Now, I have a confession to make. I didn’t watch the Academy Awards; Downton Abbey had my first allegiance. However, 24/7 cable news channels and social media provided all of the highlights, so I suppose, I did watch the awards, albeit not live.

The personalities accepting the awards used the evening as a platform for calling attention to the social ills plaguing our society, a key one being injustices perpetrated against women. If only the daughters of Lot had had such strong advocates! When the story of Sodom (Genesis 19: 1-11) is thrown in our faces as proof that God doesn’t like Sodomites (What’s a sodomite anyway? A resident of Sodom, yes?), no one ever seems to come to the defense of Lot’s daughters. Talk about abused women! Lot, rather than violate the hospitality code so essential to survival in that hostile environment, offered to exchange his two daughters for the two strangers he was sheltering under his roof. “Behold, I have two daughters who have not known man; let me bring them out to you, and do to them as you please; only do nothing to these men, for they have come under the shelter of my roof.” It’s too bad the Academy Awards hadn’t yet been invented! Those two girls could have used a strong advocate!

We have our own Academy Awards to present. The envelope please...The winner of “Best Coordinator for Kisses from a PFLAG Mom event” goes to Carole from PFLAG Hinsdale! For confidentiality reasons, we can’t use Carole’s last name, but all of us who have participated in the Mother’s Day event at Sidetrack know who she is, and we embrace her with thankfulness for all of her years of service. Taking over that role will be Marcia Prichason and Bob Cammarata, also of PFLAG Hinsdale. Thank you for your willingness to step up to the plate so that this event, much enjoyed by the PFLAG parents who participate, can continue. Who doesn’t like a hug and kiss from Mom?

- Toni

THE 750 CLUB

Tracy Baim, editor of the Windy City Times, is passionate about addressing the needs of homeless LGBT youth. To donate, or to find out more information, please go to...

https://secure2.convio.net/afoc/site/Donation2;jsessionid=4D500D3096256E422A307851558F41B7.app260a?df_id=2000&2000.donation=form1

Where it says “Team Captain” type either PFLAG or PFLAG + name of your chapter. Thank you for your generosity!
PFLAG is a non-profit, tax-exempt, all volunteer, local community-based organization of parents, relatives and friends of gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgendered 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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www.pflagillinois.org
www.pflag.org

WE ARE THE CHANGE
2015 PFLAG National Convention
October 16-18, 2015  Nashville, TN

For more info, visit http://community.pflag.org/2015convention

Looking to get involved?
Look what’s coming up!

PFLAG Information Meeting
Sunday March 8, 2015 2 p.m. at Zion Lutheran Church
Zion Lutheran Church and PFLAG are hosting a general interest meeting regarding interest in starting a PFLAG chapter in the South Suburbs.

- Are you lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender or queer (LGBTQ), or a parent, family member or friend of someone in the LGBTQ Community?
- Would you like a supportive network and safe space where you can find community, ask questions, share your experiences and concerns in a safe space?
- You are not alone. Please consider coming to this meeting.
- Where: Zion Lutheran Church, 17100 69th Ave. in Tinley Park
  - The Gathering Area (enter through the glass doors in the middle of the south side of the building)
- When: Sunday, March 8th from 2-3:30pm. Refreshments will be provided.

PFLAG realizes it’s vision through:

- Support for families, allies and people who are LGBTQ;
- Education for ourselves and others about issues and challenges facing people who are LGBTQ;
- Advocacy in our communities to achieve full equality for people who are LGBTQ.

Learn more about PFLAG at PFLAG.org.

Questions? Please contact Rev. David Weasley at (708)532-1600 or d.weasley@ziontinleypark.org.

EDUCATION
SUPPORT
ADVOCACY

LGBTQ 101:
Training for Service Providers

Thursday, February 19th or Tuesday, March 31st
12:00 p.m. - 1:20 p.m.
Center on Halsted | 3656 N. Halsted St.

This professional development training for social service providers will address the basics of gender and sexual orientation, giving context for working with Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, and Queer (LGBTQ) populations. The objectives of this training include defining key terms, ensuring an appropriate vocabulary, developing strategies to address needs unique to LGBTQ clients, and exploring ways to become an ally, both personally and professionally. This training is recommended for all social service providers, across multiple disciplines and fields.

$20 per individual. Please register at community.centeronhalsted.org/LGBTQ101.
For larger group rates or if cost is a barrier to attendance, please contact Jane Merril at jmerril@centeronhalsted.org or 773.472.5649 ext 412.

To learn more about these and other events visit centeronhalsted.org
HINSDALE CHAPTER
By Barb Medley

Our February meeting was supposed to be held the day of the Super Bowl snowstorm. We postponed our speaker, Gustavo Varela, who agreed to reschedule for our March 1st meeting. He will speak about the programs he is involved in that benefit Hispanic LGBT youth. Jackie and Carole braved the nasty weather in case a newcomer attended, and there was one. It was a quiet but very worthwhile meeting, and a big thank you goes to them for being there. Everyone made it there and home safely.

We will be showing a documentary at our April 5th meeting – “Daddy & Papa” – a film by Johnny Symons, about gay fathers in America. The firm production company, Persistent Visions, describes the one hour documentary as “exploring the personal, cultural, and political impact of gay men who are making a decision that is at once traditional and revolutionary: to raise children themselves. Taking us inside four gay male families, Daddy & Papa traces the day-to-day challenges and the larger, critical issues that inevitably intersect their private lives – the ambiguous place of interracial families in America, the wonder and precariousness of surrogacy and adoption, the complexities of marriage and divorce within the gay community, and the legality of their own parenthood.” Please join us for this presentation!

OAK PARK CHAPTER
By Nancy Johnson

We had another small meeting in February, but we did have a father and his two children attend. After hearing the teens telling their stories, I felt hopeful for the future of LGBT rights with such fierce advocates.

At our March 22 meeting, we'll be having Joy Messinger, Deputy Director at Illinois Caucus for Adolescent Health (ICAH) who oversees ICAH’s education and youth development. Besides telling us about what ICAH does, Joy will also speak about the other organizations she’s involved in.

Our annual bake sale fundraiser date has been set. It will be on September 5 at the Farmers Market. We’re looking forward to it as usual.

PTI CHICAGO CHAPTER
By Arlene Collins

Parents of Transgender Individuals did not have a February meeting but we are scheduled for March 12th at 7pm at the Center on Halsted.

Our March meeting will focus on trans issues parents have been dealing with. We hope to also watch the movie “TRANS”. Please join us for an evening of sharing the experiences along the journey we are taking with our Transgender/Gender Non-conforming kids. All are welcome.

DUPAGE CHAPTER
By John Hickey

PFLAG DuPage had a busy month with lots of activities and more events coming up.
Recent activities:

- We had a great meeting on Sunday, Feb 15 with over 30 people participating. We were pleased to hear from One Wheaton (http://onewheaton.com) members Lora and Kathy and Dawn Marie. One Wheaton is a community of LGBTQ&A alumni and students of Wheaton College. We find their mission very much aligned with that of PFLAG. They support students and alumni with compassion, counsel and resources so that they can live full, vibrant lives.

- On Jan 30, we hosted a pizza and movie night and watched, “Lady Valor – The Kristen Beck Story” (http://www.ladyvalorfilm.com/). We had over 30 people in attendance. This was a great opportunity to gain insights and spend more time getting to know each other. Participants recommend we plan another movie night. Stay tuned...

- On Feb 14, Gail, Paul, Mary Ann and Dee (from the Bloomington-Normal Chapter) hosted a PFLAG table at the 23rd annual MBLGTACC conference at Illinois State University. It was an amazing experience meeting so many energized college students. We even had a new visitor at the DuPage meeting as a result of the conference.

Upcoming meetings:

- March 15 - Our program will be presented by Kimberley Lux of Howard Brown.
- April 19 – We will have Lorry Luscri from VA. Lorry has organized and hosted three Do Ask, Do Tell events for the VA since the repeal of Don’t Ask, Don’t Tell. We will host a shortened version of Camouflage Closet (http://www.camouflagecloset.com) and a discussion.

Please consider joining us at an upcoming meeting. We meet the 3rd Sunday of each month at St. Paul Lutheran Church at 515 S Wheaton Ave, Wheaton, IL.

“No Dumb Questions,” a 2001 documentary film that follows the journey of three young sisters, ages 6, 9, and 11, as they explore their feelings about their Uncle Bill becoming their Aunt Barbara. Their parents, who are working hard to understand transgender themselves, insist that there are No Dumb Questions.

In the works for March is the film “Faces and Facets of Transgender Experience,” created by Jean Hodges, current PFLAG National President, in collaboration with the PFLAG National Staff. The film comes with a discussion guide and suggestions for PFLAG chapters on how to become more educated and inclusive.

Meg and Fred Valentini (PFLAG Metro Chicago) will be our honored guests in April as they share with us their experiences and insights as participants in the annual AIDS Ride.

It’s a long hike out to the super-boonies of McHenry, but we welcome all PFLAG members to join us at any of our monthly meeting. Between 25 and 35 people regularly attend, representing a pretty even mix of LGBT members, parents, and allies. Find us at Tree of Life Unitarian Universalist Church, 5603 W. Bull Valley Rd., McHenry, 7-9PM, on the 2nd Tuesday of the month.

DEERFIELD CHAPTER
By Sue Ginsburg

We were lucky that the weather held out, as last month our meeting had to be cancelled due to the closing of our meeting place. We welcomed a new family this month and two interns from the Adler School of Psychology!

Our speaker this month was Carmi Frankovich, a social worker who has treated the LGBTQ community for 25 years. She came to speak to us about suicide amongst the LGBTQ community and talked to us of what to look for in order to prevent the worst from happening. She explained some of the suicide warning signs, some ways to prevent suicide: the do’s and don’ts of what to say and how to help others if, in fact, all else fails and suicide occurs. It’s important that we all have the phone number of the Trevor Project (1-866-488-7386), which is the LGBTQ suicide prevention hotline; it is open 24/7!!!

We conducted a short informational meeting before we broke up into discussion groups. We talked about the many volunteer opportunities that PFLAG has and
handed out a list of them to those who were interested. I urged our members to contact their State Senators with the letter I attached to their reminders of tonight’s meeting, regarding the nomination of Rev. Meeks to be chairman of the Illinois State Board of Education. Rev. Meeks is openly anti-gay and a very poor choice for this position, besides the fact that he has no experience in education whatsoever. ALL OF US SHOULD BE WRITING THESE LETTERS TO OUR SENATORS! Our membership was also informed about the 750 Project which is the coalition of organizations headed by Tracy Baim of the Windy City Times, to raise money to house homeless LGBTQ youth. The money raised will be handled by the Aids Foundation of Chicago (AFC). We can donate on line and where it asks for “TEAM CAPTAIN”, we simply write in “PFLAG.” We can donate as often or as much as we wish, but we all agreed that this is an important part of advocacy that PFLAG should tackle. Here is the website to donate:

https://secure2.convio.net/afoc/site/Donation2;jsessionid=4D500D3096256E422A307851558F41B7.app260a9df_id=2000&2000.donation=form1

Another student from Adler is conducting a Transgender Ally survey. She’d love to have everyone participate. If you’d like to do this, you can contact her at Adler at: ecucci@my.adler.edu

SAUK VALLEY CHAPTER
By Barb Schwamberger

PFLAG Sauk Valley met on Sunday, February 15 at 2:30pm at St. Luke’s Episcopal Church annex in Dixon. Amy Brandon of YWCA Sauk Valley presented the program on domestic violence in heterosexual and homosexual relationships. She spoke about power, control and entitlement issues and how these are used to isolate and intimidate a partner in a relationship. Resources for support and advocacy will be made available. If you have concerns or questions about your relationship or that of friends, attend our meeting for support and to have your questions answered. Our meetings are open to those who advocate for justice and equality for all people. Names of those attending are kept in confidence.

The meeting room is located on West Third St. behind the public library. Look for the banner on the tree. Parking is available on the street and in the parking lot across the street.

Questions about PFLAG Sauk Valley can be directed to pflagsaukvalley@gmail.com or by calling 815-440-2672.

To stay updated on what is going on with PFLAG National, check out these links:

Stay current with PFLAG National: PFLAG national

Follow PFLAG national on Facebook: http://www.facebook.com/pflag

See what PFLAG National is tweeting about: http://twitter.com/ #!/PFLAG

Check out recent posts on PFLAG National’s blog: http://blog.pflag.org/

Watch PFLAG national on their YouTube channel: http://www.youtube.com/user/pflagnational

ALSO

PTI Chicago has a new Facebook page. Please check it out and LIKE it: PTI Chicago Facebook

About Face Theatre (http://www.aboutfacetheatre.com) in Chicago is performing A Kid Like Jake Feb 6 – March 8 at the Greenhouse Theatre. Tix are $20-$35.

Click here for show time at tix: https://www.vendini.com/ticket-
When: Friday, March 20 [3-6pm] to Saturday, March 21 [9am-5:30pm]

Where: Hyatt Regency Chicago

Mark your calendar for the LGBT Equality Institute, a two-day conference geared at bringing together our state’s LGBT community, progressive advocates, community groups, and allies to discuss the issues that affect us all.

Early bird fee (through March 1st): $60 per person
Full price (after March 1st): $75 per person

Scholarships are available. E-mail pdillon@eqil.org with inquiries.
OPEN DOORS – The Newsletter of the Northern Illinois PFLAG Chapters

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.org

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 Tuesday – 7 pm
158 N 4th St
DeKalb, IL 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.org

PFLAG Joliet
Contact Lea Anne Stoughton
lastoughton@gmail.com
815-793-5138

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
Contact Deirdre O’Connell
herself68@yahoo.com

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 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.