



OPEN DOORS

The Newsletter of the Northern Illinois PFLAG Chapters

President's Column

Let me tell you about entry #42 in the 2014 Chicago Pride Parade. Moms and dads, sons and daughters, brothers and sisters, friends, LGBT community members, allies, and corporate allies all made up the incredible contingent that marched under the proud banner of PFLAG. The crowds roared as we came into view, applauding and cheering us all along the four-mile route. From beginning to end, PFLAG received the love and appreciation of so many, many people.

Now it's time to express my appreciation to one special person, Carolann Dunn, parade chair for the PFLAG Council of Northern Illinois. Thanks to her, we had a float on which to ride, a float that allowed us to interface with the parade spectators in a way we never could while riding the trolley. She had the vision and the know-how to make the float a reality, from designing it, to building the supports, to procuring all the needed materials, to building it, to driving it, to final disassembly. We all owe Carolann a HUGE debt of gratitude. Thank you, Carolann, thank you, thank you, thank you!

Thanks, too, go out to Carolann's spouse, Sandy, for the use of her vehicle to tow the trailer/float, to my spouse, Tom, for the 10 hour day he put in the day before the parade, working with Carolann to practice assembling the float and for his help on Sunday putting it all back together. Many other people chipping in on Sunday made the work of getting everything ready that much lighter. This is our PFLAG family, and I'm proud, oh so proud, to be a part of it! YEAH, PFLAG!

By Toni Weaver

**THANK YOU,
Carolann!!**

**We loved
our new float!**



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:

Arlene Collins and
Jackie Frett

Database: Tony Dornacher

www.pflagillinois.org
www.pflag.org

Tegan and Sara

by Claire Buchanan

Tegan and Sara Quin have been advocates for LGBT rights since coming out as lesbians in their early teens. The sisters are famous in the gay community as musicians and idols. Tegan and Sara have been making music for 13 years and continue to reinvent their sound. They combine pop and indie with an amazing result. Their newest album, "Heartthrob", proves how much they have developed as musicians.

Tegan and Sara recently performed at the Vic in Chicago. I was lucky and attended the show. The mediocre openers included *The Courtneys* and *My Midnight Heart*. The opening bands performed many songs while the crowd waited for Tegan and Sara. The anticipation grew, as the lights were turned down low and smoke gathered. Finally, the twins came onto the stage and waved at the energetic fans. They opened with "Goodbye, Goodbye." The pair performed many songs from "Heartthrob" and a touch of their older material. Tegan and Sara are worth waiting in line for tickets!

They put on a great performance with their adorable Canadian accents. The pair has a great sense of style and are noticed for their fashion. They are featured in music festivals, magazines, and videos, with their popularity always growing. "Tegan and Sara have played countless festivals around the world including Bonnaroo, Glastonbury, Lollapalooza, and have toured with artists such as Cyndi Lauper, Neil Young, The Pretenders, The Killers, Jack Johnson, Ben Folds, City and Colour, Death Cab For Cutie, Weezer and Paramore. Since 2003, they have headlined tours in North America, Europe, Asia and Australia, consistently selling out theatres around the world." Highly recommended and forever a fan.



¹ About. (n.d.). *Tegan and Sara*. Retrieved June 26, 2014, from <http://www.teganandsara.com/about/>

What's Happening in Our Chapters?

HINSDALE CHAPTER

By Barb Medley

Our June guest speaker had an emergency and was unable to come to our meeting. Jackie Frett stepped in and talked with us about the attitudes of the Catholic hierarchy toward LGBT individuals. She explored her feelings being raised Catholic, remaining active in her church, and her feelings of extreme disappointment when her efforts to promote understanding in her local church were rebuffed.

Jackie reminded us about Fr. Mychal Judge, a gay priest who was the New York Fire Department chaplain, who was killed on September 11th as a result of the terrorist attack. He was a shining example of what being a good Catholic should be. Jackie talked about the supportive groups within the Catholic church who are helping LGBT Catholics, their families and allies participate in the church that has left them, such as Fortunate Families, Listening Parents, Call to Action, New Ways Ministry, Dignity and AGLO.



Thomas with the rainbow brownies he made for the June 1 Hinsdale meeting



DEERFIELD CHAPTER

By Sue Ginsburg

Our June meetings are so very special in that one of our past members awards scholarships to deserving LGBT

graduating seniors from around the area in loving memory of her son. Cynthia Drey has been so generous over the years, and this year was no different. She awarded two \$2,000 scholarships to Lukas Leon Crenshaw, from Lake Zurich High School and Michael Zavos, from Maine South High School.

Luke was very active in his GSA at Lake Zurich. He worked very hard to establish a gender-neutral bathroom at the school and, with the assistance of the ACLU was able to establish bathrooms for transgender students as well. He was an amazing advocate for the LGBT population during his high school years. His other interests include Speech and Art. Luke will be attending Elmhurst College in the fall.

Michael was President of his GSA for 3 years. While his interests are in Art and Music, and Michael is a very creative artist, he plans to eventually make a career in professional activism. Michael plans to attend Oakton Community College in the fall.

We congratulate these two young men and hope to hear about their successes in the future! And again, we thank Cynthia for her amazing generosity.



OAK PARK CHAPTER

By Nancy Johnson

We had an excellent pair of guests at our June meeting: Owen Daniel-McCarter and Monica James from Chicago House's TransLife Center (TLC) (chicagohouse.org) as well as Transformative Justice Law Project (tjlp.org.) We learned about the many challenges faced by many trans people: poverty, no education, no access to health care, homelessness, etc.

Currently TLC houses 9 trans people. Each person has a private room with a lock. The resident is the only person who has a key. It is a safe space for the residents. There are re rules such as no visitors in your room, no alcohol, no drugs on the premises. There are 24-hour monitors to ensure compliance with the rules.

Owen (handles all legal matters related to the residents, and is currently designing legal services for all of Chicago House. Monica is a lead at TLC and does outreach as well. Monica told us about the importance of using a person's preferred pronouns when referring to that person. She also demonstrated how she initiates a conversation to put a stranger at ease: "Hi. My name is Monica. I prefer "she" and "her" and my mood right now is awesome! How about you?"

Our speaker for July will be Gustavo Varela, Program Coordinator for Project Vida which provides services to lgbt Latinos including HIV testing. They also have an Independent Latino Youth Living Program for homeless youth ages 18-23. We are looking forward to learning more about Project Vida and their work.

Day in Our Village on June 1 was fun. Thanks to everyone who stopped by and helped out: Kate, Gy, Nancy, Lauren, Suzen, Sandy, Cossie, Matthew and others. As usual we were stationed next to Oak Park Area Gay and Lesbian Association, which made it even more fun to be there!

Now we're busily baking for our annual fund-raiser: Bake Sale at the Oak Park Farmers Market on July 5!



PTI CHICAGO CHAPTER
By Chad Gaynier

Our June meeting had 18 people in attendance, including a couple newcomers. The meeting featured Reverend Rachel Brown as guest speaker, who spoke about the changing attitudes among some faiths towards

the LGBTQ community. She then took questions from members; a discussion on positive experiences with religion were shared.

A general discussion followed, upcoming transgendered conferences were announced, and the Chicago Pride Parade was brought up.

July's meeting will not have a guest speaker, but will be devoted to sharing and support. We look forward to seeing everyone there!



DUPAGE CHAPTER
By John Hickey

The past few months have been fun and exciting times.

- We have had some great programming and discussions at our monthly meetings including: exploring the relationship between the Bible and homosexuality; learning about suicide awareness and prevention; and getting a glimpse into the lives of gay couples who have chosen to raise children.
- On June 2nd PFLAG DuPage members celebrated the first day of marriage equality in IL by passing out roses at the DuPage courthouse to couples getting marriage licenses.



- On Mother's Day, we enjoyed giving out Hugs and "Kisses" from Mom at Sidetrack in Chicago.

- The Chicago Gay Men's Chorus sounded great at Naperville's Wentz hall on June 1st. Be sure to catch a performance sometime. They CGMC sounds great and they are very entertaining. For info see <http://www.cgmc.org/events>



Looking forward, we have a lot more fun and interesting activities and programs coming up:

- Our July program will feature a discussion with Michael Kimpan from The Marin Foundation. Michael will help explore bridging the gap between many Faith beliefs and the LGBTQA community with his talk: *Standing in Solidarity with The Other* The Marin Foundation is a great resource and I would encourage anyone interested to please attend and not miss this opportunity. Learn more about the Marin Foundation at their website <http://www.themarinfoundation.org/> Be sure to view Andrew Marin's video of his story and why he started building bridges between the LGBTQ community and the church.
- August will feature a discussion with Carolyn Wahlskog MSW, Transcend Program Assistant from Youth Outlook. Carolyn will let us know about the great work being done by Youth Outlook and 360 Youth Services, including their new program for homeless LGBTQ youth and other volunteer opportunities.
- 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.



MCHENRY CHAPTER

By Toni Weaver

June 7 found members of PFLAG McHenry marching for the second time in the Harvard Milk Days Parade. Crowd response was enthusiastic and welcoming with very, very few naysayers. Because Harvard has a large Hispanic population, our signs were in both English and Spanish. Walking alongside Fortunate Families, a Roman Catholic Organization that supports parents of LGBT people, we made quite a presence! We'll be walking in the July 6 Crystal Lake Parade as well, again with Fortunate Families at our side. Our gratitude goes out to parade chair Barbara Marian and her spouse Jerry Powers for masterminding our presence in both parades. Community acceptance grows year by year, and it's obvious that we're fulfilling a real need our in the northwestern suburbs.

The June 10 chapter meeting featured a double track: a support group discussion for new attendees and the showing of the documentary film *Daddy and Papa*. According to the New Day Films website, "*Daddy and Papa* is a one-hour documentary video that opens a candid window on the personal, cultural and political implications of gay fatherhood. From surrogacy, foster care and interracial adoption to the complexities of gay divorce and the legal battles around gay parenting, *Daddy and Papa* presents a revealing look at some of the gay fathers who are breaking new ground in the ever-changing landscape of the American Family."



Paxton, Jaxx & Raina Hodgson
Harvey Milk Day Parade

Chicago PRIDE PARADE 2014



SPREADING THE LOVE...SHARING THE JOY

With the legalization of marriage equality taking full effect this past June, it seems appropriate to share this heartfelt speech written by the daughter of Phil and Kate Kroker (PFLAG Oak Park), Emily. The original message was written and read by Emily on the 10th anniversary of her lesbian sister's commitment ceremony to her now wife.

Meta and Joy, the past 10 years have been good to you. Despite an exhausting social calendar and incessant nonsensical bickering, you have grown together and in many ways, are more in sync now than you ever have been. You have put the work in that your relationship deserves and you are both better because of it. You both work hard to be great aunts to our kids, and loyal and generous friends, to each other, and to the rest of us. We are grateful to be a part of your lives, and to have the both of you in ours.

It wouldn't matter to me if you chose to get married or committed or civilly united, once, or twelve times or never. It would not change how I feel about Joy, what an integral part of our family she is, or the respect I have for the decision you made oh so long ago to be a family.

That being said, I cannot express how much this matters.

I am thrilled to say goodbye to the phrase "not technically," that the asterisks can be removed from alongside your names, and that you no longer require the use of complicated subtext or legal documents in order to describe or ensure a relationship, which has always been a marriage in every way.

But this is about far more than semantics and paperwork. It is a celebration of what is, natural, what is right and what is undeniably real. You need to know that if it took 100 weddings to get here, we would be here each and every time, and there would be that much to celebrate. We are honored to celebrate with you tonight, and tell you that your marriage and your right to have it means the world to us.

So as a sister, sister in law and simply a person, I am thrilled to be able to raise a glass to your marriage. Please join me in doing the same.

Written by Emily Spreng



PFLAG Chapters in the Chicagoland area have had the pleasure to work with several students from the Adler School of Psychology over the past two years. These students, under the guidance of member at large, Peter Ji, have attended chapter meetings, assisted with various chapter projects and tasks and contributed their knowledge and expertise to helping us better what we do. One student, Chad Gaynier, shared with us what his experience has meant to him.

My experience with PFLAG over the last six months has been nothing short of incredible. Visiting with the various chapters and seeing the support they offer to each other has been heartwarming, and hearing the struggles and challenges so many have faced and overcome has helped me appreciate the power that support groups like PFLAG can have on people in need. I feel that my participation has done wonders to help me towards becoming a competent counselor for LGBTQ persons and their friends and family.

Marching in the Pride Parade was an unexpected joy. I hadn't quite figured out what it meant to be in the parade until it was actually under way. For me it meant being publicly and openly supportive, and the reception from the crowd helped me to understand just how important that was for them, and also to myself. I'm honored to have been given this opportunity, and I hope that I can continue to help PFLAG in the future as much as they've helped me.

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

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

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

**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.**