AS AN ALLY TO THE TRANS COMMUNITY, I WILL...

Fight for Equality!!!

Speak up and defend by saying “That has not been my experience.”.
Let me tell you about my friends.

Advocate & Act w/ love & courage
Support Trans Youth and
Love my Trans friends! 😊

ADVOCATE FOR TRANS RIGHTS, LOVE, AND SUPPORT

I’M AN ALLY BECAUSE...

My LGBTQIA+ friends make me a better person, and they deserve the world!

I love my trans daughter
Every kid deserves to be loved at school!

I love my gay son!!
I love my gay child!

I love my trans spouse!

I love my trans son

I love my Trans daughter, with all of my heart.

I love my gay daughter & they deserve equal rights!

I love my gay children! & Everyone deserves love and acceptance.

My students deserve support and a safe space.

I love my gay son!
He is an awesome person!

Without equality, everyone suffers

It’s All About Kindness

December 2018 | PFLAG Council of Northern Illinois Newsletter openedoors@pflagillinois.org
President’s Column

Engage Your Power of Positivity!

PFLAGers are amazing people. Your ideas, light and passion energize me. I truly enjoyed meeting so many new faces at the recent PFLAG Conference. The day was filled with amazing speakers and an energetic and engaged room full of participants. For those who were able to participate, I want to encourage you to remember your take aways, the ideas that resonated with you as your call to action. For those who could not attend, the day was filled with reminders of the importance of our engagement. The impact of your story and your engagement in the community cannot be overstated. You do make a difference in the world and there are many ways to make an even bigger impact by being intentional with your positive message and actions. Follow your heart and your passion. Carrie Maxwell of the Windy City Times joined us at the conference and published her coverage of the event. You can read her article at the link below.


I find the holiday season an ideal time to reflect on the year and consider my goals and how I can make a difference in the coming year. So, please try to make time for reflection and planning to ensure that you are making the impact you desire in your family, PFLAG Chapter, workplace, places of worship and community in general... If you are interested in getting more involved with PFLAG contact your local chapter leader or reach out to us at the PFLAG Council of Northern Illinois (PCNI) at info@PFLAGillinois.org. We would love to talk with you. We are always interested in passionate volunteers who want to make a difference by helping with PCNI activities and outreach.

I hope you had a wonderful Thanksgiving and are able to connect with family and friends and enjoy the upcoming holiday season. Best wishes to you and yours for a safe, healthy and happy holiday season!

In Love and Solidarity,

John

Photos from the Power of Positivity conference by Ron Whitfield
Get Involved / Upcoming Events

Elmhurst College Big Queer Gathering - Friday December 7th, the Queer Straight Alliance at Elmhurst College invites students from High Schools all around Northern Illinois to visit for an evening to learn about Elmhurst College. PFLAG is hosting an informational table at the event.

The Community Networks of Illinois: Professionals Serving LGBTQ Youth is planning an educational conference targeted for health care professionals on January 18, 2019. Look for registration information on their FaceBook page here.

MBLGTACC 2019 “Beyond the Rainbow and to the Stars” conference is being hosted at Wichita State University February 15-17.

College age students should check it out. https://mblgtacc.org/2019

The Midwest Bisexual Lesbian Gay Transgender Asexual College Conference (MBLGTACC) is an annual conference held to connect, educate, and empower queer and trans+ college students, faculty, and staff around the Midwest and beyond.

Through a mix of workshops, keynotes, entertainment, and social activities, attendees come together to learn and grow through the knowledge and experiences of others. Over its 27-year history, MBLGTACC has attracted advocates and thought leaders including Angela Davis, Robyn Ochs, Janet Mock, Laverne Cox, Kate Bornstein, Faisal Alam, and LZ Granderson; and entertainers and artists including Jujubee, Margaret Cho, J Mase III, Chely Wright, and Loren Cameron.

To date, MBLGTACC is America’s largest and oldest continuously-held conference for queer and trans+ college students. And it remains proudly student-run.

Registration costs for MBLGTACC 2019 are:

- $75/person when registering in 2018
- $85/person when registering from 1/1/2019 to 2/1/2019
- $100 per person when registering on-site at the conference

PFLAG Chapter Opportunities!

We have had a great year in Northern Illinois so far with new chapters starting in Ottawa, Oak Lawn and Grayslake/Round Lake.

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 Carmi Frankovich at regionaldiva1@yahoo.com. Special thanks to Carmi for leading the charge with her positive energy.

PFLAG Chicago Español - There are preliminary discussions about interest in starting a PFLAG Chapter to primarily support Spanish speaking members. If you have interest in helping form this chapter in Chicago, please contact John Hickey at info@pflagillinois.org

(NEW) PFLAG Chicago / Hyde Park - There are preliminary discussions about interest in starting a PFLAG Chapter in the Hyde Park area. If you have interest in helping form this chapter, please contact John Hickey at info@pflagillinois.org

PFLAG Romeoville - Kris and Peter Shulman are looking for interested parties to help start a new in Romeoville to help serve Will County. They are currently in search of a facility for their meetings. If you are interested in helping out please send an email to PFLAGRomeoville@pflagillinois.org.

(NEW) PFLAG West Dundee - There is a small core of folks liking to add volunteers to help start a PFLAG chapter to meet at St James’ Episcopal Church, located at 516 Washington St, West Dundee, IL 60118. A special thank you for the support of Reverend Donald Frye and Gerry Miles for initiating this effort. If you have interest in helping form this chapter, 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.
The most affirming part of Lizzy’s presentation rang a bell to all of us “PFLAG’ers”: Family Acceptance Project: Evidence based resource for family members: IT’S POSSIBLE FOR FAMILY MEMBERS TO GIVE SUPPORT WITHOUT UNDERSTANDING IT.

How do we do that?

• express love
• talk with person about identity
• require other family members to respect that person
• welcome their friends in your home
• connect with role models
• believe that person can have a happy future
• (It’s just what we strive to do at PFLAG, right?)

They like to say it’s not so much your loved one is “coming out”, but that your loved one is “inviting us in” to share their gender identity and sexual identity.

Lizzy let us know that all services are FREE. Youth Services is funded through township grants and individual donations.

She wanted to let us know that there will be a TRANS YOUTH AND FAMILY SUMMIT, MARCH 3, 3080 W. Lake Ave, Glenview. More information to come. They always accept volunteers. You can reach Lizzy at Lizzy.Appleby@ysgn.org; 847-724-2620

OF COURSE, WE REMINDED ALL TO SEND IN THEIR PFLAG YEARLY DUES!!!!
News from PFLAG DuPage
by Bernadette & Ron Whitfield

We had a wonderful meeting in November. Once again, we had several new people attend. Our own, Eli Bryant, provided the educational segment. Eli shared intimate details of his life that demonstrated his strength, resilience, determination, and vision. His story includes “chapters” on coming out twice, an alcoholic parent, sexual abuse, his huge family, reactions from his coming out, what he does now, and his move out of state. We so admire Eli and will miss him immensely. We wish him and Meg well and hope that they will be able to visit us soon.

We began our meeting with memorials for The Tree of Life Synagogue victims in Pittsburgh, National Survivors of Suicide Day, Transgender Awareness Week (12th-19th), and Transgender Day of Remembrance (20th). So far in 2018, 22 members of the transgender community have been murdered in the U.S. — 3 recently in Chicago. Close to home, we remembered Liam Burdick, son of Phyllis Gallisath (President of PFLAG Rockford). Liam’s profound words reveal to us the unique, authentic, and loving young man that he was: “I have felt my mother’s warmth. I have given my soul to other souls. I have loved and been loved more than I can recall. I have been accepted. I have been cherished and celebrated. I have lived. I will always live.”

Members were very generous and brought a large amount of household and personal items for the 360 Youth Services residents. We will accept donations throughout the year. They are extremely appreciative of our help.

Before the meeting started, we played a slideshow of photos taken at the PFLAG Council of Northern Illinois Fall Conference. The conference was well attended (90+) and well received.

For a light-hearted and biting take on Transgender Rights, see a segment on Last Week Tonight with John Oliver (HBO) at https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hmoAX9f6MOc

Friday, December 7th — Big Queer Gathering, Elmhurst College — Lisa Garber and Cathy and Tom Rajcan will attend. If you would like to support them, let us know and we will put you in touch.
News from PFLAG Hinsdale

by Barb Medley

At our meeting on November 4th, our guest Scott Ammarell spoke about Chicago House, where he is the CEO. Chicago House’s mission is empowering people impacted by HIV and AIDS to live dignified lives. They provide housing on-site and at scattered sites and connect people with care, providing compassionate support to reinforce both good physical and mental health.

Chicago House began serving gay Chicagoans in 1985. Men with AIDS were losing jobs and being kicked out of their homes. They began with two buildings, one of which was a hospice home. That hospice center is now a trans-life living center. They have a drop-in center which provides health care and legal assistance among other forms of support, including assistance for job seekers. Despite major medical advances, AIDS still a crisis in the low-income community, especially for minority patients due to cultural stigma. It also greatly affects trans women of color. Medication is very expensive; preventive medicines run 1600/month. Chicago House’s 90 employees served 2300 last year, with a $9 million budget.

Our December meeting is our annual potluck holiday celebration, when we also fill stockings with toiletries, cold weather accessories and gift cards for the young adults at The Crib. In January, we will welcome Laura Jaramillo, a therapist who specializes in working with people who have eating disorders. The LGBT community is at higher risk for these disorders.

LGBTQ Bookshelf

Less
by Andrew Sean Greer, 2017

A struggling novelist travels the world to avoid an awkward wedding in this hilarious Pulitzer Prize-winning novel full of "arresting lyricism and beauty" (The New York Times Book Review).

Amazon rankings:
- #1 in Books > Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual & Transgender Books > Literature & Fiction > Genre Fiction > Humorous
- #1 in Books > Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual & Transgender Books > Literature & Fiction > Genre Fiction > Literary

"Less is the funniest, smartest and most humane novel I've read since Tom Rachman's 2010 debut, The Imperfectionists....Greer writes sentences of arresting lyricism and beauty. His metaphors come at you like fireflies....Like Arthur, Andrew Sean Greer's Less is excellent company. It's no less than bedazzling, bewitching and be-wonderful."

– New York Times Book Review
News from PFLAG Tinley Park

by Kathy King-Watters

PFLAG Tinley Park has been busy in the community. At our November meeting, we had a great discussion with a local middle school principal who wanted input on what more he could be doing for LGBTQ students. He is an incredible ally! We also took part in the Transgender Day of Remembrance in Frankfort with Southwest Suburban Activists, and the head of their Pride Committee will be a speaker at our December meeting. Finally, a hardy group braved the chill and wind before the blizzard arrived to decorate a tree at the Oak Park Avenue Tinley Park Metra station for the Tinley Park Chamber of Commerce’s Trim-A-Tree event. The PFLAG tree is decked out with PFLAG ornaments we made mixed with brightly colored shatterproof round ornaments. It's bright, fun, and shares our message of PFLAG love and support. We had so much fun making it!

PFLAG Tinley Park members after decorating the tree
News from PFLAG McHenry
by Toni Weaver

In October we commemorated the 20th anniversary of the murder of Matthew Shepard, a young, gay college student in Laramie, WY. This month we marked another sad 20-year anniversary. Rita Hester, a transgender woman of color, was brutally murdered in November of 1998. It was in honor of Rita that the Transgender Day of Remembrance was established.

Traditionally, TDOR is observed by reading the names of transgender people whose lives have been snuffed out due to violence, ignorance, and hate. However, this somber memorial has proven too difficult for our parents of transgender children, so we don’t do that anymore. Instead, we took the opportunity to provide some light-hearted education in the form of “Transgender Rights: Last Week Tonight with John Oliver.” (What did we ever do before the advent of YouTube?) The video sparked such good conversation that it was difficult to bring the meeting to a close!

PFLAG McHenry chapter member Carol Fetzner and I visited with the Woodstock High School GSA and presented the club leaders with both a transgender and pride flag as well as small desktop-sized flags, PFLAG literature, and our brochures. The Grant High School GSA in Fox Lake/Ingleside has also been resupplied with craft materials. Our chapter provides support for any GSA in the area that requests flags, supplies, literature, etc. It’s one of our greatest outreaches!

Next month will be our annual holiday potluck hors d’oeuvre/dessert party.

If anyone is looking for a great gay-themed holiday movie, be sure to check out Scrooge and Marley, co-produced by none other than Tracy Baim. (www.scroogeandmarleymovie.com)

News from PFLAG Oak Park
by Nancy Johnson

Our scheduled speakers for 2019:

- **January 27** – Hadeis Safi, Community Outreach Coordinator of the Center for Gender, Sexuality and HIV Prevention from Lurie Children’s Hospital.
- **February 24** – we don’t yet have a speaker.
- **March 24** – Nick Heap, Facilitator for Our Whole Lives (OWL) which provides lifespan sexuality education. Nick will be working with middle school students.

New movie – BOY ERASED

Released on November 2nd, in theatres

Boy Erased, R, 1 hr 55 min, drama

The son of a Baptist preacher is forced to participate in a church-supported gay conversion program after being forcibly outed to his parents.

Director: Joel Edgerton

Based on the memoir Boy Erased by Garrard Conley

Stars: Lucas Hedges, Nicole Kidman, Joel Edgerton

Focus Features is supporting PFLAG National with a donation:

[Click here to buy your tickets to Boy Erased.](https://www.scroogeandmarleymovie.com)
**Movie and Theatre News**
from Pride Film & Plays

**Musical Barney the Elf**

The musical of an elf who must leave the North Pole to find a new home after Santa Claus retires has itself found a new home for its fourth annual incarnation. **BARNEY THE ELF**, Bryan Renaud and Emily Schmidt’s LGBTQ-themed musical inspired by the ELF feature film, will be staged in the Broadway theatre of the Pride Arts Center from **Friday December 14 through Sunday, January 6**. Michael D Graham will direct the production. [http://pridefilmsandplays.com/pride-films-plays-produce-fourth-annual-production-barney-elf/](http://pridefilmsandplays.com/pride-films-plays-produce-fourth-annual-production-barney-elf/)

**Pride Film Festival - Winter Shorts**

Pride Films and Plays’ final monthly festival of LGBTQ independent short films in 2018 will be on **Tuesday, December 4, 2018**. The nine films from six countries will explore the highs and lows of LGBT life around the world. The screening will be held in The Broadway, Pride Arts Center, 4139 N. Broadway, Chicago, beginning at 7:30 pm.

Get tickets for the December Film Fest [here](http://pridefilmsandplays.com/pride-films-plays-produce-fourth-annual-production-barney-elf/). For more information click [here](http://pridefilmsandplays.com/pride-films-plays-produce-fourth-annual-production-barney-elf/).

**LezFest**

December 16, 7:30 pm – Pride Arts Center
4139 N. Broadway, Chicago

Pride Films and Plays invites you to come out and have a gay old time at **LezFest**, a presentation and celebration of queer female and non-binary performance artists.

At LezFest, our performers won’t give you the old song-and-dance. They’ll give you all-new material in this scintillating showcase of song, dance, stand-up, storytelling, and spoken word. Audiences can expect an evening of introspection and intersection, audacity and authenticity, and a riveting reflection on “the gayest meet-cute of all time,” all told with L-quence—though not to the exclusion of all other letters.

In fact, regardless of how you identify (or ident-defy), and even if your identity isn’t queer-cut, you will feel welcome at LezFest.

For tickets ($11) click [here](http://pridefilmsandplays.com/pride-films-plays-produce-fourth-annual-production-barney-elf/).
For more information click [here](http://pridefilmsandplays.com/pride-films-plays-produce-fourth-annual-production-barney-elf/).

**Short Films Include:**

- **HIGH TIDE**
  - Netherlands, 20:00 min
- **ROMEO AND JULIO**
  - USA, 9:21 min
- **GOODWILL**
  - UK, 3:42 min
- **TURN IT AROUND**
  - Netherlands, 9:23 min
- **A FRIEND OF DOROTHY**
  - Sweden, 4:42 min
- **THE GOODBYE**
  - UK, 12:00 min
- **THE JEALOUS SEA**
  - USA, 12:59 min
- **KINDLING**
  - U.K., 7 min
- **PAPER CUT**
  - Australia, 14:40 min
Presenting Young Artists

Self-portraits by Justine Janosko, age 16, junior at Fremd High School, Rolling Meadows

Open Doors welcomes submissions of creative works by LGBTQ+ artists of all ages: art, photography, writing, poetry, Email: opendoors@pflagillinois.org
Art works by Luci Lee, age 13, 317 Art Collective (Laura Gomel, art instructor), Rockford area

Click here to access 317 Art Collective’s Facebook page
Presenting Young Artists

Young students of the Naperville Tuesday night program at Youth Outlook led by Peter Thaddeus (see October 2018 issue) have recently recreated the Legacy Walk on Halsted for an LGBTQ history activity.

Youth Outlook is a social service agency solely dedicated to the support of LGBTQ+ youth. It is offering drop-in centers for youth, parent support, and community education. https://youth-outlook.org/
So what do "Ally Moms" actually do?

They make themselves available day or night for trans or questioning youth who do not have the support or affirmation they so richly deserve. As Ally Moms, they have lots of love and understanding to go around. It is so important that anyone who is transitioning or thinking about coming out has the tools they need. Ally Moms can offer a kind word, a loving, virtual hug, or perhaps a suggestion or two. They will not judge.

Ally Moms also make themselves available for parents and caregivers of trans or questioning youth. No matter where a parent is on their journey, Ally Moms can provide an empathic ear, share resources, offer camaraderie and mentorship, and community for parents and caregivers who may be experiencing shock, anxiety, isolation, confusion or a host of other emotions. Ally Moms are there for parents trying to make sense of their new reality, or seeking to connect with someone who “gets it,” Ally Moms are a phone call, a text or email away.

Why did I join "Ally Moms"?

I joined because I remember what it was like to feel overwhelmed and confused the day my daughter came out in July of 2017. I recall being scared, frantic and mostly felt completely ignorant to what my child was going through. I knew I needed to figure it all out and felt the need to do so quickly. I saw the pain my child was going through. It was clear she was hurting based on the constant isolation. I scrambled that day and the days after looking for resources, understanding and support.

There are many ways to be an ally. Please share your advocacy stories with Open Doors.
I was very lucky to find an online trans parent group on Facebook. I hesitated out of fear but still posted our story. I was so lucky that in this group of thousands a local mom miles away responded to my post. She comforted me, provided me with resources like PFLAG, Pinwheels, gave me doctor references and connected me with other moms in the area. This mom was my light in a world that felt isolating, cold and dark. This mom eventually became my friend.

As I became more active and began finding my voice in the community, I found myself becoming one of the "Go To Moms" that friends referred new parents to. Then one day in the same Facebook parent group I mentioned earlier I saw a calling for "Ally Moms". I knew immediately this was an easy way for me to give.

I have been an Ally Mom for almost six months and have received 5 calls to action. The total time commitment has been only a few hours per month and some months none at all. The service is needs based. The calls have been from children who just wanted to talk, young adults in crisis needing to find a warm place to stay or from parents who like me at one time, felt lost.

**Stacey's Story**

When my daughter was going through the initial stages of her transition 3 and a half years ago, I felt alone and scared. My husband was not supportive of her at the time. My daughter was only 7, and I didn't know anyone who had been through this. I started researching online and came across a list of Ally Moms (only about six names at the time). I picked one randomly and called. She and I talked for over an hour. Honestly, I don't even remember exactly what she said, but I remember exactly how she made me feel: heard, less alone, and less afraid. As the years went by and I gained more knowledge and experience parenting my own child, I came across Ally Moms online again, but this time a call to serve. I could not think of a better way to give back and to support the transgender community and their families.

**Marion's Story**

I joined because I have been watching the hate my daughter has been going through and I looked up stuff online and really didn't find anyone for her to talk to. I wanted to be that someone for others who needed a voice or just an ally someone in their corner willing to listen and help them. I also joined to help other parents struggling with finding out their child is transgender. I feel that not only do the kids need a listening ear but so do their parents. Ally Moms truly is an awesome group and I feel very fortunate to be a part of it. Thank you, Roz, for making it happen.

**Peggy's Story**

I've joined to fight hate and ignorance, to stand for my daughter and all of the transgender community. My daughter is the sweetest most giving person I know. Unfortunately, she came out to us at the same time Caitlyn Jenner came out, I couldn’t believe the hate I read EVERYDAY on social media, people who I thought loved and supported her and our family sharing ignorant and hateful things on social media. That's when momma bear came out! My circle is smaller, but definitely better! I WILL NOT stay quiet to hate and IGNORANCE! My daughter has reverted back to being “he” now, because of the hate she has endured, but my biggest hope is that one day she is strong enough to be her, her true self! Regardless of how she presents, I'm in her or his corner and I WILL fight the fight!!!!

**Why have other moms joined?**

### Stacey's Story

When my daughter was going through the initial stages of her transition 3 and a half years ago, I felt alone and scared. My husband was not supportive of her at the time. My daughter was only 7, and I didn't know anyone who had been through this. I started researching online and came across a list of Ally Moms (only about six names at the time). I picked one randomly and called. She and I talked for over an hour. Honestly, I don't even remember exactly what she said, but I remember exactly how she made me feel: heard, less alone, and less afraid. As the years went by and I gained more knowledge and experience parenting my own child, I came across Ally Moms online again, but this time a call to serve. I could not think of a better way to give back and to support the transgender community and their families.
Sue's Story

I've joined Ally Moms so that I can open my heart and share my love with the transgender community by providing a listening ear, guidance in finding resources, help to parents just finding out their child is transgender, and whatever else I can do. While we wait for society to wake up and realize our transgender families are REAL, and NORMAL and LOVED, and deserving as much RESPECT as every other human being, we will do what we can to protect and help all of the BEAUTIFUL transgender individuals we can!

So, by now I hope you are asking yourself... What can I do to help?

Apply to be an Ally Mom

Email Janna Barkin jannabarkinyoga@gmail.com

With the Subject: Stand With Trans Ally Moms Application.

There is an application/screening process. After you are accepted, we provide free online training, webinars for continuing education and a private Facebook group to stay in connection with resources and other Ally Moms. If you can spare a few hours a month you can help!

Can't spare the time right now? That's ok. There are other ways to help!

Share the Ally Moms application with moms we desperately need in the following states:

- Wyoming
- Vermont
- South Dakota
- Rhode Island
- North Dakota
- Arkansas
- Hawaii
- Iowa
- Kentucky
- Montana

Help by Sharing Ally Moms as Your Go To Resource

http://standwithtrans.org/ally-moms/

Share us with your kids!
Share us with your local GSA or LGBTQ Youth Center!
Share us with your therapists and counselors!
Share us with other allies, advocates and parents you know.

Help by Donating

Please consider a monthly donation to Stand With Trans. As you know Non Profits can only continue to operate with your help. http://standwithtrans.org/donate/

And One last thing!..... promise!..... DADS .... We haven't forgotten about YOU!! We need You! YES YOU!

Though we have many dads who are supportive and help out in various ways, we are currently in need of someone who can oversee an Ally Dads program (process applications, facilitate communication, etc.). If you are a dad who might be interested in doing so, please email istandwithtrans@gmail.com

Please consider sharing the Ally Moms link. Thank you for listening and remember we are here for YOU!