



OPEN DOORS

The Newsletter of the Northern Illinois PFLAG Chapters

President's Column

STORY TIME

By Toni Weaver

"Oberweis ice cream! Good choice," said my grocery bagger at Jewel. "It's more expensive, but you get what you pay for."

"The products I like, but not the owner of the company," I replied.

"Why is that?" she asked.

"Jim Oberweis is an ultra conservative and is very anti marriage equality. I have a son who's gay, and I'm not going to vote for someone who denies people equal rights."

It was just another routine trip to the grocery store, but it afforded me the opportunity to tell my story and to bring up a subject very close to my heart.

Then there was the drive-through at Baskin Robbins in Crystal Lake shortly after the Chick-Fil-A opened across the street. "I'd never eat there," I said to the gal at the drive-through.

"Why not?" she questioned. After I explained their anti-LGBT stance, she said that settled it for her. She'd withdraw her application for employment because she has lots of gay friends and wouldn't want to work in an atmosphere of discrimination.

Chances like this aren't as rare as you might think. I've started looking for them, sometimes even forcing the point when the tale wouldn't have naturally gone that way. It's amazing how often we can interject something about gay rights or marriage equality or even ENDA (I'm still not proficient at working ENDA into a conversation, but I'm working on it!)

Think of the possibilities! Wakes, funerals, anniversary parties, reunions, shopping trips, chance encounters with old friends, the opening of a Chick-Fil-A ...all of these provide opportunities for those important conversations that change minds and hearts. 90% of the folks I talk to are amazingly open and receptive; the remaining 10%...well, they just promise to pray for me. That's ok...I can use all the prayers I can get!



A Loss for the LGBTQ Community – VERNITA GRAY

Parents, Families and Friends of Lesbians and Gays (PFLAG) is a non-profit, tax-exempt, all volunteer, local community-based organization of parents, relatives and friends of gay 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:

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www.pflagillinois.org
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Vernita Gray, one of Chicago's longest and most prolific activists for LGBT rights, has died. She was 65.

Gray and wife Pat Ewert were the first same-sex couple married legally in Illinois, Nov. 27, 2013, after winning a court victory because of Gray's critical health situation. That paved the way for additional court rulings that hastened marriage in Illinois ahead of the original June 1, 2014 implementation of full marriage equality in the state.

View additional photo spread at the link:

www.windycitymediagroup.com/gay/lesbian/news/photospreadthumbs.php.

Gray, a native Chicagoan, came out as a lesbian soon after she attended the 1969 Woodstock music concert in New York, where she learned about the Stonewall Riots.

A longtime cancer survivor, Gray lost her battle March 18 just before midnight, with her wife by her side. Friends and family had visited with Gray in her final weeks, as she said her goodbyes. She was laughing and giving advice up until the end.

Gray's cultural and activist interests were varied. She was a poet who knew how to rally the troops at events, including anti-violence marches and most recently the Oct. 22 March on Springfield for Marriage Equality, her last public speaking engagement. She worked in the Cook County State's Attorney's Office for 18 years, including in the position of victim/witness assistant, where she helped LGBT crime survivors, and as an outreach worker on LGBT issues. Prior to that, she owned the popular Sol Sands restaurant in Uptown.

Gray was one of those people you might run into at any kind of event and among any sort of crowd – at every Chicago Pride Parade since the first in 1970, at a community gala or fundraiser, at a women's music festival, at a poetry slam reading her own words, or even at the White House which she visited four times during President Barack Obama's administrations.

As a young girl she watched Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., try to desegregate the heavily divided city of Chicago. Her visits to the White House brought tears to her eyes because she never thought she would see an African-American president, especially from her hometown of Chicago. She first went there for a June 2009 Pride reception. The next time, in October of 2009, was for Obama's signing of the federal hate-crimes law, something she had supported for many years. Gray's most recent visits were in December 2009 and 2013, for White House holiday celebrations. She attended the 2009 event with her good friend Mary Morten. For one visit, she went with Renae Ogletree, who at the time was in the final months of her unsuccessful battle with cancer. Gray was a ubiquitous activist. In the early 1970s, she was instrumental in starting the first gay and lesbian helpline in Chicago in her own apartment. Her one-bedroom place on 56th Street and Drexel Avenue also served as an overnight shelter for a number of teens who had been kicked out by their families because they were gay, lesbian or transgender. Gray gave them a place to go and was there to lend a hand when they needed someone.

Gray was an activist who juggled her love of community with her love for friends and partners. She had several long-term relationships, including one in which she helped raise two children. For her work, Gray has received dozens of honors. She was inducted into the Chicago Gay and Lesbian Hall of Fame in 1992. She received the prestigious Stonewall Award, the Horizons Community Services Human First Award and many other accolades. Gray's life is documented in the upcoming book, Vernita Gray: From Woodstock to the Whitehouse, by Tracy Baim and Owen Keehnen.

Judge Patricia Logue, former head of Lambda Legal Midwest and a longtime lesbian activist herself, performed the marriage ceremony for Gray and Ewert in front of several dozen family and friends. In her remarks, Logue called the event "a very personal yet historic occasion – an event long-awaited and hard-won, (and) one that crystallizes the impact of equality and inequality in all our lives. And once, again, as so often happens in our nation's long civil rights journey – we are assisted by a federal court decree in favor of justice and humanity for a minority group." Lambda Legal and the ACLU of Illinois filed marriage the case Nov. 22, two days after Gov. Pat Quinn signed the marriage law into effect, seeking immediate action due to Gray's failing health. Judge Thomas Durkin issued the decision.

What's Happening in Our Chapters?

DuPage Chapter

By John Hickey

Happy Spring!

In March, PFLAG DuPage was happy to visit with the Gay-Straight Alliance, "As Is", at Addison Trail High School. As Is has just completed their first year as a student organization on campus. They have a wonderful group of students and now have support from several members of the faculty. Our March 16th meeting was an outstanding, introspective and engaging meeting with [Mark Hodar](#), LCPC, leading a discussion on the self-esteem. Mark is an entertaining and thought provoking facilitator / speaker.

Looking forward:

- Our April 20th, Easter Sunday meeting will feature a viewing of the film [Fish Out of Water](#). Fish Out of Water is a film that explores the impassioned relationship between homosexuality and the Bible.
- Our May 18th meeting will include a program on the important topic: suicide awareness and prevention.
- Our June 15th, Father's day meeting will feature a showing of the film [Daddy & Papa](#). Daddy & Papa is a one-hour documentary exploring the personal, cultural, and political impact of gay men who are raising children themselves.
- We are looking forward to attending the Chicago Gay Men's Chorus performance of [Bouncing Off the Walls: Broadway Our Way](#) coming up on June 1st in Naperville. For info see <http://www.cgmc.org/events>

Please feel free to join us for a meeting and experience the support and fellowship unique to PFLAG. PFLAG DuPage meets at 2:00 p.m. on the 3rd Sunday each month at *St. Paul Lutheran Church at 515 S. Wheaton Ave, Wheaton, IL.*

Warm wishes,
John

Deerfield Chapter

By Sue Ginsburg

Our speaker in March was Peter Ji, past President of Northern Illinois PFLAG Council and professor at the Adler School of Professional Psychology. I had asked Peter to speak to us as to ways that we could increase our membership.

In his years at PFLAG, first in Hinsdale, then at Chicago Metro, he did some research as to why people come to PFLAG, why they stay and why they leave. He explained that some myths can be dispelled: only if you have a problem? Some people come because they are curious, some come because they just want to come, for advocacy or to volunteer.

We talked about those who don't return, would it be proper to follow up with them, email or call? The consensus was to allow a new person to decide for him/herself, with no pressure from us, but to let them know we are available, both individually and as a group, for support. Each person must decide for him/herself the level of support needed. Some people may get what they need in one meeting and that is enough. People are at different levels of need and we need to meet them where they are, and allow them the time to explain where they are "in need." It is better for us to do more listening, encouraging more stories of vulnerability, than advice giving. The truth is new people may not be exactly sure where they are in their levels of need. People come back because they believe they may have a role to play, and if given this time, they'll find their niche.

Remember: PFLAG is the ONLY open, free drop in place for the LGBT community, with NO restrictions. Talking about things that are difficult to talk about is the heart of PFLAG.

So we shouldn't feel that we've failed, if some don't return. Embrace those who do and keep being who we are.

Our next meeting we will be welcoming a representative from The Night Ministry.

Parents of Transgender Individuals - Chicago

By Chad Gaynier

Our March meeting was well attended and included at least one new member. The meeting's speaker was Dana Gonzalez, a trans woman who works at the Howard Brown Center and Ann Lurie Children's Hospital. She spoke about the importance of receiving properly administered hormone therapy for transgendered individuals, as well as the differences in hormone therapy for Female-to-Male vs. Male-to-Female persons. Dana also spoke about her personal struggle and how she was able to turn her life around, even though she did not have the family support that she needed when she started her transition. Her presentation followed by a Q & A session with those in attendance.

The meeting also featured dissemination of flyers and pamphlets for a number of transgender resources. An article featuring suggestions for common language and news about upcoming conferences was shared. The attendees then began sharing their heartfelt stories and struggles they have faced with their children's coming out in dealing with their own emotions and the reactions of others. Everyone was very supportive throughout and a great many continued their conversations with each other after the meeting had concluded.

April's meeting will feature author Jennifer Carr as our guest speaker, who is the author of a children's book, "Be Who You Are". Jennifer is the mother of a gender non-conforming child and a member of PTI. We look forward to welcoming her as a special guest for the evening.

We look forward to seeing everyone in April!



Hinsdale Chapter

By Barb Medley

We continue to have a good turnout for our meetings, and we're so grateful that everyone seems to enjoy our speakers, conversation, and for those who need it, support and advice.

At the beginning of our March meeting, we spent a few minutes with the Reverend Lois McCullen Parr, Pastor of Broadway United Methodist Church and a member of FAN, the Faith & Asylum Network, who wanted to talk about CLASP – the Chicago LGBT Asylum Support

Program. They are helping those who have left countries hostile to LGBT rights like Uganda and Nigeria who fear for their safety if they return and are seeking asylum in the United States. CLASP is organizing resources such as housing that is available for a minimum of 6 months; gifts of money, food and clothing; and networking for medical, legal and spiritual support for asylum seekers. Rev. Parr stopped by to ask us to contact her if we knew of any faith-based groups who could provide housing support. For more information about CLASP and LGBT-FAN, their website is www.lgbt-fan.org.

Our guest speaker was Crispin Van Torres from the Midwest Regional Office of Lambda Legal, who spoke with us about their legal services and casework for youth in Illinois. Crispin manages the educational campaign. They provide education and training to corporations; work with LGBT youth who are experiencing homelessness, harassment and legal problems; advocate for marriage equality and work to fight against discrimination based on sexual orientation and identity. Despite advances in tolerance and acceptance, there is still much work to be done. In 34 states, it is still illegal to be HIV positive! Lambda Legal also advocates on behalf of transgender rights and students bullied and not supported by their schools. He recommended their website as a good source of information – www.LambdaLegal.org.

Our April 6th speaker will be Aidan McCormick, Community Congregational Relations Coordinator for the Night Ministry. His talk will focus on the Night Ministry's work with LGBTQ youth through their youth outreach team and the Crib. This is an organization near and dear to our hearts, and we have dedicated our time and service to monthly breakfast at the Crib and a Christmas-time donation of supplies.



Oak Park Chapter

By Nancy Johnson

Our speaker for March was Christopher Fox from Thrive Counseling Center in Oak Park (www.Thrivecc.org.) Counseling services are available for adults, youth and families. It is an LGBT-friendly center with sliding fee-scale for residents in Oak Park and River Forest.

We learned that Thrive staffs four youth therapists, a substance abuse preventionist and a student advocate 4 at Oak Park River Forest High School (OPRF.) The gay-

straight alliance at OPRF is mostly social, so the youth therapists have a group for LGBT students to discuss sexuality.

Our April speaker will be Richard Knight, director, founder of the Queer Film Society, and involved with Reeling, the Chicago International LGBT Film Festival that will be held in September this year.

We hope to have Owen Daniel-McCarter speak to us in June. Currently he is a Project Attorney with the Transformative Justice Law Project of Illinois (www.tjlp.org) and more recently, Legal Director & Staff Attorney with the TransLife Center of Chicago House (www.chicagohouse.org.)

Because our May meeting is the day before Memorial Day, we will not have a speaker. Our busy time is fast approaching however:

March 30 - Fifth Sunday Potluck at Gy and Sylvia's 5pm to 7pm.

June 1 - Table at Day in Our Village

June 29 - PRIDE PARADE!!

July 4 - March in Oak Park Parade.

July 5 - Bake Sale at the Oak Park Farmers Market

October - Tentative month for the Transgender

Documentary Film Festival (TDoc).

If anyone is interested in helping with this contact me at njj0907@gmail.com. We are working with several members of the Chicago Gender Society. We're looking at venues now. We're thinking of 2 different venues, one in Chicago, and one in Oak Park, but are up for other suggestions.

NEW LGBTQ SUPPORT GROUP MEETING IN NAPERVILLE

Linda, a former member of The Stonewall Association of Illinois has started a new, informal group for LGBT people.

The group meets every 2nd and 4th Wednesday at 7PM at Portillo's on Ogden Ave in Naperville.

The loose schedule is 7-7:30 socializing and dinner if interested (some eat, some don't), 7:30-8:00 discussion and sharing, 8-8:30 socializing.

The purpose of the group is to reach out and give LGBT people a chance to meet each other and share life stories, enjoy conversation with like-minded people and just get out of the house!

Current schedule:

April 9
 April 23
 May 7
 May 21
 June 4
 June 18

Questions, please contact Linda at albertrocksyeyes@yahoo.com.



PRIDE 2014

THE CHANGING PERSPECTIVE OF THE LGBTQA COMMUNITY

SATURDAY, APRIL 12, 2014 | 8 a.m.-4:15 p.m. | COMMONS AREA (BUILDING B)

KEYNOTE PRESENTATION FEATURING:
 Chicken Lips: "Laugh As Though Your Life Depended On It: Raise Morale, Ignite Energy, Improve Health"

- FEATURED SPEAKERS INCLUDE:**
- Patty Dillon, Equality Illinois
 - Tracy Baim, Windy City Media Group
 - Toni Weaver, Parents, Families and Friends of Lesbians and Gays (PFLAG)
 - Arlene Collins, Parents of Transgender Individuals (PTI)

RESOURCE TABLES:
 Equality Illinois, Windy City Media Group, PFLAG, PTI, The Center on Halsted, Open Door Clinic, United States Transgender Advocacy, Pride

SPONSORED BY:



MCC Student Life
 MCC College Democrats
 Parents of Transgendered Individuals

MCC Pride Club will host the 3rd annual Mr. and Miss Drag MCC on Friday, April 11 at 7 p.m.

Open to the public and free of charge to students and current MCC employees.

Advanced pricing:	At the door:
\$20 conference only	\$25 conference only
\$25 conference and drag show	\$10 drag show only
	\$35 conference and drag show

Online registration is available at www.mchenry.edu/pride



ARE YOU A MEMBER OF PFLAG? WHY NOT?

PFLAG is an all-volunteer run, non-profit organization that relies on your support to help provide the materials and services that we offer LGBTQ people and their families. Please consider becoming a paid member; it's easy.

Sign up online at <http://www.pflagillinois.org/membership-and-donations/> or fill out the form below and mail in your check. Make sure to indicate what chapter you are affiliated with. Part of your membership goes back to that chapter!

Membership Form

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 of the following year; 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 CHAPTER

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

Hinsdale Aurora/Fox Valley Entre Familia McHenry County McHenry Parents of Transgendered Individuals Deerfield Chicago/Metro Chicago Parents of Transgendered Individuals Joliet Kankakee Palatine Oak Park DeKalb DuPage

Check enclosed payable to PFLAG Please charge my credit card (Visa MasterCard Amex Discover)

_____ (Credit Card Number)
 _____ (Expiration DD/MM) (CVV - V/MC/D 3 digits
 on the back - AX 4 digits on the front)

_____ (Name on the Card) (Signature)

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

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



Upcoming Events in the LGBTQ Community



GET INVOLVED!

Conference at McHenry County College

April 12, 2014 – 8:30 a.m. to 4:15 p.m. 8900 W Highway 14, Crystal Lake, IL, 60012

Pride, the LGBTQA club at McHenry County College, will host its first conference, Pride: The Changing Perception of the LGBTQ Community, on Saturday 12 April at MCC starting at 8:30A and ending at 4:15P. The conference will be held in conjunction with the annual drag show on Friday 11 April starting at 7:00P.

Pre-registration for the drag show and conference will be available starting in March: the drag show and conference \$25, conference only \$20. On-site registration will be \$25 for the conference and \$35 for the drag show and conference. A continental breakfast and lunch will be provided.

There will be three sessions during the day with a variety of speakers discussing LGBTQ issues. The plenary speakers will be Chicken Lips, a gay couple from Denver who present motivational ideas in a humorous manner. They will also do two sessions during the day. Speaker will include MCC faculty and staff as well as speakers from Equality Illinois, PFLAG, and PTI.

THE OPEN DOOR CLINICS in Elgin and Aurora provide an amazing array of services for people who are HIV+ or who have AIDS. In addition, they provide a wide range of health services to the LGBTQ community.

Their annual fundraiser is on April 12 and will feature past-Olympian Greg Louganis.

More information can be found through the link below.

<http://www.opendoorclinic.org/new-beginnings/>

Gay Straight Alliance for Safe Schools and Diverse and Resilient are pleased to present:

"SAFE SCHOOLS, SAFE COMMUNITIES: STATE CONFERENCE ON LGBT YOUTH"

on Friday, April 11, 2014 at UW-Parkside in Kenosha, Wisconsin.

This year's conference is hosted by UW-Parkside's LGBTQ Resource Center.

Find out more and register at:

<http://www.gsafewi.org/events/statewide-conference-on-lgbt-youth/>

Anyone interested in developing the resiliency, safety, and well being of lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) youth should attend this conference. Specifically, the conference will benefit K-12 teachers, counselors, administrators, social workers, parents, middle and high school students, healthcare professionals, police officers, social workers, youth workers, and university students who may work with LGBT youth in the future. Attendees will share and learn best practices in supporting the resiliency of and protective factors for this population. **This year's conference will focus on what adults and youth leaders can do to build school, family, and community support for LGBT youth in our state while nurturing the inner strength and resilience of our youth.**

Caitlin Ryan, PhD, ACSW will keynote. Dr. Ryan is a clinical social worker that has worked on LGBT health and mental health for nearly 40 years. She is a graduate of Smith College for Social Work and started her social work career in school-based psycho-educational programs. Dr. Ryan directs the [Family Acceptance Project](#) at San Francisco State University - a research, intervention, education and policy initiative to help ethnically and religiously diverse families to support their LGBT children. This is Dr. Ryan's first visit to Wisconsin to talk about the Family Acceptance Project. Her work and research will be particularly valuable to social workers and social work learners, as well as agencies providing foster care services.

WHAT INTERESTS YOU?

Windy City Times is hosting a summit May 2-5 on LGBTQ youth in the Chicago region, to assess the current issues impacting homeless youth, and new solutions to these complex issues. Kim Hunt, executive director of Affinity Community Services, is the summit's director.

The title of the summit is "**OWNING OUR LIVES: DREAM IT. SPEAK IT. DO IT!!**" The website for registration, donations and full information is chicagosummit.lgbthomelessness.com/.

Each of the summit's three days will have a different area of focus:

Friday, May 2, 2-8 p.m.
Ann & Robert H. Lurie Children's Hospital

Open to people 25 and under who have been impacted by homelessness.

Registration: FREE

EDUCATE...LEARN...LISTEN...

...OPEN YOUR MIND 7

LGBT Resources for you

LGBT Supportive Organizations:

- **Center on Halsted** - www.centeronhalsted.org
- **Illinois Safe Schools Alliance** – www.illinoisafeschools.org
- **Howard Brown Health Center** – www.howardbrown.org
- **Lambda Legal** – www.lambdalegal.org
- **Youth Outlook** – www.youth-outlook.org
- **Transparentcy** – www.transparentcy.org
- **Open Door Clinic** - www.opendoorclinic.org
- **Links** – www.linksyouth.org
- **Heartstrong** – www.heartstrong.org



- **What Does Gay Mean?** – How to talk to kids about sexual orientation and prejudice - <http://www.mentalhealthamerica.net/go/what-does-gay-mean>
- **Welcoming Schools Helps Make Classrooms Safe Spaces for All Students (HRC)** – <http://www.hrc.org/blog/entry/welcoming-schools-helps-make-classrooms-safe-spaces-for-all-students>
- **GLSEN** – www.glsen.org
- **LGBT friendly college campus search** – www.campusprideindex.org
- **Children of LGBT parents** – www.rainbowrumpus.org



fish out of water
a documentary that explores the impassioned relationship between homosexuality and the Bible.

www.fishoutofwaterfilm.com

Film Screening of
Fish Out of Water

**Northbrook
United Methodist Church
Friday, May 2nd
7pm**

Refreshments and dialogue to follow the movie which is about an hour in length.

Sponsors from the following organizations will be present:



Northbrook Cares



1190 Western Ave.
Northbrook, IL 60062
(847) 272-2442
www.northbrookumc.org

WHAT HAVE PFLAG-ERS BEEN UP TO?

A few PFLAG Members attend the Gay Christian Network Conference that was held in January. Barbara Marian was one of those who attended and wrote a nice piece on her experience. This write up was also featured in the newsletter letter, *Fortunate Families*.

Toni Weaver, leader of our PFLAG Chapter of McHenry County (IL) and a Listening Parent herself invited my spouse and me to share an information table for Fortunate Families at the 10th annual conference of the Gay Christian Network www.gaychristian.net held January 09-12 in Chicago.

Jerry and I were so happy to be given an opportunity to meet our brother and sister parent-allies from evangelical churches and to demonstrate our solidarity with them in their work within their churches on behalf of their gay kids.

The conference attracts about 600 attendees each year from all over the U.S and we met people from various places in Canada, British Columbia and New Zealand as well.

Judging by the titles of the presentations and the breakout session for parents we attended it is obvious that all of us are struggling in much the same ways to be hopeful and loving toward our faith communities and to call them to be just and welcoming to our kids whom we love unconditionally.

We were touched by the parents, family members and single and coupled gays and lesbians who came over to talk to us. Almost every one of them greeted us with radiant smiles nine miles wide. Our conversations on Saturday afternoon were full of the energy and the spirit that can only come with the happiness and sense of freedom we were all feeling to be out and blessed and there together.

Another thing we had in common with people we met at the Conference was our mutual fascination and gratitude for Pope Francis. His words and behavior toward the marginalized are giving all of us joy and hope. Truly he is a great evangelizer!

There were only two visitors to our table who were not familiar with PFLAG but not a single person we met knew about "the Catholic PFLAG" Fortunate Families. However, as we anticipated, almost every person who came by was Catholic at one time or had a family member or friend who is Catholic.

Most of our visitors took photos of themselves and each other at our table and of our signs and of us. It's tremendously gratifying to know they were "taking us home with them," telling the story of their experiences at the Conference and putting Fortunate Families and PFLAG all over Facebook.

The 11th Annual GCN Conference is scheduled for Portland, Oregon next January 8th-11th, 2015.

Some of PTI members and families participated at the LGBTQ Panel Discussion on Friday March 21 at Aurora University during their Human Rights Awareness Week.

The "COMING OUT STARS" activity was an excellent ice-breaking activity that triggered a good discussion. We were asked to pick a paper star, which came in 4 colors (red, yellow, green, or blue). We wrote our name in the center of the star. At the points of the star, we wrote (1) name of someone we care about very much, (2) community we belong to, (3) a family member who has made a large impact in our live, (4) a job we most like to have, and (5) our hopes and dreams. In the coming out process, we are more likely to tell our close friends first, closest family members next, and then members of our community. At some point we will have to deal with rumors at work, and all of these will impact our hopes and dreams in life. Base on the color of the star we chose, we followed the clue depending on responses from friends, families, communities, and workplace. We kept the corresponding point of the star if we got full support, folded it back if we got hesitant or mixed responses, or tear it off if we received negative responses such as anger, disgust, or hatred. At the end, the blue star did not lose any points. The yellow star lost some points. The green star lost all 5 points but still kept the center. The red star lost the entire star including the center. The red star represents 40% of suicide victims who are LGBTQ individuals.

The panelists then shared their stories in relation to what color of star they have in real life. The session was dynamic with active participation from the audience. One panelist, not being accepted by his biological family for who he is, was able to find his new family base on the definition, "A family is the people who will love and be there for you no matter what." The facilitator also made a good point regarding the acceptance of LGBTQ individuals in comparison to left-handed people. In the old days, being left-handed was considered a sin or part of the devil. Now, left-handed children are not forced to switch hand. Generation Z will be more inclined to accept gender and sexual diversity better than older generations



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 DeKalb County

Meetings held LAST Monday – 7 pm
 Northern Illinois University
 Montgomery 109 - DeKalb 60115
 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

Entre Familia: PFLAG En Espanol

Meetings typically held 2nd Sunday – 1:30 pm
 Please contact us to confirm date,
 time and location
 pflagenespanol@pflagillinois.org

**PLEASE JOIN US
 AT 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 1st Sunday – 2 pm
 Unitarian Church Hinsdale
 11 W Maple, Hinsdale 60521
 pflaghinsdale@pflagillinois

PFLAG Joliet

Meetings held 3rd Sunday – 2 pm
 Good Shepard Church & Preschool
 25 Alexander Circle, Romeoville
 pflagjoliet@pflagillinois.org

PFLAG Kankakee

Contact Barbara Lohrbach
 815-932-2845

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

PFLAG Palatine

Meetings held 3rd Monday – 7 p.m.
 Countryside Unitarian Church
 1025 N Smith Rd, Palatine 60067

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.
 (not in December)
 Tree of Life Unitarian Church
 5603 W Bull Valley Rd, McHenry 60050
 flynnmb12@gmail.com
 marygenzler@hotmail.com