



OPEN DOORS

The Newsletter of the Northern Illinois PFLAG

President's Column

June is the month to **SHOW YOUR PRIDE...**

The last weekend in June 1969 marked the start of the modern LGBTQ civil rights movement. Rioters protested the police raids at the Stonewall Inn on Christopher Street in New York's Greenwich Village. That same weekend one year later, Chicago held the first Pride Parade, along with other cities like New York and



LA. However, the truth is, these were not actually celebratory parades, they were, in fact, protest marches. The parade in NY was actually called Christopher Street Liberation Day; Chicago Gay Liberation organized Chicago's event. It was the start of a new movement. Over the years, much progress has been made and the Pride Parades have blossomed into the affirmations and celebrations of diversity that we know today. In

June of 1999, Bill Clinton was the first President of the US to declare June "Gay

& Lesbian Pride Month". In June of 2016, Stonewall became our first LGBTQ National Monument. Today, we have a lot to celebrate. This month, I will be celebrating diversity and the progress we have made. I will also be remembering Stonewall and the work yet to be done.



In Illinois, we are especially fortunate to live in a state that has been more progressive than most and we have many opportunities to engage and make a difference. Be sure to check out the list of upcoming events in this month's Open Doors. If you are able, please consider volunteering for an outreach event or participating in Pride in Aurora or Chicago, or one of the other many pride celebrations.

In my efforts to support the Inclusive Curriculum Bill (SB 3249), I came across opposing letters to the editor that served as a reminder that we still have more work to do. There are still too many people that don't have empathy or an understanding of the damaging power of ignorance and bias. As I view it, ignorance breeds fear while familiarity produces comfort. So, it is important for us to be visible allies for equality. Through our outreach, within our stories and advocacy, we are making connections. We are building bridges and opening hearts and minds; helping people get familiar and get comfortable.

In Love and Solidarity,

John



New PFLAG Chapters!

Welcome! PFLAG Ottawa

PFLAG Ottawa meets the 4th Sunday each month from 2:30 pm-4:00pm at Open Table United Church of Christ - 910 Columbus St., Ottawa, IL 61350

Their email address: pflagottawa@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 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:

OPEN DOORS Editor
og4equality@gmail.com

EDITORIAL BOARD

Editor-in-Chief:
Maureen Goldin
Website Guru:
Bonnie Clemens

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

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PFLAG Council of Northern IL
on

facebook

PFLAG represented at RESILIENCE event at Waubonsie Valley High School (WVHS)

PFLAG members: Susan Rusk, Suellen Cook and Jackie Frett were stationed at a table on behalf of PFLAG for this informative and moving event. The vent was put on by the HS group AMPLIFY. Elizabeth Fay started the group and its purpose is to highlight and exhibit stories from within the WVHS community. The event took place on May 15th and PFLAG was proud to be able to be a part of it.



DUPAGE CHAPTER

By Ron & Bernadette Whitfield

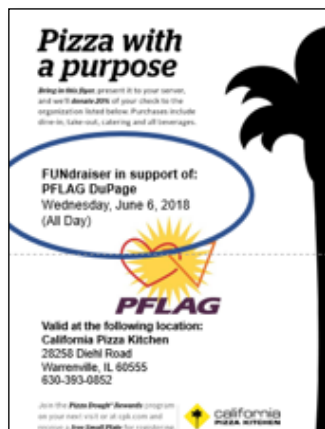
Unfortunately, our scheduled speaker encountered a work crisis and was not able to visit with us. However, we still had a very good meeting with much to discuss.

Our meeting began with a memorial of the 8 students and 2 teachers who were killed in the shooting at Santa Fe High School in Santa Fe, Texas. We also mentioned the untimely death of Liam Burdik. Liam's mother, Phyllis Gallisath, is a leader of the PFLAG Rockford Chapter. Liam was active in PFLAG, DiversCity Youth Group, The Illinois Safe Schools Alliance Youth Committee, Action Camp, and TEACH at Harlem High School. His wonderful spirit, joy, and talents were celebrated Monday, May 21st at one of his favorite places, Rock Cut State Park in Loves Park, IL. Our hearts go out to Phyllis and her family.

Announcements:

Of interest is the 'Mettachine' podcast, which recounts essential gay history, including Chicago's pioneering role (www.mettachinepod.com). The word "Mettachine" comes from the Mattachine Society, a group founded in 1950 that was one of the earliest LGBT organizations in the United States, probably second only to our own city's Society for Human Rights. The word Mattachine comes from a medieval French group of masked players, the Societe Mattachine, to represent the public "masking" of homosexuality.

Wednesday June 6—All day— California Pizza Kitchen FUNdraiser for PFLAG DuPage. 20% of sales will be donated to PFLAG DuPage. 28258 Diehl Road in Warrenville. 630-393-0852. Last year we received \$1,000! Please support us while enjoying a great meal at CPK!



Sunday June 17 — The inaugural Aurora Pride Parade- (Father's Day). Mark your calendar to show Aurora what Family Pride is about. More info to come!

Sunday June 17 — Regular PFLAG DuPage Chapter meeting. Many members will be supporting the Aurora Pride

Parade, but we will have members present at St. Paul to welcome first time visitors and others.

Thursday June 21 — 5-8 PM, Family Pride Night at Morton Arboretum. For more info contact: Ron and Bernadette Whitfield — bandr.pflag@gmail.com.

Saturday June 23, noon-4 pm — Elmhurst Presbyterian first annual Pride Block Party; we have been invited to host a PFLAG booth.

Saturday June 23 - Pride on the Pier – est. 11-5. For more info contact: John Hickey- jthickey1@gmail.com

Sunday June 24 - Chicago Pride Parade

Wednesday, July 4 - Wheaton July 4th Parade.

The theme is American Heroes. This is our chance to educate spectators about American LGBT Heroes! We hope to have a "party" to make posters honoring our LGBT heroes. Details will follow.

Sunday, July 22 or 29 — PFLAG DuPage is a sponsor of Fellowship on the Lawn at St. Paul Lutheran Church (TBD). This is an opportunity for us to show our gratitude to the parish for allowing us to use their space for our meetings.

Youth Outlook/PFLAG Picnic — A date has not been set yet but it could be anywhere from early August to early September. Details to follow.

Saturday, August 18 — Diversity Picnic at Hope Presbyterian Church in Wheaton. Details to follow.

Sunday Aug 26 — Fahrenheit Chicago by Eq IL- Oakwood Beach (41st and Lake Shore Drive) (John Hickey- jthickey1@gmail.com)

Saturday November 10 — PCNI Workshop. Mark your calendar! Planning a great full day PFLAG conference! More information to come later.

Finally, information on Chicago area LGBTQ events can be found at <https://www.choosechicago.com/things-to-do/lgbtq-chicago/lgbtq-events/>.

DEERFIELD CHAPTER

By Sue Ginsburg & Janet Svatos

As someone who used to line up speakers for our monthly meetings, I was always disappointed when our meeting came around and the speaker either canceled or we just couldn't connect with one. Historically, these meetings usually turned out to be fantastic. Why? I believe that it's

because we have more time to talk to each other, get support and give support.

We were fortunate to welcome four new families this month! Therefore, we needed that extra time, not just to go around and introduce ourselves, but also to listen to our new visitors and hope they found what they were looking for with PFLAG.

I'm not sure how it is at other chapters, but when we welcome over 30 people at a meeting, we have to limit our introductions to one minute, which doesn't always work, so that we can fit in the speaker, a treat, then small group discussions. Given the extra time, we allowed more time for introductions, which was so helpful to the new people, as they could hear everyone's story and a little bit about their journeys.

June is always our "Ohadi Scholarship Awards Ceremony". Cynthia Drey, mother of John Paul Ohadi, has funded and given scholarships to LGBTQ+ students for the past 15 years, in memory of her son, John Paul. Cynthia is a former member of Glenview/Deerfield PFLAG. She flies back to Chicago from Texas each year to personally present awards to these amazing students. Our June meeting is open to all as we award and recognize these deserving students!

HINSDALE CHAPTER

By Barb Medley

On May 6th our speaker was Jim Kelly, who spoke to us about LGBTQ Peace Corps volunteers and the strides that have been made in helping them to successfully complete their terms of service. Jim told us his story. He joined in 1969 as a response to the possibility of being drafted during the Vietnam War.

Part of the Peace Corps application process involved completing a questionnaire that included the question, "Do you have homosexual tendencies?" Of course, he had to lie. His acceptance letter stated there would be an FBI background check, including a check of references. He felt uncomfortable that in addition to his lie, his personal references would also have to be complicit in the lie. They assured him they believed his good character would make him an excellent member of the Corps.

His training included mental fitness, which dwelt again on perceiving homosexual tendencies in the volunteer trainees. He talked about spending his training terrified

that he'd be found out. Sadly, he said the following 3 1/2 years of service to the Peace Corps were the loneliest of his life.

After his initial service he extended his volunteer work for the next 20 years, dedicated to programming for trainees. He decided he needed his master's degree and wrote his thesis on the lack of positive messages for LGBT volunteers. He began by conducting a survey on LGBT volunteers' experience with attitudes, treatment and support while in the Peace Corps. He finished his thesis in 1991, the 30th anniversary of the Peace Corps. A group of LGBT Peace Corps volunteers gathered in DC for the anniversary and decided to form an association. He met a woman in the Peace Corps who worked in crisis management and sent her his thesis. With her encouragement, his thesis was sent to every office of the Peace Corps and changed the tone of their training and attitude towards LGBT volunteers. In the last couple years, same sex couples serving in the Peace Corps are sent together to work in countries where same sex marriage is legal.

We had an enlightening visit with Jim and learned a lot about this great organization. It was encouraging to see that the actions of one knowledgeable and passionate volunteer armed with his truth changed the attitudes and actions of an international organization.

Our speaker for June 3rd is Kate Slivovsky who works at the Chicago Children's Museum as Exhibit Development Director. She will talk about how she's made the museum LGBTQ friendly.

MCHENRY CHAPTER

By Toni Weaver

Stevie Romer, one of the first transgender women to run the Boston Marathon, was our guest in May. As a person who was identified male at birth, Stevie has faced her share of discrimination especially as she entered the competitive world of running. She is perceived as having an unfair advantage due to testosterone. However, the rules about testosterone levels are quite strict, and a transgender woman must demonstrate that her levels meet certain stringent criteria.

For additional reading please see the following two articles:

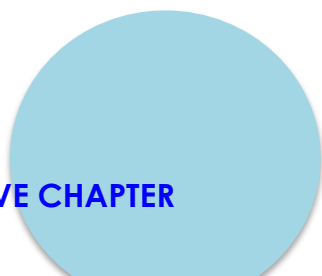
<https://www.marathoninvestigation.com/2018/03/tranger-boston-marathon.html>

<https://www.nytimes.com/2018/04/30/sports/track-gender-rules.html>

There is currently a special exhibit taking place at the Gerber/Hart Library, 6500 N. Clark St. in Chicago, titled "Gay is Good."

<http://www.windycitymediagroup.com/m/APPreirect.php?AID=62662>

James Conley and Kurt Heinrich will be our special guests on June 12 to discuss the exhibit and gay history. James is one of the exhibit curators, and his husband Kurt is the exhibit designer. James' mom, by the way, is a member of PFLAG McHenry.



DOWNERS GROVE CHAPTER

By Gloria

Our May speaker was Kim Hunt from Pride Action Tank: <http://prideactiontank.org>. Kim has a 30-year career that spans the public, private, and nonprofit sectors with a focus on advocacy and nonprofit management. She is currently the executive director of Pride Action Tank (PAT), a social justice lab devoted to improving outcomes for LGBTQ communities through a collaborative process of inquiry, advocacy, and action. PAT is a project of the AIDS Foundation of Chicago, where Ms. Hunt also serves as an advocacy advisor. She is a co-host of a monthly LGBTQ storytelling event, political columnist for a quarterly gay men's fashion magazine, and a member of various boards and advisory councils. We were happy to have Ms. Hunt speak with our group about Pride Action Tank and her other advocacy work.

Our next Downers Grove chapter meeting will be Wednesday, June 13 at 7:00 p.m., at First Congregational UCC, 1047 Curtiss St. in Downers Grove. Join us!

PTI CHICAGO CHAPTER

By Betty Guilfoile

In December PTI Chicago began a project called "A Mother's Love: the Quinn Collins Project" to honor the work of Arlene Collins, PTI's longtime president, in memory of Arlene's son. The membership felt that we have a great



capacity to love our children and wanted to share that love with youth whose families are not able to support them at this time.

In January 2018 we combined forces with Center on Halsted and the Sullivan Family, another PTI Chicago family who lost their daughter in 2017 and created the Quinn Collins/Sloane Sullivan Project.

The Sullivan Family worked tirelessly writing grants, and collecting donations to create 54 backpacks filled with supplies to support youth experiencing homelessness/housing instability.

On May 23rd PTI Chicago and the Sullivan Family and Friends distributed Citypak backpacks and supplies to Youth Members of Center on Halsted's Youth Program. Fifteen packs were distributed that evening with the rest in reserve for new Youth Members in need.



In her remarks, Susan Sullivan, Sloane's mom acknowledged all those who were involved in making this project happen including Peter Johnson, Greg Storms and Forrest Linsell, from Center on Halsted; PTI members who helped plan the project and pack the packs; individual donors who donated money to purchase the backpacks and supplies, especially Cindy Brady; and the organizations that generously donated materials for the packs including Underwriters' Laboratory; the Skin of Steel Foundation; Major, Lindsey and Africa; Wrap It Up; Bauer Dental; and





Upcoming events

Please join



as they host
The Legacy Wall

The Legacy Wall is a one-of-a-kind traveling exhibit that features 125 “mini-biographies” of LGBTQ people from every walk of life. The Legacy Wall has been thoughtfully designed to highlight the many important roles LGBTQ people have played in shared human history - sparking conversations about inclusion, intersectionality, and how our perceptions are shaped by what we have been taught. Learning about the accomplishments of LGBTQ people - who are rarely included in any thoughtful discussion of general history - improves dynamics by supporting a culture of respect.

Please email VOCE@Barilla.com to setup a visit of the Legacy Wall

Available Dates:
May 29th - June 1st, June 4th, June 6th - 9th
Times: 8:00am - 4:00pm

Location: Barilla America
885 Sunset Ridge Rd., Northbrook, IL 60062





ILLINOIS HOLOCAUST MUSEUM
& EDUCATION CENTER

PRIDE MONTH EVENT

The Right Side of History?

LGBTQ+ RIGHTS WORLDWIDE



SUNDAY, JUNE 10, 2:00 - 3:30 PM

Illinois Holocaust Museum & Education Center | 9603 Woods Drive, Skokie, 60077

On Thursday, August 9, The Cradle: <https://www.cradle.org>, an adoption agency in Evanston, in partnership with the Center on Halsted is having a roundtable event in the *Our Children Education and Empowerment Series*.

“Our panel of LGBTQ parents and the adult children of LGBTQ parents will address sensitive questions such as how to talk comfortably about your family life with friends, acquaintances, classmates, teachers, colleagues and others.” (Cradle newsletter)



PFLAG Kisses Fundraiser Found Successful

The annual PFLAG "Kisses from Mom" fundraiser was held at Sidetrack on Mother's Day, Sunday, May 13th. PFLAGers handed out kisses (both chocolate and real) to patrons and passers-by and asked for donations. 50% of the money that is raised at this event goes directly to Council and is used primarily for our spot in the Chicago Pride parade. The other 50% is divided up amongst the chapters that volunteer. It's a win/win all around.



Volunteering for the "Kisses" event is always personally satisfying as we receive such a warm welcome! There are also so many poignant stories. One PFLAG mom states, "A young man said he had called his mom to wish her a happy Mother's Day, but she would not talk to him." Another man said with tears in his eyes that he had sent flowers to his mom and that she actually called him to say, "thank you." Yet another proudly paraded his mother in front of him as he hugged and kissed us all extolling, "this is my mom!"

These stories and more remind us that our mission to support, educate, and advocate are what we do on Mother's Day and EVERY DAY!



Marcia Prichason
"Kisses from Mom" Coordinator – Hinsdale Chapter



PFLAG Participates in Illinois PTA 116th Annual Convention

We had a great weekend in May hosting an informational table at the Naperville NIU campus. The location was ideal and provided lots of opportunities for interaction with participants. We met so many compassionate PTA leaders interested in making their school environment more affirming and conducive to learning. Folks just loved the family and pride themed buttons we offered. Ron has a variety of great family pride themed designs that were a big hit with the group. It is encouraging to know that the PTA vision and mission are very much aligned with that of PFLAG. The theme for this year's convention was **Every Child Deserves a Champion**. I think we can all agree on that!

A special thanks to all of our PFLAG table volunteers- Ron and Bernie, JoAnn, Mary Ann, Margaret, Peter and Kristin, Gail and Brittany. I hope you all enjoyed sharing PFLAG with the PTA participants and other exhibitors as much as I did.



John

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.pflagdg.wix.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 Ottawa (NEW)

Meetings held 4th Sunday – 2:30 -4:00 p.m.
Open Table United Church of Christ
910 Columbus St.
Ottawa, IL 61350
pflagottawa@pflagillinois.org

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
pflagkankakee@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.)