



OPEN DOORS

The Newsletter of the Northern Illinois PFLAG Chapters

President's Column



Spring is here and PFLAG is springing into action. PFLAG and our community partners have been off to a great start with activities in 2018 and there are many more opportunities for you to jump in too! I know that we don't all start our PFLAG journeys ready to jump into the Pride Parade with both feet. But, I cannot help but be impressed with the growing strength of PFLAG Advocates!

Below are some opportunities for you to consider!

- Learn about the legislative process & how to have your voice heard at LGBTQ Advocacy Day April 11th. Find more information at <https://www.equalityillinois.us/events/2018-advocacy-day/>
- Participate in a local Parade with your chapter or a neighbor chapter! Walk with the Aurora/ Fox Valley chapter in Aurora's first Pride Parade on Father's Day, June 17th.
- Help host a table at Chicago Children's Museum - International Family Equality Day May 6th. Contact Ron and Bernie at BandR.PFLAG@gmail.com
- Join in the fun and participate in the Mother's Day "Kisses from Mom" fundraiser at Sidetrack Bar in Chicago May 13. See details on how to sign up in this issue of Open Doors.
- Help host our tent and interact with Chicago and visitors at Pier Pride Saturday June 23rd. Contact me at info@pflagillinois.org to sign up.
- Join the festivities as PFLAG marches in the 49th Chicago PRIDE Parade Sunday June 24th. This is your day to feel like a rock-star!
- Mark your calendar to participate in our PFLAG Workshop Day currently planned for Saturday November 10th. I am very excited. This is going to be a great day with amazing speakers, workshops and networking. Get engaged, inspired and empowered! Details will be out in the coming months.
- Keep an eye on Open Doors and your email for opportunities to join in a community outreach activity or event at a local school or in the community.
- Forge new relationships and consider hosting an event of your own! PFLAG is always here to help.

In Love and Solidarity,

John



New PFLAG Chapters!

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

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PFLAG Council of Northern IL
on

facebook

Congratulations to our newest official Chapter.... PFLAG Grayslake / Round Lake!

PFLAG Grayslake / Round meets on the 2nd Wednesday of the month at 6:30 p.m. at the Grayslake Teen Center, 151 Hawley Street, Grayslake IL 60030.

Congratulations to Hal Sloan and the Grayslake / Round Lake leadership team for making this a reality!

PFLAG Aurora/Fox Valley is looking for folks who want to help strengthen the chapter and build on their proud legacy of support for the LGBTQ community and allies in Aurora / Fox Valley. If you are interested in helping make a difference please contact John Hickey at info@pflagillinois.org

It is really great to see PFLAG chapters becoming accessible to more families. We would love to see PFLAG more accessible to all families. If there is not a PFLAG chapter near you, and you are interested in forming a chapter in your community, please contact John Hickey at info@PFLAGillinois.com



PFLAG Supports Dominican University Pride Week Resource Fair!



PFLAG members Ron and Bernie Whitfield, Joann Larson, and John and Mary Ann Hickey spent an afternoon making pins and buttons, and discussing PFLAG with Dominican University students, administrators and other community service providers. We were impressed by all that Dominican University is doing to promote an affirming culture of inclusion.

DUPAGE CHAPTER

By Ron & Bernadette Whitfield



We realize that it sounds repetitive, but we truly did have another wonderful meeting in March. Seven new

people attended and Jameson Pagano shared his journey as a trans man. Jameson was accompanied by two of his colleagues, and they spoke briefly about the professional services that they collectively provide.

Before Jameson's presentation, we celebrated PFLAG's 45th anniversary with a short slide show.



Later, we gathered for a photo with the cake.



We mentioned an event that might be of interest to many: Friday, April 6, 2018 from 7:30 PM to 9:30 PM (CDT); Reclaim & Reform: A Night of LGBTQ Inclusive Worship; Lake Street Church of Evanston; 607 Lake Street; Evanston, IL 60201. You can register for this free event at <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/reclaim-reform-a-night-of-lgbtq-inclusive-worship-tickets-43844966475>.

Join the Northwest Suburban Community Network: Professionals Serving Lgbtq+ Youth for their Supporting LGBTQ+ Youth & Intersectionality Training On April 17th. You can register for this free event

at <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/supporting-lgbtq-youth-intersectionality-training-tickets-44108448557>.

We also gave a "heads up" notice about an important new event. June 17th (the third Sunday and our usual meeting date) will be the inaugural Pride Parade in Aurora! The general feeling is that we have to support this important event. One scenario is that we have a small group of members present at St. Paul to welcome new people and any others who might show up, and a larger group that will march in the Aurora parade. Please think about what you would like to do on June 17th. Let us know if you are interested in participating in the Aurora Pride Parade so that we can plan for the event (e.g., carpooling).

DEERFIELD CHAPTER

By Sue Ginsburg & Janet Svatos

We were honored this month to showcase one of our own: Carole Abrams. When the Palatine Chapter closed, Carole decided to come to Deerfield, which was Palatine's loss and our gain. We found out that in 2006, Carole was chosen as one of three trans women chosen by a documentarian to film their efforts in trying to get House Bill 101 passed in Illinois. This bill would guarantee equal protection housing, employment, credit and other accommodations for transgender people for trans people as well as all LGBTQ people. We were able to see the documentary, entitled "Ladies and Gentlemen," and learn so much more about Carole's whole life as an activist, which began at age 18 when she protested the Viet Nam War. And yes, she was in Grant Park in 1968!!!! (All of you Boomers will know what I mean) The documentary followed these three individuals both in their personal lives and on their sometimes frustrating path to lobbying the bill in Springfield. Carole's life has not been easy health-wise. She was born with severe heart problems, necessitating several surgeries and one of her vocal chords froze, which makes it difficult to speak sometimes. But she always perseveres. Carole has 3 adult children and 3 grandchildren who support her fully.

We, at Deerfield, are so proud to have Carole as one of our own. I know we all have our own stories, but Carole was on the forefront of attaining LGBTQ rights and we are all so grateful for ourselves and for our children. Thanks, Carole!

We welcomed three new families at our meeting with hopes that they will all return. The most wonderful thing

that I witnessed was a family who had only been coming to meetings a few months, embrace a new family with loving support and care. This is what makes PFLAG so very special.

HINSDALE CHAPTER

By Barb Medley

Our March 4th guest speaker was Anthony Galloway, Director of Civic Engagement for Equality Illinois. He has extensive experience as an artist, fundraiser and activist for the LGBTQ community and talked about Equality Illinois' legislative agenda and work to promote pro-LGBTQ policies with a focus on education, health care and criminal justice.

Anthony talked about the power of story-telling and reminded us how helpful it was when parents talked to legislators in Springfield before the same-sex marriage bill was voted upon and passed. We discussed the importance of students being exposed to inclusive and affirming school curriculum. This is our chance to update the current Illinois School Code so that all students in Illinois have access to a safe, accurate and affirming educational experience. There are currently Illinois senate and house inclusive curriculum bills, which if passed will include the contributions of LGTQ people in the teaching of U.S. history; make awareness of LGBTQ contributions to society part of Illinois school curriculum; and ensure instructional materials in Illinois are nondiscriminatory and accurately reflect Illinois' diversity. He recommended the book, Queer Clout: Chicago and the Rise of Gay Politics, by Timothy Stewart-Winter. It is available through Amazon.

As our April 1st meeting is Easter, we will not have a guest speaker. Our May 6th speaker is Jim Kelly, who will talk about gays and lesbians in the Peace Corps.

MCHENRY CHAPTER

By Toni Weaver

On March 2, Mary Genzler, Cate Conley, and Toni Weaver presented both a Pride flag and a Transgender flag to the Sycamore High School GSA. We have been giving Pride flags away for several years, but this is the first time we have given out a flag in the colors that represent the transgender community. We made the offer to GSA advisers at the January workshop we helped sponsor for GSA advisers and school support staff interested in starting

a sexuality and gender club at their schools.



The final workshop for this academic year will be in April and is geared for athletic directors and coaches. Once again I credit the McHenry County Regional Office of Education for making these workshops possible.

DOWNERS GROVE CHAPTER

By Gloria

Our speaker was Katie Slivovski, Exhibit Director and LGBTQ Inclusion Chair at Chicago Children's Museum, and her colleague Alex. Katie's program focused on "10 Easy Ways to be More LGBTQ Friendly," which she admitted was easy in this crowd. She broadened her talk to ways in which we can help make a difference in organizations that we are involved in or work in, and was full of great tips and processes for making organizations more intentionally inclusive, respectful, and celebratory of individuals and families in all their configurations. Such a great philosophy from the museum: "Every child benefits when they see themselves and their family configuration represented in the world around them. It's simply what's best for kids."

Katie was a wonderful speaker! Her contact information is katies@chicagochildrensmuseum.org.

Our next chapter meeting is Wednesday, April 11 at 7 p.m. Hope to see you there!

PTI CHICAGO CHAPTER

By Jo-Peer Haas

Our speaker in February was Gearah Goldstein, creator and co-chair of the GenderCool Project. Gearah does much-needed training, via storytelling, in schools and offices to teachers and administrators. Her project has been written about in the New York Times and, most notably, she (with a group of trans young adults) appeared on the "Today" show with Megan Kelly. Gearah's platform is, as she puts it, to "bring understanding to middle America". Her goal is preventing fear, which so many people experience around transgender people, from turning into hatred. Gearah finds language to be of great importance; and, she mentioned the success of the Inclusive Curriculum bill getting introduced in Illinois last month. For more information, go to www.gendercool.org.



Make **Mother's Day** Magnificent!



Your participation in PFLAG's annual "Kisses from Mom" event is needed. Each year on Mother's Day, we hand out kisses (both chocolate and real) in exchange for donations to PFLAG. And, this year is no exception!

We will once again be gathering in front of **Sidetrack, located at 3349 N Halsted St, Chicago**, on Mothers' Day, **Sunday, May 13th from 3:00 - 9:00 P.M.** for the fundraiser, and volunteers are needed.

Make your Mother's Day special and join in! Here's how:

- Sign up **by e-mailing me: Coordinator Marcia Prichason** at: mprichas@gmail.com
- Please give me the first and last name of the contact person (you or a member of your group)
- State your shift preference (1st, 2nd, 3rd)
 - 1st shift: 3:00 – 5:00 P.M.
 - 2nd shift: 5:00 – 7:00 P.M.
 - 3rd shift: 7:00 – 9:00 P.M.
- State how many people will be volunteering in your group
- Give **the contact person's** e-mail address and your phone number
- Indicate what Chapter you represent

You will receive a confirmation from me as well as reminders and tips as we get closer, AND you will have an amazing experience; it will truly be a magnificent Mother's Day!





Advocacy Matters

Equality Illinois and the Illinois Safe School Alliance is working hard to support the Inclusive Curriculum Bill

Inclusion is essential.

As Adrienne Rich said...

"When those who have the power to name and to socially construct reality choose not to see you or hear you...when someone with the authority of a teacher, say, describes the world and you are not in it, there is a moment of psychic disequilibrium,

as if you looked in the mirror and saw nothing. It takes some strength of soul--and not just individual strength, but collective understanding--to resist this void, this non-being, into which you are thrust, and to stand up, demanding to be seen and heard."

All of our children deserve to be educated in an environment in which they are seen, affirmed and valued so that they may see a world in which they can thrive.

Let your legislators know how you feel. Follow this link to send them a note:

<https://www.equalityillinois.us/category/get-involved/find-your-legislator/>



Plan to attend LGBTQ Advocacy day and share your story and your views. **Your voice matters.** Your stories can and do open hearts and minds.

In The Arts

Consider a Chapter movie night out to see - Love Simon

Everyone deserves a great love story, but for 17-year-old Simon Spier, it's a little more complicated. He hasn't told his family or friends that he's gay, and he doesn't know the identity of the anonymous classmate that he's fallen for online. Resolving both issues proves hilarious, terrifying and life-changing.

For more information and to see the trailer check IMDb <http://www.imdb.com/title/tt5164432/>





SUPPORTING LGBTQ+ YOUTH & INTERSECTIONALITY

Training for professionals, families, youth and community members



TRAINING SCHEDULE

.....
CEUs will be provided.
.....

10 AM - 2 PM Training for Professionals

3:30 - 5 PM Youth Panel

6:30 - 8 PM Parent Presentation

.....
Resource tables will be available during all trainings.

TUESDAY, APRIL 17TH

TRICKSTER ART GALLERY | 190 S. Roselle Rd., Schaumburg, IL 60193

FREE TO ATTEND | RSVP AT nscn-spring18.eventbrite.com

LOOKING TO TABLE AND SHARE RESOURCES
AT THE TRAINING? | EMAIL northsuburbnet@gmail.com

FOR MORE INFO ABOUT THE NETWORK, VISIT commnetworks.org



Funding provided in whole or in part by the Illinois Department of Human Services (IDHS), the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA), and Office of Adolescent Health (OAH).

Tips for an Effective Meeting with Your Public Official

Equality Illinois – Civic Engagement – November 2017

Effective meetings with your public official:

- Are conducted in-district, where an elected official is less distracted and can offer you more time
- Involve personal stories and data
- Consist of 3-4 people. Don't get too big or the meeting could become unwieldy and unmanageable.

Before your meeting:

- Write down what you want to say and practice.
- You don't have to be the issue expert, but identify key data to share with the elected official
- Sketch a compelling personal story about why you support or oppose a particular policy or position.

Your personal story should:

- Connect with values
- Share something personal about your life or someone close to you
- Have a connection to the elected official or their district or community
- Make a case for the elected official to share your position on the policy item

During the Visit	After the Visit
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introduce yourself. • Try to start on a positive note by finding common ground. For example, if your legislator recently voted in support of a pro-LGBTQ issue, thank them. • Tell a compelling personal story and support it with data. Explain how the legislation affects you, your family, or your friends; make sure legislators understand the personal ramifications or benefits resulting from their actions. • Ask them to take a specific action, like sponsoring a bill or voting for or against a pending measure. • Thank the legislator as you leave. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Send a thank you letter to the legislator for meeting with you and to remind them of the conversation and your ask. • Maintain ongoing communication with legislators and their staff through letters, calls, and visits.

DO	DON'T
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Do feel like the expert of your own story and experiences. • Do learn the legislators' position and ask why they take that position. • Do show openness to the knowledge of counterarguments and respond to them. • Do admit when you don't know. Offer to try to find the answer and send information to their office. • Do spend time with legislators whose position is opposite ours. You can decrease the intensity of the opposition and perhaps change it. • Do spend time in developing relationships with the legislative staff. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Don't feel like you have to be the policy expert on an issue. • Don't overload a legislative visit with too many issues. • Don't confront, threaten, pressure, or beg. • Don't be argumentative. Speak with calmness and commitment so as not to put the legislator on the defensive. • Don't expect members to be specialists. • Don't make promises you can't deliver. • Don't be afraid to take a stand on the issues. • Don't shy away from meetings with legislators with known views opposite your own. • Don't be offended if a legislator is unable to meet and requests that you meet with their staff.

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 – 7p.m.
 First Congregational UCC
 1047 Curtiss
 Downers Grove, IL 60515
 www.pflag.wixsite.com/pflagdg
 pflagdg@gmail.com

PFLAG Oak Lawn (NEW)

Meetings held 3rd Sunday – 2 p.m.
 Pilgrim Faith UCC
 9411 S 52st Ave
 Oak Lawn, IL 60453
 shoehouses@yahoo.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.)