ptichicago1@gmail.com](mailto:ptichicago1@gmail.com).

## DOWNERS GROVE CHAPTER

By Gloria

Our speaker in January was Chicago House CEO Scott Ammarell. An agency long known and respected for its HIV/AIDS services, Chicago House is focused on its next phase of providing housing and support services to the most vulnerable, ensuring that Chicago House continues to serve those most in need. As HIV/AIDS continues to disproportionately impact the LGBTQ community, Chicago House is dedicated to ensuring access to life saving care, housing stability, adequate jobs, and other necessary resources to thrive. Scott’s depth of experience in housing services and development includes time as the Chief Legal Officer and General Counsel for the Chicago Housing Authority where he advised the development and strategic planning of the City of Chicago’s Public Housing. Scott’s passion for LGBTQ and HIV/AIDS services has led him to serve on many boards, including Chicago House’s partner agency, Test Positive Aware Network. Scott and Chicago House are committed to ensuring those in need thrive through sustainable housing, health and prevention services. Thank you Scott for an informative and

inspirational presentation. Find more information about Chicago House at [www.chicagohouse.org](http://www.chicagohouse.org).

Our next meeting is Wednesday, February 14, Valentine’s Day! Please join us for our regular meeting at 7 p.m. and, if you are able, at Ballydoyle, 5157 Main St., at 5:45 before the meeting. Hope to see you there!

## MCHENRY CHAPTER

By Toni Weaver

The December meeting was both conversation and holiday social. Initially we were going to discuss the issues faced by LGBTQ people and their families at holiday family gatherings but then decided to give a more positive focus to the discussion. People were invited to share the highlights of their year.

Because the January meeting fell one day after the 5<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Jeanne Manford’s death, we watched YouTube videos that showcased both Jeanne and PFLAG. One was the video of Rachel Maddow singing the praises of PFLAG in which she showed a clip of President Obama speaking about PFLAG at an HRC (Human Rights Campaign) gala. The other showed an aged Jeanne looking back on the now infamous Christopher Street Parade in 1972 when she marched with her son Morty and carried the sign that read “Parents of Gays, Unite in Support of our Children.” For many newcomers to PFLAG this was their introduction to how PFLAG began.

If you wish to view these videos, simply go to YouTube and type PFLAG in the search box.



**Julie Suter (w/ Coty), Rose Iverson & Toni Weaver at the People in Need Forum**

We will be staffing an information table at the People in Need Forum at McHenry County College on Saturday, January 27, and we are again

collaborating with the Regional Office of Education to present the third workshop of this academic year, one

focused on GSAs with the hope of getting GSAs into more middle schools and strengthening the GSAs at the high school level. Nat Duran from Illinois Safe Schools will be the lead presenter.

An evening social is being planned for all those folks who renewed/started a membership in PFLAG.

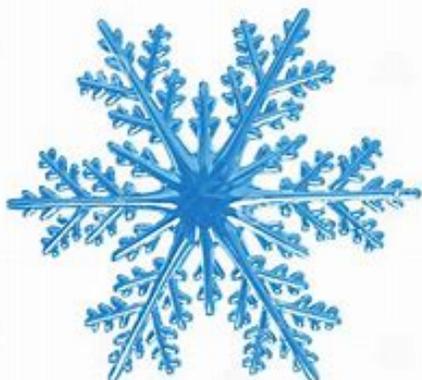
### OAK PARK CHAPTER

By Nancy Johnson

In November we were delighted to have Tracy Baim ([editor@windycitymediagroup.com](mailto:editor@windycitymediagroup.com)) as our speaker. She has just edited and published a new book: Gay Press, Gay Power subtitled "The Growth of LGBT Community Newspapers in America." She gave us an informative and fascinating talk about the history of the LGBT press. She had interesting displays of covers and articles, many from sources that no longer exist. We all enjoyed her talk so much. Her father, Hal, a photographer who used to work for the newspapers in Chicago, also accompanied her. Tracy is willing to go to any of our chapters to do her presentation. Do invite her! She's a fountain of LGBT history (and gossip)!

On December 4, Longfellow School in Oak Park screened the documentary Gender Revolution. Phil and I set up a PFLAG information table there, and talked to a number of people. The film was well attended with parents, children and community members.

Next month, Don Donahue from the NI Council will speak to us about recruiting and maintaining our membership.



## What's Coming Up!



**Open Hearts  
Open Doors**

You are cordially invited to attend a discussion about the LGBTQ Community and the Church

Southminster Presbyterian Church  
(at Dryden Avenue, across from The Moorings)  
916 E. Central Road, Arlington Heights, IL 60005

**Sunday, February 11  
2:30 - 5:00 p.m.**

Free childcare is available  
An RSVP is appreciated. Please email [silkpalette@gmail.com](mailto:silkpalette@gmail.com)  
or call the church office 847.392.1060

Check in and light refreshments followed by panel discussion and Q & A  
Four guest speakers share their personal experiences:

- Rich Howard, Pastor and Executive Director, The Inclusive Collective, U of I Chicago
- John Hickey, President, Northern Illinois Council of PFLAG (Parents, Families and Friends of Lesbians and Gays)
- Zoie Sheets, Inclusivity Intern, The Inclusive Collective
- Emily Snowden, Pastor, Congregational United Church of Christ, Arlington Heights

For more information, visit [www.spcnh.org/openhearts](http://www.spcnh.org/openhearts)

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**If you're looking to share some sex-ed with your LGBTQ kids (or even the non-LGBTQ ones), here are two websites to check out:**

[https://www.buzzfeed.com/sallytamarkin/queer-af?utm\\_term=.wi8o7ZzdA5#.ynK1nwOZPm](https://www.buzzfeed.com/sallytamarkin/queer-af?utm_term=.wi8o7ZzdA5#.ynK1nwOZPm)

<http://www.scarleteen.com/article/sexual-identity>

**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](mailto: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.com](mailto:pflagchicagometro@pflagillinois.com)

**PFLAG Deerfield**

Meetings held 2<sup>nd</sup> Thursday – 7:15 pm  
 Congregation BJBE  
 1201 Lake Cook Rd, Deerfield 60015  
[pflagdeerfield@pflagillinois.org](mailto:pflagdeerfield@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](mailto:pflagdupage@yahoo.com)  
[www.pflagdupage.org](http://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  
[www.pflag.wixsite.com/pflagdg](http://www.pflag.wixsite.com/pflagdg)  
[pflagdg@gmail.com](mailto:pflagdg@gmail.com)

**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.

**PFLAG Hinsdale**

Meetings held 1<sup>st</sup> Sunday – 2 pm  
 Unitarian Church Hinsdale  
 11 W Maple, Hinsdale 60521  
[pflaghinsdale@pflagillinois.com](mailto:pflaghinsdale@pflagillinois.com)

**PFLAG Joliet**

Contact Maria Prekop  
[maria.prekop@navigant.com](mailto:maria.prekop@navigant.com)

**PFLAG Will, Kankakee, Iroquois**

Contact Rev. Barbara Lohrbach  
[revlohrbach@gmail.com](mailto:revlohrbach@gmail.com)  
[plagkankakee@pflagillinois.org](mailto: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](mailto: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](mailto: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](mailto:parentsoftransgender@pflagillinois.org)

**Parents of Transgender (McHenry)**

Meetings are held the 4<sup>th</sup> Wednesday – 7 p.m.  
 Tree of Life Unitarian Church  
 5603 W Bull Valley Rd, McHenry 60050  
[pflagptimchenry@pflagillinois.org](mailto:pflagptimchenry@pflagillinois.org)

**Parents of Transgender (North Shore)**

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

**PFLAG Rockford**

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.)