President’s Column

The Transformative Power of the Arts

This weekend, I experienced a moving performance of *TREVOR the musical* and was reminded of the immense, transformative power of the arts. I love the idea of creating change in the world through the arts.

As the Writers Theatre website explains: “Meet Trevor, a 13-year-old boy in 1981 whose vibrant imagination drives a turbulent journey of self-discovery. As he deals with adolescence and all that goes with it, Trevor begins to explore what it means to be himself, influenced by his friends, parents and his musical idol.” The performance not only reminded me of what it was like during my middle school years, but it also gave me other important perspectives to consider.

In my business life, I find it is true that people will usually forget the details of what you said. But, you can bet, almost without fail, they will remember how you made them feel. Therein lies the power of the arts. Done well, they have undeniable power invoke deep emotions. Art can give us a glimpse into the life and views of others and increase the breadth and depth of our experiences and perspectives.

Whether it is a play about the complexities of life, a moving dance routine, an inspiring story, a revealing documentary, a brilliant photo, a heartwarming painting, an empowering song, disturbing movie or some other creative expression, Art can have a lasting impact on our views and help shape our future.

October 11th is National Coming Out Day. This is a day to raise awareness, promote affirmation and celebrate the LGBTQIA community. I plan to continue enjoying personal growth through exploration of the arts… and hope to bring some friends or family along on the journey.

Consider taking in a performance of the Tony Award winning play *Fun Home*, playing through November 12th. If you use the code “PFLAG” to book tickets for the Friday, October 10th performance of Fun Home, a portion of the ticket price will be donated to the PFLAG Council of Northern Illinois.

Explore the vast opportunities Northern IL offers. Live, love, laugh, cry-grow…

In Love and Solidarity,

John

*TREVOR the musical* – Playing at the Writers Theatre through October 8th

[https://www.writerstheatre.org/trevor-the-musical](https://www.writerstheatre.org/trevor-the-musical)
PFLAG is a non-profit, tax-exempt, all volunteer, local community-based organization of parents, relatives and friends of gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender persons. PFLAG is not affiliated with any ethnic, religious, economic or political group.

OPEN DOORS is a publication of the Northern Illinois PFLAG chapters. Articles that appear do not necessarily reflect the opinions of PFLAG, its Board of Directors or members. We reserve the right to edit any submissions. Priority is given to original work by the membership.

Send submissions, comments and photos to:
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og4equality@gmail.com

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www.pflagillinois.org
www.pflag.org
www.pflagillinois.org/transgender

Be sure to like PFLAG Council of Northern Illinois on Facebook.

2017/2018 Membership Campaign

Dear PFLAG friends,

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

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

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

Thank you,
Don Donahue

Let’s be there … tomorrow!

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

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

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

Isn’t our membership dollar really more about tomorrow?
And won’t you help pay it forward?

Please join us – or consider renewing your membership in PFLAG! Our membership year begins Oct. 1

Your membership donation of $45.00 goes a long way to educate, influence change and provide support. Shared by your local chapter, the Northern Illinois Council, and the national PFLAG organization, your contribution helps to:

- Support important community and national outreach efforts, work with local businesses and school districts and celebrate in the Chicago Pride parade and other local parades
- Run our help line and insure our chapters can provide meaningful support
- Maintain our website, print brochures and educational materials

Because the need is great, and there is so much more to do, please consider increasing your donation beyond the standard membership fee to help us further strengthen and broaden our efforts.

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It’s fast and easy! Simply go to www.pflagillinois.org and click on GIVE. Select a chapter and membership donation level. Or complete an enrollment form, mailing it and your check to: PFLAG Council of Northern Illinois, P.O. Box 734, Elmhurst, IL 60126.

Won’t you help pay it forward?
McHenry CHAPTER  
By Toni Weaver

A last minute family emergency forced a change of meeting content in September. Rather than having a presentation on PrEP, the pre-exposure prophylaxis drug protocol, we watched a Tyler Oakley video on LGBTQ+ refugees, very timely since the refugee crisis is ever present in the news. For our extended worldwide LGBTQ family, the ability to escape persecution and death is paramount, and we must always maintain vigilance.

On September 26, we co-sponsored a workshop for school support staff to give them training in working with their transgender student population. AJ Jennings from the Illinois Safe Schools Alliance presented the training, and the day also featured a panel of parents sharing their own personal family stories and a panel of school practitioners who had successfully navigated their school systems to make their schools safe and welcoming spaces for their transgender students.

The PrEP presentation has been rescheduled for October.

Deerfield CHAPTER  
By Sue Ginsburg/Janet Svatos

We were honored to host Nat Duran, Youth Management Manager from Illinois Safe Schools Alliance (ISSA). ISSA oversees statewide GSA’s, youth programing and youth leadership events. Nat talked about the upcoming event that ISSA will be hosting on Oct. 8-9 at the University of Illinois Chicago Forum. There will be a plethora of workshops available on the 9th and PFLAG will be present with a table of our own. If you are interested and would like to attend, contact John Hickey: jhickey1@gmail.com

For additional information about the event, contact Maggie at: engagementvista@illinoissafeschools.org

Nat also talked about this summer’s “ACTION CAMP”, sponsored by ISSA. It was a completely gender neutral, sleep away camp for 8th through 12th graders. During their week away, the students enjoyed regular camp activities, but also leadership skills; they attended workshops to learn to become activists and to learn important history! This knowledge could then be taken back to their schools in the fall. It was a place to feel safe and empowered!

Our group also talked about two other events that will be taking place, unfortunately on the same night of October 3. The first is in conjunction with Writers Theatre and Youth Services of Glenview and Northbrook. Since Deerfield has partnered with Writers Theatre, we were looking for a place to continue the conversion started with “Trevor the Musical.” (which leaves Writers Theatre on October 10)

Although TREVOR the musical is set in 1981, young people today still face daunting challenges in their everyday lives. Societal expectations, peer pressure and bullying can lead to depression and suicidal thoughts in young people, especially LGBTQ youth discovering their identity. Fortunately, there are resources out there to help. Join us for a stimulating panel discussion with representatives from some of these life-saving organizations as we talk about the important issues facing young people today, and what we can do to support the “Trevors” in our lives. Featuring youth and leaders from Youth Services of Glenview/Northbrook, Family Service of Glencoe and more.

RSVp here:  

Hinsdale CHAPTER  
By Marsha Prichason

Hinsdale PFLAG met on Sunday, September 3rd. Because it was a holiday weekend, we did not have a designated speaker. However, after introductions, we did have a spirited discussion regarding membership (pay your dues and be sure to indicate to which chapter you belong), signing-up for our annual December pot-luck, and collecting the many items needed for our filling of 30 stockings for the Night Ministry’s Homeless shelter, the Crib. The Crib is the only shelter in Chicago dedicated to serving homeless LGBTQ individuals. Additionally, volunteers were solicited to serve a hot breakfast at the Crib the first Sunday of every month. At breakfast that morning, 25 young people were served. The facility is clean and everyone was well behaved and hungry. Also discussed was the issue regarding the Downers Grove Library Board’s Art Jaros who, amongst other comments, stated that the library should serve only the heterosexual population and that diversity training should be eliminated for library staff. A letter was passed for signatures demanding Mr. Jaros’ immediate removal from the Board. The letter was sent to the Village of Downers Grove Mayor and Commissioners. Members also discussed the meaning of gender neutral, gender fluid, non-binary, and the appropriate usage of the pronoun “they,” attempting to gain greater understanding of the terminology and the implications and meaning with respect to those who
DuPage CHAPTER  
*By Bernadette & Ron Whitfield*  

We had a very good turnout (nearly 50 people) in September to welcome our speaker, Anthony Galloway of Equality Illinois. Galloway (his closest friends call him that!) shared his journey from East St. Louis to Chicago and the experiences that formed his ambitions and passions. Thank you, Galloway, for sharing your life with us. Other notable attendees were Rev. Jared Olson, Pastor of St. Paul Lutheran Church — the site of our meetings since inception; and George and Mary Ann Avery — founding members of our Chapter 14+ years ago! Also in attendance, due to the encouragement of their clinical instructor, were 5 NIU psychiatric nursing students. We were a bit surprised to learn that only one of the five knew about PFLAG before learning about our chapter meeting. This raises an important area for outreach and education. Suggestions about how to do that are welcome!

- Don Donahue from our chapter and the membership chair for PCNI spoke briefly about signing up for next year! Don spoke eloquently about the good things that are done with the help of paid memberships. You can sign up online at [http://www.pflagillinois.org/membership/](http://www.pflagillinois.org/membership/).
- Chapter Elections  
  - The nominating committee of Gail Hanson and John Hickey assembled the following slate of officers: Bernadette & Ron Whitfield, Co-Presidents; Steve Rothmund, Vice-President; Bob Lied, Treasurer; and Lisa Garber, Recording Secretary.

  - Chapter members present voted unanimously to elect the nominees!
  - We thank Steve, Bob, and Lisa for their leadership roles and support in the chapter.

- This year marked our second appearance in Naperville’s Labor Day Parade. Special thanks to Steve and Rita Rothmund for managing our entry, providing the refreshments, and setting up the awesome music. Bernadette and Ron were overjoyed to be accompanied by their son, Jonathan, and his fiancé, Al Cortez, who were in town for a family wedding. Jay and Al became engaged after completing the San Francisco half-marathon in July. Congratulations Jay and Al.
  - August 26 — Diversity Picnic at Hope Presbyterian Church in Wheaton. Special guests were Hope Presbyterian Church parishioners from Englewood. We brought the safety pin craft and the button maker.
  - August 27 — Equality Illinois Fahrenheit 2017 Chicago Pride South Festival on the Lake (organized by Anthony Galloway of Equality Illinois). PFLAG DuPage was well represented. We brought the safety pin craft and the button maker.

ascribe to those identifiers. A letter was read from Illinois Safe Schools thanking Hinsdale PFLAG for its donation. Next month’s speaker will be Matt Lind from the Chicago Gay Hockey League, who works with the NHL and college hockey to promote an inclusive environment at all levels. Members were reminded that February 3rd is the Equality Illinois’ Gala.
maker.

• Saturday, September 9 — PFLAG DuPage brought the safety pin craft and the button maker to the DuPage UUC’s Activist Expo. PFLAG Northern Illinois Council arranged for the booth.
• We contacted Glenbard South High School and learned that we could put a “public service announcement” in their school newspaper (online). We submitted a short paragraph about our existence and how to find us. We encourage others to contact their high schools and inquire about doing that too. We will be pleased to share what we submitted.

Oak Park CHAPTER
By Nancy Johnson

Our table at Barrie Fest was a huge hit due to the button machine! The kids enjoyed it, and liked selecting their choice of button, and helping to make it. One girl told us that she had done a report on PFLAG at school because she had a gay friend. WOW!

PTI Chicago CHAPTER
By Molly Malone

This month, Chicago-PTI, had a longtime friend of the group visit as our guest speaker: Pamela McCann. Pamela is an activist in the LGBTQ community and is currently on the Chicago Task Force on LGBT Aging. As a transwoman with a trans son, she has an especially unique perspective on the trans-parent experience. Pamela is generous, compassionate, and has an easy way of explaining things. One of the things that she discussed was how gender requires social validation yet sexuality does not. We humans require social validation from everyone (from strangers to family) in every relationship (from casual to intimate) in order to feel secure. However, our sexuality does not need validation by anyone in order to feel secure. (It is nice to have validation from our romantic/sexual partners but it is not required from society as a whole.) She volunteered to punch out the patterns for the buttons since she was a crafter and had the punches at home. It was very helpful since we didn’t have to cut out any with scissors!

We had no speaker in September, but enjoyed our discussion about various issues.

Downers Grove CHAPTER
By Gloria

Our speaker, Tatyana Moatan from Howard Brown, was unable to join us due to illness, but she will be with us for our October 11 meeting.

We discussed the current state of the DG Library board. Board member Art Jaros was dismissed by the Mayor and village council on Sept 5 for comments he made in a public library board meeting that were discriminatory toward LGBT people, and regarding inclusive library training and services. Jaros is opposing that dismissal with the DuPage County board. We decided that a member of our PFLAG chapter will attend each monthly library board meeting. Library board meetings are public meetings.

We honored the life of Edie Windsor, LGBT activist. We celebrated the passage of Illinois HB 1785 into law, and reminded everyone to contact Rauner to thank him for signing this into law. And we discussed the Republican President’s ban against transgender soldiers in the military.

We also had some new parents in August. One of them
observed that the current variety of the society’s ability to validate the variety.

Gender is a social construct and its validation is an important concept to understand that goes to the root of how to be an ally. One of Pamela’s suggestions for how to be a better ally, and validate gender socially, includes asking, “how would you like me to ____?” and creating the space for an answer. This particular ally action does require some work on the ally’s part to notice and respect the subtlety of when such a question is appropriate. Good times might include before/after a social event, when there are no social pressures or events planned as part of a supportive conversation, or even asking to create a space for such questions and waiting for that space to ask. When talking to your child, asking these questions in a safe space can also help the child practice the answers so they are more prepared when others ask. Pamela does caution that sometimes the answer is unknown, and that is OK. Gender is often a journey and there is no script or map; everyone will create their own definitions and often it continues to evolve.

We all learned from Pamela’s wisdom and truly appreciate her sharing her experiences. We also welcomed three new families to the meeting and discussed our upcoming election for officers at the next meeting.

**Tinley Park CHAPTER**
By Deborah Medina

PFLAG Tinley Park continues to welcome visitors to its monthly meeting. Along with our regular attendees, we have been at about 10-12 people per month, sharing our resources and stories. Three of our members recently attended a forum in Flossmoor, hosted by “Lighthouse LGBTQ+”. Their guest speaker that evening was Brian Johnson from Equality IL. He spoke on the history of the gay community and movement over the last 100 years, specifically in Illinois. What an interesting topic! We hope to continue a relationship with the Flossmoor group.

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**OTHER NEWS...**

PFLAG National names Dr. Jaime M. Grant as New Executive Director.

Membership Form
PFLAG Council of Northern Illinois

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

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

Please check:
• _____ New Membership
• _____ Renewal Membership

Date: ____________________

Name: ____________________________________________________________

Address: __________________________________________________________

____________________________________________________________________

Telephone: _________________________________________________________

E-Mail: _____________________________________________________________________

MEMBERSHIP LEVEL: (please circle)

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

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

SELECT CHAPTER:

Aurora/Fox Valley Chicago Chicago PTI Deerfield
Downers Grove DuPage Hinsdale Kankakee
McHenry McHenry PTI North Shore PTI Oak Park
Rockford Tinley Park

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

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

Membership may also be started/renewed on-line at www.pflagillinois.org.
Equality Illinois invites you to join them on **Friday, Oct. 27, 2017** at the Cadillac Palace Theatre in Chicago to see *Les Misérables*. Cameron Mackintosh presents the new production of Alain Boublil and Claude-Michel Schonberg’s Tony Award-winning musical phenomenon direct from an acclaimed two-and-a-half-year return to Broadway. Proceeds from the sale of these tickets benefit Equality Illinois’ important LGBTQ civil rights work. Your support helps us remain VISIBLE and POWERFUL! We hope to see you at the show.

**SECURE YOUR TIX TODAY!**

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**ILLINOIS SAFE SCHOOLS SYMPOSIUM 2017 - A Decade of Hope, Determination and Resistance**

**October 8th and 9th 2017**

Sunday, Oct.8, 4-6:30 Pre-Symposium Cocktail Reception
A New Leaf// 1818 N. Wells St., Chicago, IL 60614
Cost: $60 per person

Monday, Oct. 9: Safe Schools Symposium
Featuring Key Note Speaker Alex Gino, author of “George"
8:00 am to 5:30 pm
University of Illinois Forum// 725 Roosevelt Road, Chicago, IL 60608
Cost free to youth (18 and under)
Cost $120 (Although there will be a break for educators, etc)
Contact Illinois Safe Schools for information

Support for young folks traveling to Chicago from North, Suburban, Central and Southern IL will be available as well as continuing education credits for teachers and licensed attorneys. We will also provide childcare and lunch on the day of the symposium.

For more information contact Maggie at engagementvista@illinoissafeschools.org

PFLAG WILL HAVE A TABLE AT THIS SYMPOSIUM. PLEASE CONTACT JOHN Hickey, PRESIDENT OF PFLAG’S NORTHERN ILLINOIS COUNCIL, TO LET HIM KNOW YOU ARE ATTENDING AND CAN MAN THE TABLE FOR A WHILE.

**YOU CAN CONTACT JOHN AT :** jthickey1@gmail.com

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Fun Home – Playing at the Victory Gardens Theater through November 12th.


Enter the code “PFLAG” when ordering tickets for the Friday Oct 10 performance and a portion of the ticket price will be donated to PFLAG Council of Northern Illinois.
PFLAG Aurora/Fox Valley
Meetings held 2nd Sunday – 2 pm
New England Congregational Church
406 W Galena Blvd, Aurora 60506
pflagaurorafoxvalley@pflagillinois.com

PFLAG Metro Chicago
Meetings held 3rd Sunday – 2 pm
Center on Halsted (Senior Room)
3656 N Halsted, Chicago 60613
pflagchicagometro@pflagillinois

PFLAG Deerfield
Meetings held 2nd Thursday – 7:15 pm
Congregation BJBE
1201 Lake Cook Rd, Deerfield 60015
pflagdeerfield@pflagillinois.org

PFLAG DuPage
Meetings held 3rd Sunday – 2 pm
St Paul Lutheran Church
515 S Wheaton Ave, Wheaton 60187
pflagdupage@yahoo.com
www.pflagdupage.org

PFLAG Tinley Park
Meetings held 2nd Sunday – 2-4 pm
Zion Lutheran Church
17100 69th Ave.
Tinley Park, IL 60477

PFLAG Downers Grove
Meetings held 2nd Wednesday – 7 p.m.
First Congregational UCC
1047 Curtiss
Downers Grove, IL 60515
www.pflag.wixsite.com/pflagdgg
pflagdg@gmail.com

PFLAG Hinsdale
Meetings held 1st Sunday – 2 pm
Unitarian Church Hinsdale
11 W Maple, Hinsdale 60521
pflaghinsdale@pflagillinois

PFLAG Joliet
Contact Maria Prekop
maria.prekop@navigant.com

PFLAG Will, Kankakee, Iroquois
Contact Rev. Barbara Lohrbach
revlohrbach@gmail.com
 plagkankakee@pflagillinois.org

PFLAG McHenry
Meetings held 2nd Tuesday – 7 pm
Tree of Life Unitarian Church
5603 W Bull Valley Rd
McHenry 60050
pflagwoodstockmchenry@pflagillinois.org

PFLAG Oak Park
Meetings held 4th Sunday – 3 pm
First United Church
848 Lake St, Oak Park 60304
pflagoakpark@pflagillinois.org

Parents of Transgender (Chicago)
Meetings are held the 2nd Thursday – 7 pm
Center on Halsted
3656 N Halsted, Chicago 60613
parentsoftransgender@pflagillinois.org

Parents of Transgender (McHenry)
Meetings are held the 4th Wednesday – 7 p.m.
Tree of Life Unitarian Church
5603 W Bull Valley Rd, McHenry 60050
pflagptimchenry@pflagillinois.org

Parents of Transgender (North Shore)
Meetings are held the 3rd Sunday – 6 p.m.
Winnetka Presbyterian Church
1255 Willow Rd, Winnetka, IL

PFLAG Rockford
Meetings are held the 1st Monday – 6:30 pm
Rockford Public Library
215 N Wyman St, Rockford, IL
(use entrance off Mulberry St.)

Please join us for any chapter meeting.

If you are not comfortable meeting in a large group, arrangements can be made to meet one-on-one.
Contact any one of our chapters for more information.