

Jaqui Arte  
*Los Colores de Mexico*  
more on pp 16-19



December 2019 | PFLAG Council of Northern Illinois Newsletter

[opendoors@pflagillinois.org](mailto:opendoors@pflagillinois.org)

Monthly  
**Open Doors**

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# *Commit yourself to a lifetime of learning...*

## *Your life will be all the richer.*

PFLAG National did a great job of organizing another fantastic convention. WE ARE THE CHANGE was the theme of this year's conference hosted in Kansas City Missouri October 25-2. It was a weekend of connecting, learning, growing and getting energized. I don't know where the 2021 Convention will be held, but I recommend attending if that is an option for you.

For me, one of the best parts of any convention or conference is getting to meet new people and share ideas. This weekend was no exception with hundreds of PFLAGers to meet. There were many really inspiring people all sharing their ideas and experiences on a variety of topics including fund raising, training, community support and much more. There were opportunities to meet folks in the vendor areas, at meal times and at the open plenary sessions and at the different workshops.

There was an impressive number of workshop opportunities. There were 5 separate workshop session times, each offering 11 unique options with no repeated workshops, with the total of 55 different workshops provided. With so many great options, choosing which ones to attend was a difficult decision. One of the sessions that I found most enlightening was entitled ***Born Intersex: We are Human! The importance of inclusion.*** It was presented by Mx. Anunnaki Ray Marquez and their husband James Bunce. They really helped me to better understand what it means to be intersex and the issues in society and with Doctors and parents making premature decisions for children. It was an interesting and moving presentation.



To get a glimpse into what was presented, and share in the workshop experience, I urge you to view Anunnaki's [TEDx: Born Intersex, we are human!](#). Their presentation at the convention also included three poems that they have written. "[Reflections of my husband: You are not Broken to me](#)" was read by James and "[The Joke about me, LGBTQIA+](#)", and "[Why Do I feel like a visiting alien](#)" were recited by Anunnaki. There are many more poems and much more to explore at <https://anunnakiray.com/>. Anunnaki's TEDx or some of their poems could be used as the basis for a chapter educational program.

The PFLAG National Convention takes place every other year. 2020 will be an off year. So, to help provide opportunities to learn and network closer to home, the Council is planning to develop a one-day conference for next fall. Keep an eye out for details in *Open Doors* and on our [Facebook page](#) next year. If you are interested in helping with the conference, there are lots of ways to help out.

Happy Holidays!  
In love and solidarity,

*John Hickey*  
President, PFLAG Council of Northern Illinois





The Intersex flag was created in July 2013 by Morgan Carpenter. The circle is described as "unbroken and unornamented, symbolizing wholeness and completeness, and our potentialities."

## Why do I feel like A VISITING ALIEN?



Poem by Anunnaki Ray Marquez

### Do I really have to have more surgery to fit into YOUR WORLD?

I use to appear a typical woman  
Then I use to want to appear a typical man  
Now I am being compared to transgender men  
I even made a lousy woman.  
Where do I fit in?  
**Please do not erase me**



I have had over eighteen surgeries  
Thanks to being sickly and broken all my life  
I am EXHAUSTED trying to fit into your world  
**Please do not erase me**



Just let my body be.  
They say "No Body is Shameful"  
Oh how beautiful that is!  
**Please do not erase me**



I just want to go to the beach, the pool; to dress the  
way I am  
But do I dare?  
Will I be called the bearded woman?  
Will you call me drag?  
Would you be my friend or talk behind my back?  
I am not a circus sideshow



I am not a woman  
I am an intersex person  
I am an intersex man  
**Please do not erase me**



They said I am unlovable  
Yet I even proved you wrong there  
I am loved, desired and needed  
**I am a LOVED**  
parent, a husband, a brother, a cousin, and an amazing  
friend!  
I even contribute to this world to make your planet a  
better place

YET

Here I am wishing.....  
to be a part of your world



Please, I beg this world for  
**OUR  
HUMAN RIGHTS**



STOP Cutting us to make us fit in  
Stop expecting me to CUT myself  
To fit in.



### I WILL NOT HAVE MORE SURGERY!

This is my planet too!  
"I"

Simply want human rights  
"I"

Want to feel human



**Please do not erase me,**  
or  
any of us **Intersex** People  
"I"

**doesn't have to be invisible anymore!**

[LGBTQIA+](#)



# ***PFLAG Chapters in the Making!***

**As we begin our new fiscal year, we are hopeful that plans are progressing for two other new chapters to start in the near future:**

**PFLAG West Dundee-** Plans are also moving forward with to start a West Dundee PFLAG chapter. They intend to meet at St James' Episcopal Church, located at 516 Washington St, West Dundee, IL 60118. Planning meetings are on the first Saturday at 1:30 pm. Thank you, Sharon and Adam, for leading this initiative. If you have interest in helping form this chapter or want to be added to their email distribution list, please contact Sharon or Adam at [PFLAGwestdundee@pflagillinois.org](mailto:PFLAGwestdundee@pflagillinois.org)

**PFLAG Evanston-** Planning meetings are being held to initiate a new chapter in Evanston. To get involved, please email [info@pflagillinois.org](mailto:info@pflagillinois.org).

In addition, there have also been inquiries and preliminary discussions about interest in starting up a number of additional PFLAG Chapters in Northern Illinois.

**Some of the areas of focus for a new chapter include:**

- ❖ **Chicago Español**
- ❖ **Chicago / South**
- ❖ **Chicago / West**
- ❖ **Edgebrook**
- ❖ **Mt. Prospect**
- ❖ **Waukegan**

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 you have interest in being part of or helping to form a new chapter and build a supportive community near you, please contact us at [info@pflagillinois.org](mailto:info@pflagillinois.org)

Shop using Amazon Smile and support The PFLAG Council of Northern Illinois  
Click [here](#).



# ***District 211 Victory!***

Open Doors is happy to report that District 211 Board of Directors voted 5-2 at their November meeting to adopt new trans-affirming locker room policies in their district. Transgender students will now have full access to locker rooms matching their gender identity and will no longer be required to use special privacy stalls.

Many of you have participated in D211 public hearings, addressed the board, written letters and emails, and expressed support of the new policy. We know from our members whose children attend schools in D211 how important this affirmation is for them.

While we celebrate this hard-won victory, it is important to recognize that the opposition (a group that calls itself “Parents for Privacy”) may continue fighting this decision and demanding a rollback of the new policy. They continue spreading false information, insulting transgender people, and planning new actions that threaten the rights and safety of transgender students. **We must remain active in our support of the district’s new policy.**

But, despite this ongoing transphobia, ignorance, and bigotry, now is time to celebrate! We won!!!

**Students affected by this policy, we love you, we are so happy for you, and we will fight for you as long as it takes, until the society recognizes your rights.**

# ***PFLAG Needs Your Time, Talents and Treasures...***

In the [October issue](#) of Open Doors (page 2), Don Donahue did a fantastic job of explaining why your membership and donations are so important to PFLAG at the Chapter, Council and National level. Today, my appeal is to your time and talents. I am extremely grateful for the many great PFLAG leaders that we have today and have had throughout the years. PFLAG is a volunteer-based organization run by passionate, kind and generous people just like you. Thankfully, it is a labor of love and also some of the most rewarding work you will ever do.

So, I want to encourage you to **engage your time and talents to helping PFLAG** fulfill our mission of providing support, education and advocacy. Specifically, I want to make you aware of some of our objectives this fiscal year and some volunteer opportunities for your consideration. There are lots of roles for a diverse talent pool. On the next page is a listing of some of our needs for this year.

*John Hickey*

# Volunteer for PFLAG!

## Fall 2020 Conference

(2018 coordinator- John Hickey)

- Conference coordinator with leadership and project management skills
- Food/Beverage coordinator
- Food and Beverage hosts
- Conference activity / workshop planning
- Conference host
- Conference registration
- Participant greeters
- Participant packages
- AV management
- Facility acquisition
- Facility layout and decorations

## Community Outreach

(current coordinator- John Hickey- supported by many amazing volunteers!)

We receive many requests for engagement (training, presentations, group panels, hosting informational tables, etc.) with employers, places of worship, schools, colleges, other organizations, and community partners with common elements to our mission. We welcome volunteers to assist in overseeing these requests and initiatives, planning and managing our participation and coordinating volunteers.

## Chicago 2020 Pride Parade

- (2019 coordinator- John Hickey) **Parade Coordinator** to ensure registration, transportation plans, communications with participants.
- **4 parade monitors**, to aid in keeping our parade location and formation.
- **Volunteers** for decoration of our transportation, messaging, snacks, water, group photo etc.

## Chapter Expansion

(current coordinator- John Hickey)  
Volunteers to help with strategies and initiatives to help foster new grass root chapter initiation activities.

## Fundraising

(no current coordinator outside of the Mother's Day event, led by Marcia Prichason)  
A volunteer will have broad authority for fundraising initiatives, such as grant writing, arranging corporate sponsorship, fundraising sales, organizing a Gala or other events.

Currently filled Council positions could use **new volunteers and future leaders**. Council Officers (President, VP, Treasurer, Secretary) are elected every two years. 2020 is our next election year. We welcome new volunteers to participate in the Council to ensure rotation and succession in all leadership roles.

## President- John Hickey

Provide leadership for Council initiatives and activities. Preside over quarterly Council meetings. Engage the Officers and Chapter Council leaders in determining the activities and direction of the Council and ensure execution of duties. Seek to fill and maintain Chair and Coordinator roles. Manage communications. Represent Council in public engagements and meetings. Serve as the Council point of contact for coordination with PFLAG at the State, regional and National levels.

## Vice President- Don Donahue

Assist the President in providing Council leadership as needed and actively participate in determining the activities and direction of the Council.

## Treasurer- Jim Levie

Oversee and manage Council financial activities including budgeting, collection and disbursement of funds. Oversee / coordinate directly with the Membership Chair on membership drives, communications and record keeping. Manage the Council PO Box.

## Secretary- Andrew Zanevsky

Record minutes for Council meetings. Oversee and coordinate with other chairs and coordinators related to Council Correspondence and online presence including: Open Doors Newsletter, Facebook, Website and other related initiatives.

## Membership Chair- Don Donahue

Aid in strategies for annual membership drive and communications to aid Chapter leaders in maintaining and growing their membership. Collaborate with the treasurer to ensure proper recording and management of membership records.

## Facebook Coordinator- Toni Weaver

Oversee Facebook content and presence. Respond to Facebook messages to the Council.

## Open Doors Newsletter Editor-

Andrew Zanevsky  
Coordinate with Officers, Chapter leaders, and other volunteers to gather content for the newsletter. Edit, design, organize production and distribution of Open Doors monthly, February through December.

## Website Coordinator- Andrew Zanevsky

Oversee web presence. Explore and coordinate change requests with the webmaster.

## Webmaster-

This role is currently contracted out and changes management is overseen by the Website Coordinator. Manage all technical website design and updates as requested by the coordinator. Provide Council guidance on best practices for effective and affordable web solutions.

## Help Line Manager- Phil Kroker

Respond to help line calls. Engage other leaders and volunteers when needed.

## Special/New Projects

If you have ideas for new projects that fit our mission, if you are passionate about a specific direction of our work, if you have skills and experience in an area that is not fully served by our current leadership roster, we welcome you to bring your ideas to the Council, champion new initiatives, and create a new role. The Council will help you with resources and help find additional volunteers for your project.

## News from PFLAG McHenry

by Toni Weaver

Being November, the focus of our meeting was on the Transgender Day of Remembrance (TDOR). One of our members, Zoe Wolff, created a moving memorial to the victims while also emphasizing hope for change. She had obtained pictures of as many of the people as she could find and placed them on chairs throughout the room. A single rose lay on each chair as well so that all who attended could bring home a rose as a way of remembering. Zoe slowly read the names and as much about each person as she knew and followed each name with a suggestion of what we could do to bring change to our world. The message: We are the change!



We've also had a death in our PFLAG family: Barbara Marian. Barbara, also an active "Listening Parent" as part of Fortunate Families, a ministry to the Catholic parents of LGBTQ+ kids, was our first parade coordinator and the brainchild of getting us into parades following the controversy surrounding holding the rowing events of the 2006 Gay Games in Crystal Lake. She was a fierce advocate, fighting against inequality and injustice wherever she found it. Rest in peace, Barbara, and thank you. To Barbara's spouse of 56 years, Jerry, we offer our deepest sympathy.

In December we'll have our annual hors d'oeuvres potluck in addition to discussion of the issues facing families around the holidays. Holidays can be so joyous, and yet holidays can be such a great source of pain as well. Holidays unite families, but for some, holidays divide them... How can we mitigate the damage?



## News from PFLAG Hinsdale

by Barb Medley

On November 3<sup>rd</sup> speaker was Sara Smollen, our member Deb's daughter. Sara identifies with the pronouns she, her and hers. She shared with us her journey and experiences as a transgender woman. Sara knew early in life that she felt "different" but was unable to express what exactly made her so. It began to take a toll when bullying began in third and fourth grades. In middle school she was very uncomfortable but still wondered if her feelings were something everyone was going through; she called it very off-putting. In seventh grade she tried to be what everyone expected and began to experience depression. It impacted her grades, and she began to act out and strike out at others. This continued into high school, where she finally experienced happiness and a feeling of belonging in the school's music programs and with the good friends she met there. In senior year she came out as gay. She calls April of her senior year her transition week. She told her best friends, and they were loving and accepting. She discovered there was an LGBTQ group at school, and the first event she joined in was a trip to the Art Institute. That's when she came out to her family as transgender. Having her family and friends' acceptance and support brought her happiness, and she found her "place."

We loved hearing Sara's story. She has an unusually calm and peaceful presence about her. She was so positive and was comfortable sharing her story and answering our questions, and it was a wonderful visit for all of us.

**Having her family and friends' acceptance and support brought her happiness, and she found her "place"**

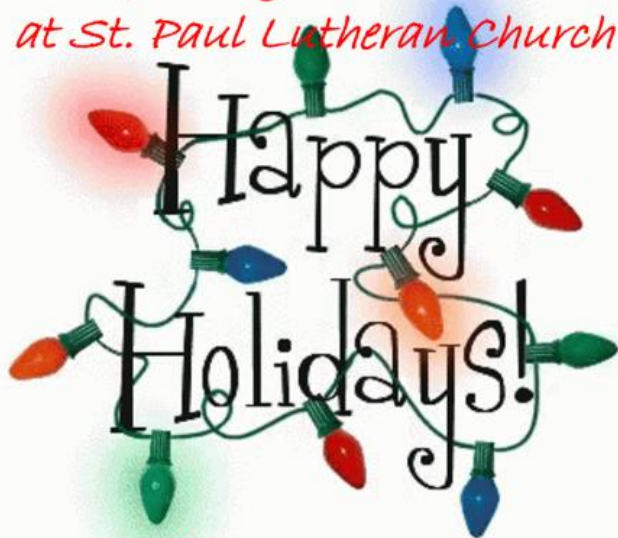
Our December meeting is our traditional holiday potluck, followed by our collection of toiletries for The Crib. Our speaker for January 5<sup>th</sup> is Randi Provost from Youth Outlook who will bring us up to date about their activities and the new centers that have opened in our area.

## **News from PFLAG DuPage**

by Bernadette & Ron Whitfield

As is our tradition, instead of a regular Chapter meeting in December, we will have our annual pot luck social.

*PFLAG DuPage Pot Luck Social  
at St. Paul Lutheran Church*



*December 15, 2019 @ 2 PM*

All are welcome. Please bring a dish to share.

We had another wonderful, well attended meeting in November. Our guest speakers from Youth Outlook shared their experiences and reactions to life in family, school, and community. They shared many very personal details about their journeys. We really appreciated their openness and frankness. All questions were answered. We learned a lot.

Seven people were attending their first PFLAG meeting! We were, as always, very welcoming and hope that they have found a safe space. It continues to amaze us that people find us so quickly after someone important in their lives comes out to them.

One order of business was settled: a motion was made and seconded for a vote to approve the



*Front row (left to right): Jax, Rachel, and Sebastian (Youth-Outlook); back row (left to right): Margaret Donahue, Bernadette Whitfield, Kristin Shulman, Danny Julius (Youth-Outlook Transcend Program), and Ron Whitfield. Margaret and Kristin are the newly-elected Co-Presidents of PFLAG DuPage*

revised Chapter bylaws. The motion passed and the revised bylaws were approved by a vote of members present.

Our presentation included remembrance of Richard Pfeiffer (founder of the Chicago Pride Parade) and observation of Transgender Day of Remembrance.

### **Sadly, we remember the passing of Richard Pfeiffer, Founder of the Chicago Pride Parade**



May 14, 1949 — October 6, 2019



## ***News from PFLAG Homer Glen / Lockport***

**by Michelle Eckmayer**

We are super excited that our chapter has been going for 5 months now and steadily growing. We are averaging 15-20 people each month and have a wonderful core group of amazing allies. We have had a variety of topic starters including live audio streaming with PFLAG National, video clips, Queer Bingo (to help educate us on LGBTQ+ people in history) and this month we had a speaker, Jay La Plante, he is a suicide survivor and LGBTQ community advocate. Jay shared his story about his decade-long struggle with suicide, living with mental health challenges, coming to terms with his identity and being able to live authentically, and the reality of life for LGBTQ individuals in society and the workplace. He referred to his story as one of doom and gloom however we saw it as a calling to continue to work hard for equality.

Our chapter had two outings, both to Outspoken events. The evenings were powerful and impactful for our members. Storytellers sharing from their heart through talk or music was incredibly insightful.

**We will not be meeting in December due to our meeting falling on New Year's Eve.**

In closing, I would like to share with you a paragraph of an email I received from a young man who attended our November meeting. His name is withheld for anonymity purposes. He disclosed to me that he would be disowned from his family if they knew. It is incredibly rewarding knowing PFLAG is making a difference one life at a time....

Hey Michelle!

I legit never felt so loved in my life. I was honestly so terrified to come in. I sat in my car and contemplated driving back to school. By the end of the meeting, the mother and young boy next to me gave me their number and Lisa did too. They said: "if anything happens and you need a place to stay, please reach out". I sat in my car and sobbed my eyes out. My own family won't even support me this much. I never felt so accepted in my life. I will definitely be back in January!

See you soon!

**“I legit never felt so loved in my life”**





## News from PFLAG Rockford

by Phyllis Gallisath

We welcomed a few newcomers to our monthly meeting with 10 in attendance. After introductions, we had fun sharing what we are thankful for this holiday season, with examples like: our families, our partners, and our pets!

Our meeting started off with an informative presentation on Trauma 101 from our guest speakers: Lori from [Children's Home + Aid](#) and Mary Ellen from the [Youth Services Network](#). In order to help our community become more trauma-informed, Lori and Mary Ellen give this presentation to all kinds of groups. We were appreciative to have them present and we learned concepts like: Symptoms of trauma, Small-t Trauma and Large-T Trauma, ACEs (adverse childhood experiences) and their impacts later in life, how to instead of asking "What's wrong with you?" ask "What happened to you?," triggers, Impacts of trauma, and self-care techniques.

### What we've been up to

October 28th our Safe Schools Team presented to Harlem High School students in a women's studies class about gender. Britt and Amber did this presentation. 30 students participated. And we're requested to come back next semester.

I attended the *PFLAG National Convention* that is held every other year. This time it was in Kansas City, from October 25-27, 2019. The workshops attended were:

- Building Inclusion at the intersection of racial and ethnic LGBTQ+ identities
- What you don't know about your child's identity
- Supporting youth through community partnerships
- Youth in foster care and juvenile courts
- Advocating for LGBTQ people in rural communities
- Born Intersex

The convention was a great experience. I got to meet and connect with several chapter leaders from our (Great Lakes) Region. I'm looking forward to implementing what I learned here in our community.

PFLAG presented at Rock Valley College about transgender visibility and issues of prejudice,

discrimination, and violence that affect transgender people on November 12th. I lead this presentation with the help of some of our members who are trans and intersex so they could speak to their experiences and help make sure the material reflects lived experiences.

Our monthly DiversCity Youth Group session was held on November 13th at the Nordlof. We were joined by 7 teens for this month's drag workshop with Adenah Killz. The teens enjoyed watching Adenah apply makeup while they chatted, and were wow'd by her performance.

Our monthly Adult Peer Support Group met on Saturday, November 16th at the East Branch Library. Nine adults enjoyed conversation and support from one another.

In the past, we have scheduled monthly social events, but they have fallen off. We would like to revisit this in the new year 2020 and possibly elect a chair to organize these events. We already have some interested people who are excited to see where this goes.

We are looking to rebuild our website. I reached out to Andrew the website monitor for the Illinois Council. In our meeting, we decided that we will link our webpage URL to the main PFLAG IL website. Our site URL would be something like [pflagil.org/Rockford](#). We won't need to pay for the domain registration or for hosting. However, we are going to ask for help in building and designing this page, so we're going to tap into a web developer contractor, Nina, who helps with various [pflagil.org](#) changes. She's very professional, reliable, and has been doing a good job. She lives in Maryland and works with PFLAG IL remotely on an as-needed basis.

The Transgender Day Of Remembrance (TDOR) was held at the Unitarian Universalist Church on November 20th from 5:45-7:45pm where we honored those who have died by suicide and violence in the trans community. [WIFR](#) and [WREX](#) both reported on the event.

### Updates

Curt provided our financial updates, with our current balance at \$3,617.40.



## News from PFLAG Rockford continued

Scottie and I have been working with a newly forming group that seeks to offer more and better resources for our community. This non-profit organization will be named *The Liam Foundation*, in memory of my son, Liam Burdick. We are planning to bring a brick and mortar LGBTQ+ resource center to Rockford. We have begun to form a committee and are hoping to elect some candidates to our executive board by next month.

Lien updated us that RVC's technology is aspiring to be more trans inclusive. So far, their online system Eagle is working on the ability to add a preferred name. Lien continues to work with PAIC (promoting an inclusive community) at RVC to move equality forward.

### Upcoming Events

"Love Makes A Family" exhibit will be at RVC from November 11-22. - Today is the last day - sorry for the late notice!

Amber is excited to visit Harlem Middle School's GSA for the first time on November 21, 2019.

Amber and I will be presenting on LGBTQ+ matters to students and staff at Roosevelt High School on Friday, November 22, 2019.

DiversCity Youth Group: Our monthly session will be held on Wednesday, December 12th, 6:00pm-8:00pm at the 317 Art Collective for a Paint & Sip Night. This will be located at 317 Market St, Rockford, IL 61107. DiversCity is a safe space for LGBTQ+ youth and their allies ages 13-19.

Our Adult Peer Support Group will be hosted at the East Branch Library on Saturday, December 14th from 3:00pm-5:00pm in the Friends Community Room.

## In Special Honor of Liam Burdick for TDOR

"This world is unforgiving but my heart is pure."



Liam Burdick 2/18/00-5/14/18



### External links:

- Children's Home + Aid - <https://www.childrenshomeandaid.org/>
- Youth Services Network - <https://ysnkids.com/>
- WIFR News Story - [wifr.com/content/news/Transgender-Day-of-Remembrance-Rockford](http://wifr.com/content/news/Transgender-Day-of-Remembrance-Rockford)
- WREX News Story - [wrex.com/rockford-marks-transgender-day-of-remembrance-with-vigil](http://wrex.com/rockford-marks-transgender-day-of-remembrance-with-vigil)

Happy Holidays,  
With LOVE,  
*Phyllis Gallisath*

## No meeting in December

Next Meeting: **Monday, Jan 6, 2020** 6:00pm-8:00pm  
at Montague Library



## News from PFLAG Ottawa

by Ken Brown

At our November meeting, our guest speaker was Tracey O'Fallon. Tracey has been the faculty advisor for the Gay-Straight Alliance at Ottawa High School since 1994. She spoke about the challenges and hurdles she faced through the years in her fight to gain acceptance for the GSA. There was resistance from faculty and the administration. It was not until about six years ago that the GSA was recognized as an official student club at the high school. Currently, the GSA has about 25 members, and it is a safe place for LGBTQ+ students and allies. My, how things have changed! Tracey noted the overall acceptance and support that the GSA now receives, and the students' appreciation for the club. And, as Tracey also noted, the GSA saves lives! Tracey and I are pictured here.



In December, we plan to have an open discussion about the difficulties many LGBTQ+ people face as they gather with family for the holiday season. (We will meet on the third Sunday instead of the fourth to avoid a conflict with Christmas). We may also consider watching the video “*Fish Out of Water*,” since it appears to us that some of the difficulties that exist are driven by a misuse of scripture.

## News from PFLAG Deerfield

by Ann McAuliffe

On Thursday, November 14th, we were honored with a truly special guest speaker - Logan Pierce from the Potocsnak Family Division of [Adolescent and Young Adult Medicine within Lurie Children's Hospital](#). Logan shared information on three of the cornerstone programs at Lurie Children's followed by a lively Q&A session:

### 1. TransMentor Program

One-on-one mentoring opportunities pairing transgender and gender expansive youth ages 12-20 with similarity identified adults. Logan thinks this program is the first of its kind in the nation. He affectionately described it as “Big Brothers, Big Sisters for Trans people”.

### 2. Sexuality Education Programming

Combines the expertise of a multi-disciplinary staff with a youth-centered and engaging curriculum. The team supports thoughtful, culturally-responsive and LGBTQIA-inclusive conversations as students learn about relationships, social emotional development and their bodies.

### 3. Gender & Sex Development Program

The specialists within this program at Lurie Children's are dedicated to providing you and your child with warmth, support & exceptional care.

- Gender Development – provides subspecialty medical and behavioral health services for gender-expansive, gender-questioning and transgender children and youth up to age 24. New patients can begin care at age 21 and younger.
- Sex Development - provides subspecialty medical and behavioral health services for newborns, children and young adults with differences of sex development (DSD).

## News from PFLAG Grayslake / Round Lake

by Nicole Farley

In anticipation of the coming holidays, and in recognition that the holidays can be particularly challenging for the LGBTQIA+ community, the November meeting for PFLAG Grayslake / Round Lake focused on tips and tools for surviving, and thriving, through them. Jean Sowa, LCSW at the Naval Station Great Lakes, opened our meeting with mindfulness practices and information on resources for mindfulness tools. Our meeting continued with the board offering ways to help prepare for and decompress after difficult events. The formal education hour closed with the sharing of handouts with hotline resources and then those gathered shared their own suggestions. And, for those who couldn't be at the meeting, all the resources were shared on our Facebook Page and in our Facebook Group. As we usually do, we spent the second half of our meeting in support conversations.

## News from PFLAG Aurora / Fox Valley

by Tom Purl

The Aurora/Fox Valley chapter had another good meeting on November 10th. We did not have a guest this month and spent the entire time discussing recent LGBTQIA+ events and personal stories. The discussion topics included the **Transgender Day of Remembrance** on 11/20 (<https://www.glaad.org/tdor>) and the Georgulas transgender custody case in Dallas.

## Equality IL Gala



Equality Illinois invites you to be a part of the [Equality Illinois Annual Gala](#). For the past few years, the Gala has been a **sold-out affair** with local media **live broadcasting** from the venue and has been called a “Who’s Who of Illinois politics” by ABC News.

The Equality Illinois Gala is taking place on Saturday, February 1, 2020 at the Hilton Chicago and is the largest LGBTQ event of its kind in the country. With nearly **1,500** attendees, including more than 100 political figures and community VIPS, Equality Illinois is excited to celebrate the accomplishments that advanced LGBTQ rights over the last year and hear about the challenges that remain in our fight for full equality for all Illinoisans.

Click [HERE](#) for more details and to purchase tickets.

## MBLGTACC Conference

The [28th annual Midwest Bisexual Lesbian Gay Transgender Asexual College Conference \(MBLGTACC\)](#) has announced [Kat Blaque](#) as one of the [keynote speakers](#).



Kat Blaque is an Animator, Illustrator and [Youtuber](#) from Southern California who has been openly blogging about her life for the past 10+ years on Youtube. She currently uses her platforms on Youtube and Facebook to speak about the topics she's passionate about as well as spread information, and cultivate conversations that encourage education across intersections.



# RELIGION

## On Gender and Sexuality

**Fr. Richard Rohr, a Franciscan priest who runs the Center for Action and Contemplation in New Mexico, has written five meditations which might speak to people who have trouble accepting their own or their children's sexual orientation/gender identity due to their religious beliefs. It might give them hope and a new perspective.**

### *Final Court of Appeal*

**Quote:** “If you believe that the Bible is a single, timeless, internally consistent teaching on matters of human morality dictated by God then yes, the Old Testament book of Leviticus is definitely uncomfortable with “homosexuality.” But it is also uncomfortable with menstruating women, shellfish, and pigskin. (And for the record, it has some very harsh words to say about lending money at interest, a prohibition that even biblical literalists seem to find it perfectly permissible to disregard!)”

**Read the full meditation here:**

<https://cac.org/final-court-of-appeal-2019-10-22/>

### *A Deeper Tenor*

**Quote:** “Where the Bible mentions [same-sex sexual] behavior at all, it clearly condemns it. I freely grant that. The issue is precisely whether the biblical judgment is correct. The Bible sanctioned slavery as well and nowhere attacked it as unjust. Are we prepared to argue today that slavery is biblically justified? [Over] one hundred and fifty years ago, when the debate over slavery was raging, the Bible seemed to be clearly on the slaveholders' side. Abolitionists were hard-pressed to justify their opposition to slavery on biblical grounds. Yet today, if you were to ask Christians in the [U.S.] South whether the Bible sanctions slavery, virtually everyone would agree that it does not. In the same way, fifty years from now people will look back in wonder that the churches

could be so obtuse and so resistant to the new thing the Holy Spirit was doing among us regarding [sexuality].”

**Read the full meditation here:**

<https://cac.org/a-deeper-tenor-2019-10-23/>

### *True Self and False Self*

**Quote:** “Christianity is all about being who you are ... So if you want to honor God, here's the first step: Know who you are. Be who you are. Be the person God created you to be.”

**Read the full meditation here:**

<https://cac.org/true-self-and-false-self-2019-10-24/>

### *The Wedding at Cana*

**Quote:** “One of the easiest ways that progressive denominations could ignite interest in the binary-busting aspects of Christian theology would be to free up queer clergy to proclaim the Gospel from an explicitly queer perspective, boldly and honestly.”

**Read the full meditation here:**

<https://cac.org/the-wedding-at-cana-2019-10-25/>

### *Gender and Sexuality: Weekly Summary*

**Quote:** “With all the changing ways of understanding gender and sexuality, most of us truly need contemplative eyes and the guidance of the Holy Spirit to “rupture simplistic binaries” and be compassionate and respectful of difference and diversity.”

**Read the full meditation here:**

<https://cac.org/gender-and-sexuality-weekly-summary-2019-10-26/>



# Letter to SCOTUS

*by Sue Ginsburg*

**Supreme Court of the United States**  
**1 First Street NE**  
**Washington, DC 20543**

Dear Justice Ginsburg,

I am writing this letter to each Justice personally, specifically because I am not sure who has or has not had a real connection with someone from the LGBTQ community. Since you will be deciding law based on Title VII, I thought I would relate MY story to you in an effort to expose you to a “real” connection.

Ten years ago, our 30 year old daughter came out to us. She had been living in California, working as a prosthetist, and had come in for a visit. Right before she was to return to the airport, she mentioned in passing that she was dating a woman. We were left with the fact and what to do with it. The first thing I did was go online to look for support and found PFLAG, a national organization which supports parents, friends and families of those in the LGBTQ community. Meeting once/month, I found families like mine who loved their children, but just didn't know how to support their children. We were worried about their safety and their futures.

I digress. I want you to know Amy. Amy was a 3 sport athlete in high school. She played college basketball at the University of St. Thomas in Minneapolis. She had to go to a Division 3 school because she wasn't tall enough for the Big Ten, although she got into Michigan and Illinois. She played Varsity her freshman year and wound up playing in 3 Final Fours! Her senior year, she chose to play soccer and was goalie. Amy majored in Biology and taught high school biology her first year out of college. But it was a brand new school and they could only offer her half

time status, even though it was Amy who wrote the biology curriculum.

She moved to California, taught outdoor education on Catalina Island for a year, then decided to go back to school there and become a prosthetist. But she was so much more.... In her position at Hangar, she competed in the Challenged Athletes' Foundation Marathon for over 10 years, raising over \$2000 each year. She had a 13 year old patient who lost his leg to Ewings sarcoma; he felt his life was over because he had always wanted to surf. So Amy decided to take him surfing. She started a surfing group, one full bodied person per amputee, and at her own cost, the group met once/month. She provided breakfast and lunch and all participants “surfed”. Many couldn't stand the board, but all surfed! I was fortunate enough to be there for one of their outings.

Amy became known in the para-Olympian community, as her love for athletics was never far from her interests. A young man who had just gotten a job at Cirque de Soleil in Las Vegas was hit by a hit-and-run driver and lost his leg. He was determined to get that job back. Amy took part in his rehab and designed his “hanging” leg. He is now the ONLY amputee in Cirque de Soleil, having gotten his job back almost a year to the day of his accident!

Oh, and I can't forget the dogs that Amy has helped on her own time and at her own expense. She has fitted prosthetic legs and many braces for dogs in need. Amy has traveled to Mexico, making prosthetic legs and wheelchairs for those who cannot afford to buy their own.

Amy is now living in Denver. She is working for a company that specializes in upper extremity prosthetics, using micro-processing technology. She is



## Letter to SCOTUS continued

taking a course in electronics to advance her knowledge. She is always learning; always helping her patients to have a better life. Can you tell how proud I am of my daughter? No more or less proud than I am of my older daughter, who is a school social worker. Why should her rights be any different than Amy's?

Now YOU are going to decide whether members of the LGBTQ community are to be considered "less than" other citizens of the United States. You will decide whether they can be fired from their job because of who they love, whether they can be evicted from their homes, whether they can access medical care?

Now I can see why parents were so worried 10 years ago at my first PFLAG meeting.

**OUR CHILDREN ARE NO DIFFERENT THAN YOURS! No child asks to be gay, lesbian or transgender. No matter what any religion says, these children are born that way. That is a fact! They are contributing members of our society and should be treated as such. Otherwise, the words to our Pledge of Allegiance are false: there would be NO LIBERTY AND JUSTICE FOR ALL!**

I am now president of our local chapter of PFLAG. I welcome parents of gay and transgender children every month, trying to allay their fears and give them hope that life will be good to their children. After all, isn't that what we all want? We all want our children to be healthy, happy and safe.

It is my fervent prayer that you will do the right thing; the only thing when it comes to making a judgement this June. You cannot ignore 10% of the population of the United States. We are here, we are strong and we demand equal rights under the laws of the United States of America.

Thank you,

*Susan Ginsburg*  
President, PFLAG Deerfield



Resource guide prepared by the Chamber of Commerce summarizes LGBTQ+ rights in the U.S. workspace, includes state-by-state information, and references to other resources:

<https://www.chamberofcommerce.org/lgbtq-workplace-rights> [[LGBTQ Workplace Rights Guide](#)]

Hello  
my name is

???

my pronouns are

???

Click [here](#) to read the article by Sinclair Sexsmith *Dear (Cis) People Who Put Your Pronouns On Your "Hello My Name Is" Name Tags*

**“It can make my whole day brighter when I hear someone use they/them pronouns. ... I feel vulnerable, and cared for, and seen.”**

# Jaqui Arte

The artist of the month is Chicago-based Jaqui Arte, who is inspired by her Mexican cultural heritage, traditional folk art, and spirituality.

Please visit Jaqui's Facebook and Instagram pages to see more artworks and follow her projects:



[www.facebook.com/jaquiarte](http://www.facebook.com/jaquiarte)



[www.instagram.com/artejaqui](http://www.instagram.com/artejaqui)



## Interview with the artist

**Open Doors:** You grew up in a family of artists and had role models and support in your career choice. What would you advise our readers whose young children exhibit artistic talents? How can they be more nurturing?

**Jaqui Arte:** I was Fortunate enough to come from a family of artists and creatives, but it wasn't always a supportive environment because art was not seen as a career but rather a hobby. However, because I followed my dreams and heart, they are now 100% supportive. It was hard being told that art wouldn't take me anywhere, so I would advise readers whose children are showing signs of artistic talent to be supportive of their dreams. Help them buy art supplies, buy them books with images and history of art from all over the world, take them to exhibits so they meet other artists and more than anything, encourage them to learn business because you want them to profit from their talents. As far as being nurturing all I can say is be mindful of how you speak about art because it's subjective and therapeutic. Some kids may do art and love it because it allows them to express themselves in this over critical society. Some choose art because that's their drive and heartbeat, either way just be mindful and please encourage their talents.

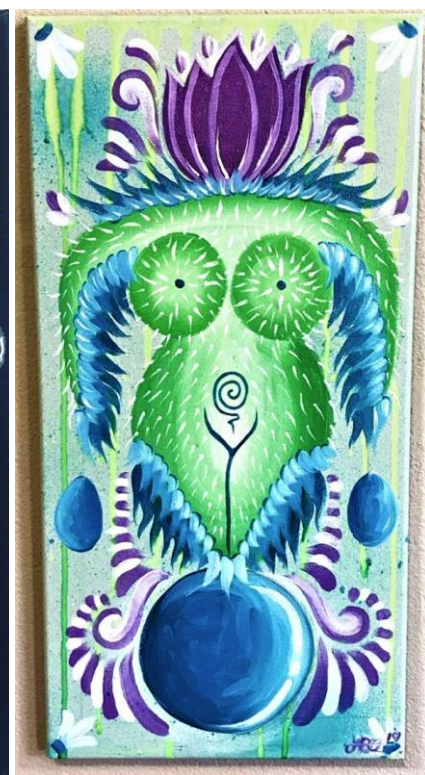




*Diosa Nopa*



*Nopal Kali*



*La Nopal Diosa Pájaro*

*Coyolxuahqui*

## ***Interview (continued)***

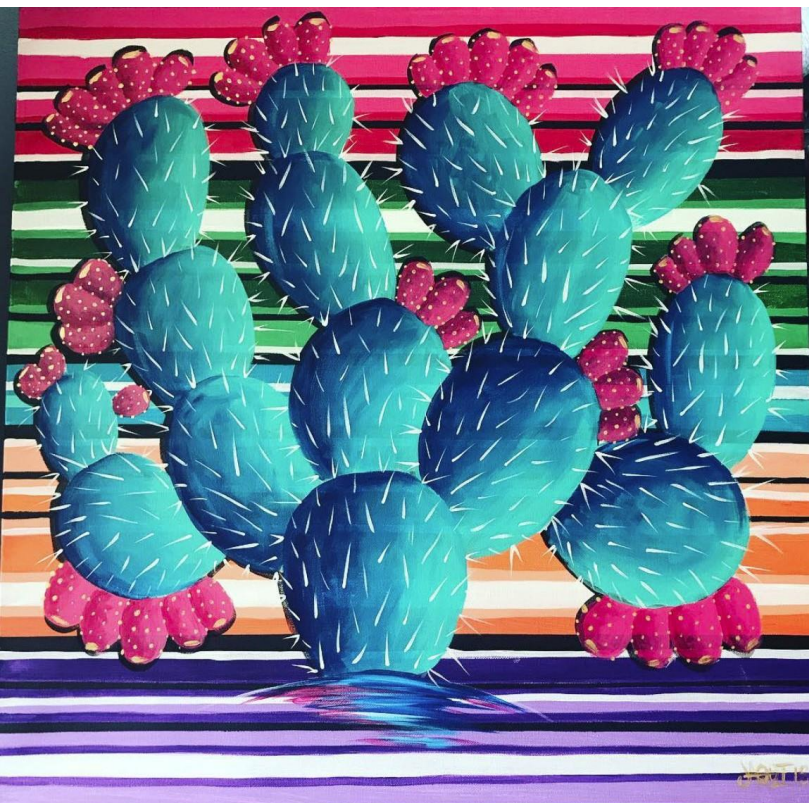
**OD:** How would you describe your artistic style?

**JA:** I would describe my artistic style as Traditional folk art with an Urban twist. I'm greatly inspired by the folk art of my Mexican heritage because of its bright and bold imagery, tales and finesse. However, I did grow up in an urban setting as opposed to a countryside in Mexico, so the graffiti and street art sparked an interest in me as a young child. I do my best to mix both as a representation of who I am in today's world.

**OD:** Cacti appear in many of your works. Is there a symbolic meaning?

**JA:** Yes! I do paint a lot of Cacti, in particular the Nopal, which is native to many parts of Mexico. To me the Nopal is representative of immigrants because how they survive and thrive under the worst conditions and with minimal, sometimes nothing at all and yet flourish and give fruit. Being a daughter of immigrants, a Chicana, I am that fruit. I'm the prickly pear to their Cacti!





↑ Sarape with Turquoise Nopales



Dreaming of You ↗

Amor →

## ***Interview (continued)***

**OD:** How important is spirituality in your creative process?

**JA:** I am a very spiritual person to begin with, so with that being said I feel as if I cannot create without their being a spiritual aspect to my art. I guess what I'm saying is that I follow my intuition when it comes to my art, I have to have music playing and my spirit needs to be calm. Sometimes I burn incense or light candles, say a prayer or just meditate before I get started. If I'm not emotionally feeling well, I cannot create. Also, I do incorporate at times my spirituality in my work when I paint my Cacti Goddesses or use Primitive/Indigenous symbols in my pieces.

**I grew up in an urban setting as opposed to a countryside in Mexico, so the graffiti and street art sparked an interest in me as a young child**



## Interview (continued)

**OD:** Your artworks convey a sense of humor and kindness. What are the main sources of positivity in your life?

**JA:** I've learned that GRATITUDE is key for positivity, sounds easy but it can be a daily battle at times but I really do my best to remember this. At times also the support of loved ones like family, your partner and community is a great source of positivity because it reminds me of who I am and why I love doing this. The humor and kindness I express in my art derives from Love, compassion, understanding of the self and others, political and social views.

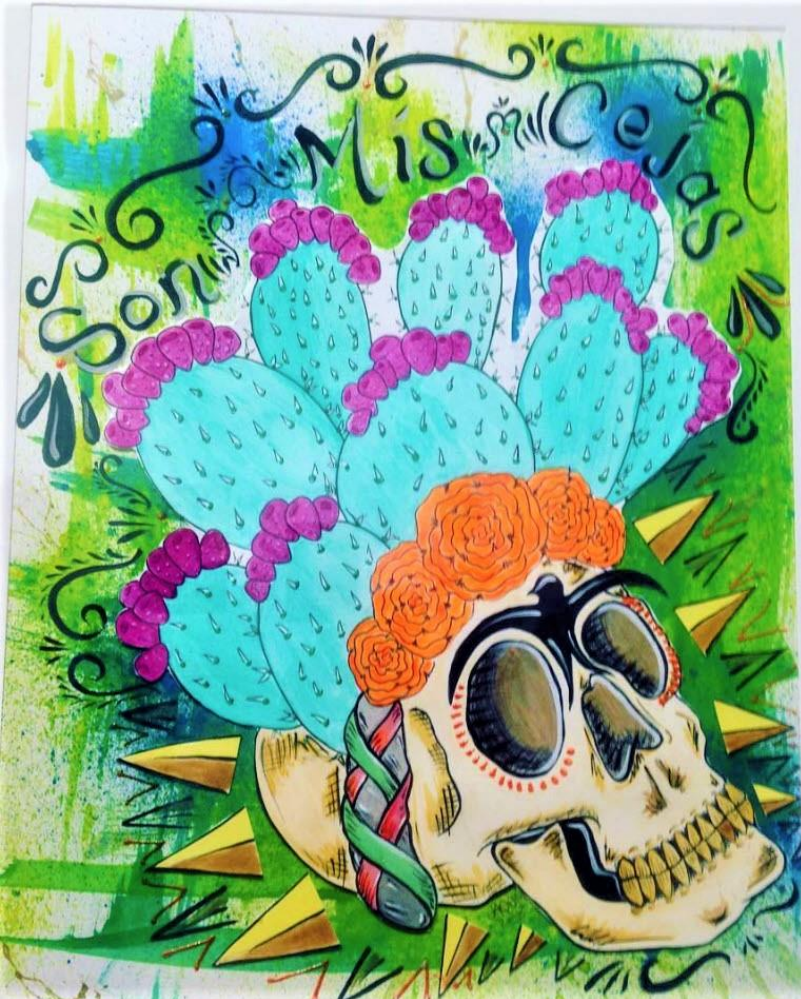
**GRATITUDE**  
is key for positivity



↑ Audrey Catrina

← What Would Frida Say

↓ El Día de Los muertos



# Calendar at the Center on 3656 N. Halsted, Chicago



📅 Saturday, Dec. 7 ⌚ 12 - 4 pm

## Santa Speedo Run Boystown 2019

More than an excuse to hang out your holiday decorations – it's also a huge party that raises money for Center on Halsted serving Chicago's LGBTQ community. REGISTER TO RUN as an individual or as a team or MAKE A DONATION and enjoy all the fun! Help us raise more than last year—\$80,000!

📍 Center on Halsted | 3656 N. Halsted

[RSVP HERE >](#)



📅 Sunday, Dec. 8 ⌚ 3 - 10 pm

## The Spot: Sunday Funday & The L Word Watch Party

Center on Halsted is proud to partner with Peach in a fresh take on Sunday Funday for queer women in Chicago. Join us for our launch of The Spot, where Ivy Les Vixens — the ring leader of the legendary Les Vixens (an all queer women's neo-burlesque troupe) will be hosting and performing!

At 9pm CST, we will be LIVE viewing the premiere of *The L Word: Generation Q* on Showtime!

📍 Elixir | 1509 W. Balmoral

[LEARN MORE >](#)



📅 Thursday, Dec. 12 ⌚ 6 - 9 pm

## The Boys Who Said No Film Screening

Nearly 60 years ago, against the background of the quiet conformity of the 1950s, in the face of a seemingly senseless war in a country they had never heard of, a small group of young men refused to register or serve in the U.S. Army. For the first time, *The Boys Who Said No!* tells the story of their acts of courage...

📍 Center on Halsted | 3656 N. Halsted

[RSVP HERE >](#)



📅 January 14 & 16 ⌚ 11 am - 4 pm

## SILVERFORK

### Cohort 29

Now taking applicants for next Silverfork Cohort 29. Silverfork is a FREE, 9-week culinary arts and job readiness program. To apply please email: [silverfork@centeronhalsted.org](mailto:silverfork@centeronhalsted.org).

📍 Center on Halsted | 3656 N. Halsted



**FREEFORM**

&



INVITE YOU TO A  
**SNEAK PEEK SCREENING** OF

# EVERYTHING'S GONNA BE OKAY

**MONDAY, DECEMBER 9**

**6:30PM** Doors Open

**7:00PM** Screening +  
Q&A with Josh Thomas

Reception to follow  
with light bites & cocktails

**CENTER ON HALSTED**

3656 N HALSTED ST  
CHICAGO, IL 60613

**CLICK HERE TO RSVP**

# LGBTQIA+ 101



**Tuesday, December 3 | 7:45 pm**

Join us for this presentation about LGBTQIA+ inclusion and how it coincides with Jewish values. You will learn about gender identity, sexual orientation, pronouns and vocabulary.

This program is for people who are knowledgeable on this topic or not, comfortable or not... it will offer all populations a basic understanding of these concepts.

This program is sponsored by the North Suburban Synagogue Beth El LGBTQIA+ Task Force and will be presented by Keshet, a national organization that works for full equality in Jewish life.

Please RSVP to Ali Drumm at [adrumm@nssbethel.org](mailto:adrumm@nssbethel.org).

North Suburban Synagogue  
**Beth El**  
בית כנסת בית אל

**Keshet**  
קשת

For LGBTQ  
equality in  
Jewish life

## 360 YOUTH SERVICES HOLIDAY SPONSORSHIP REQUEST!

360 Youth Services in Naperville houses 38 youth experiencing homelessness, including having a LGBTQ+ specific housing program. We are seeking sponsors to "adopt" our youth this holiday season. Please see the details below for the different ways to participate. All donations are tax deductible. 100% of monetary donations go directly to the Holiday Sponsorship Program!!

Register here as a holiday sponsor: <https://forms.gle/UyUyMRuX62onJhY96>

All donations/gifts can be sent to our administrative office: **360 Youth Services, Attn: Holiday Sponsorship Program, 1305 W. Oswego Rd., Naperville, IL 60540.**

We can also pick up local donations! Contact Kelly Mannion at [kmannion@360youthservices.org](mailto:kmannion@360youthservices.org) to coordinate. Thank you!!!!



**Adopt-A-Youth:** You'll receive a wish list from a client. You shop, we wrap! Suggested price is \$200.



### Monetary Donation:

Contribute to the general holiday fund. These are used to pay for wrapping paper, food, movie tickets and events on Christmas Eve, Christmas Day, New Years Eve and other holiday celebrations.



**House Elf:** Sponsor an apartment and purchase needed household supplies. We'll provide a list of needs. Suggested price \$150-250.

**Baked Goods:** Can you make the jolliest gingerbread people? We appreciate baked goods throughout the season to share with our residents.



**Stocking Elf:** Help fill up to 40 stockings with candy, gift cards and other fun treats. Suggested price is \$25-40/stocking.



**Purchase Gift Cards:** We need \$10-\$50 cards for grocery stores and gas stations.



**I have another idea of how to give!** If you think of another way you want to contribute, please let us know!



# WORLD PREMIERE

Music by Cindy O'Connor      Book & Lyrics by Larry Todd Cousineau  
Directed by Donterrio Johnson

## An Oddball Holiday Reality Musical

November 29, 2019 - January 12, 2020



The Broadway at  
4147 N Broadway



1 866 811 4111  
pridefilmsandplays.com

Join us for one of the early performances of **AMERICA'S BEST OUTCAST TOY**, a dazzling new musical by Larry Cousineau and Cindy O'Connor, directed by Donterrio Johnson. Comp tickets are available for Friday 11/29 at 7:30pm, Saturday 11/30 at 7:30pm, Sunday 12/1 at 5:00pm or Monday 12/2 at 7:30pm. There are also a very limited number of comp tickets available for opening night, Tuesday 12/3 at 7:30pm. RSVP to [PF tickets@gmail.com](mailto:PF tickets@gmail.com) with your name and affiliation and a request for one or two tickets! Join us for some grand holiday fun.

January 30th  
Thru  
March 1ST



Directed By: Steve Scott

# THE CAKE



By Bekah Brunstetter

The next Production of The Buffalo Theatre Ensemble in Glen Ellyn is **The Cake** by NBC "This Is Us" Writer Bekah Brunstetter. It's a provocative, timely, and fun play inspired by the famous Supreme Court Case that allowed a Cake Shop owner to discriminate and refuse to make a wedding cake for a gay couple. Learn more by visiting <http://www.BTEDuPage.com>





# PFLAG Northern Illinois Chapters

**PFLAG McHenry**  
Meetings held 2<sup>nd</sup> Tuesday – 7 pm  
Tree of Life Unitarian Church  
5603 W Bull Valley Rd  
McHenry 60050  
pflagmchenry@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

**PFLAG Grayslake/Round Lake**  
Meetings held the 2<sup>nd</sup> Wednesday – 6:30 p.m.  
Star Homes  
783 Barron Blvd.  
Grayslake, IL 60030  
pflaggrayslake@pflagillinois.org

**PFLAG Rockford**  
Meetings are held the 1st Monday – 6 p.m.  
Rockford Public Library's Montague Branch  
1238 S Winnebago St  
Rockford, IL 61102  
pflagrockford@pflagillinois.org

**Parents of Transgender (North Shore)**  
Meetings are held the 3<sup>rd</sup> Sunday – 6 p.m.  
Winnetka Presbyterian Church  
1255 Willow Rd, Winnetka, IL  
pflagptnorthshore@pflagillinois.org

**PFLAG Deerfield**  
Meetings held 2<sup>nd</sup> Thursday – 7:15 pm  
Congregation BJE  
1201 Lake Cook Rd, Deerfield 60015  
pflagdeerfield@pflagillinois.org

**Parents of Transgender (Chicago)**  
Meetings are held the 2<sup>nd</sup> Thursday – 7 pm  
Center on Halsted  
3656 N Halsted, Chicago 60613  
pflagptchicago@pflagillinois.org

**PFLAG DuPage**  
Meetings held 3<sup>rd</sup> Sunday – 2 pm  
St Paul Lutheran Church  
515 S Wheaton Ave, Wheaton 60187  
pflagdupage@pflagillinois.org

**PFLAG Metro Chicago**  
Meetings held 3<sup>rd</sup> Sunday – 2 pm  
Center on Halsted (Senior Room)  
3656 N Halsted, Chicago 60613  
pflagchicagometro@pflagillinois.org

**PFLAG Aurora/Fox Valley**  
Meetings held 2<sup>nd</sup> Sunday – 2 pm  
New England Congregational Church  
406 W Galena Blvd, Aurora 60506  
pflagaurorafoxvalley@pflagillinois.com

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

**PFLAG Bolingbrook**  
Meetings held 2<sup>nd</sup> Sunday – 2 pm  
305 E Boughton Road, Bolingbrook, IL 60440  
pflagbolingbrook@pflagillinois.org

**PFLAG Homer Glen / Lockport**  
Meetings held Last Tuesday, 6:30–8 pm  
Cross of Glory  
14719 W. 163<sup>rd</sup>, Homer Glen, IL  
pflaghgl@pflagillinois.org

**PFLAG Oak Lawn**  
Meetings held 3<sup>rd</sup> Sunday – 2 p.m.  
Pilgrim Faith UCC  
9411 S 51<sup>st</sup> Ave  
Oak Lawn, IL 60453  
pflagoaklawn@pflagillinois.org

**PFLAG Hinsdale**  
Meetings held 1<sup>st</sup> Sunday – 2 pm  
Unitarian Church Hinsdale  
11 W Maple, Hinsdale 60521  
pflaghinsdale@pflagillinois.org

**PFLAG Tinley Park**  
Meetings held 2<sup>nd</sup> Sunday – 2-4 pm  
Zion Lutheran Church  
17100 69<sup>th</sup> Ave.  
Tinley Park, IL 60477  
pflagtinleypark@pflagillinois.org

**PFLAG Ottawa**  
Meetings held 4<sup>th</sup> Sunday - 2:30 pm  
Open Table United Church of Christ  
910 Columbus St., Ottawa, IL 61350  
pflagottawa@pflagillinois.org

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

Click anywhere on the map to open it online

