

Open Doors

Art by
Alan Emerson Hicks
pp 15-18

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Social Distancing or Distant Socializing

During these trying times, I wish you and yours all the best. In this time of social distancing, while we should not be together physically, there is no reason not to use this time and energy positively and to connect in other ways

I couldn't say it better, so I want to share a recent FB post from our own PFLAG Council Secretary / Open Doors Editor, Andrew Zanevsky:

"I think that we all need more positive posts here. Funny, beautiful, happy, idealistic, witty, empathetic, supportive, silly, playful, intellectual.

Let's be kind to each other. We'll all benefit from it.

If we are stuck at home, it's an opportunity to relax, to reconnect with our loved ones by phone or online, to play a game with our family, learn something new, create.

I care about you and I wish you all to be safe and healthy! ❤️"

-- Andrew Zanevsky

So, it is in that spirit that I encourage you to make safe choices and make a positive impact in your life and the lives of others. Rather than increasing stress levels, I prefer not to have the news on 24/7. I can stay up to date with a little exposure to the news once or twice a day. Then, in my free time, I can look for more positive things to do with my time.

To help us in this endeavor, I have gathered some ideas in hopes that you might try a few – if you aren't already.

Healthy activities... While avoiding others and staying away from crowds, there is no reason you can't enjoy some time and activity indoors or even outdoors (at a distance).

- Get out for a walk, run or bike ride—especially on the nice days.
- Try a video exercise class or an online class.
- Break out the home exercise equipment if you have it. Try weights, bands or cardio equipment.
- No equipment, no problem. There is plenty to do without equipment. Click here for [12 No-Equipment Exercises Top Trainers Swear By](#)

Connecting (distant socializing)... While we should not be physically visiting, with the technology available today, there is no reason for us to be disconnected and lonely.



- Call and check in with family members, neighbors and friends.
- Want to see people? Try video chatting on FaceTime if you have Apple devices or try some more universal video chat applications like: [FaceBook](#) messenger, Google [Duo](#) or Google [Hangouts](#)
- I understand that there are even online games you can play with others. While I have not tried this yet, I understand there are options out there.
- Join a FB group.
- Join the PFLAG Video meeting coming up. Look for details in this edition of Open Doors.

Me time and entertainment...

- Read a book.
- Watch a movie or binge watch a series on Netflix or your favorite streaming service. Be careful to not become a couch potato-it's easy to do.
- Don't forget the documentaries. One of my favorites that had an impact on my life is [Forks Over Knives](#) – available on Netflix.
- Podcasts. If you have not tried podcasts, you're in for a treat. There are literally thousands of different podcast providers on every topic you can think of. Pick a podcast app and get started. This article can help you get started with an app: [Best Podcast Listening Apps \(For iOS & Android\)](#). I have used a number of different apps over the years. Currently, I use Google Podcasts. Search and explore to find some that may interest you. These may or may not be your cup of tea, but some of my favorites are: The Daily, Ian Cramer, The Motley Fool Money, Paul Merriman / Sound Investing, Rich Roll, Chris Beat Cancer, TED Talks Daily, How I Built This (NPR)... I guess I like news, finance and health topics.
- [TED Talks](#)... you know I love TED Talks. Explore your interest.

- The library may be closed, but your library may offer download of ebooks and audiobooks. Check their website and download the apps you might need to enjoy these online services at no cost.

Healthy eating... Enjoy some time in the kitchen.

- Try some new recipes or some of your favorite old family recipes.
- May I suggest exploring some delicious and healthy options? There are some really great blog sites: [Top 100 Plant Based Food Blogs and Websites on the Web in 2020](#). Some of my favorites are:
 - Minimalist Baker
 - [Oh She Glows](#)
 - Try this [Creamy Mushroom Soup](#)- You won't believe it's dairy free! Be sure to blend it on high for several minutes to thicken the cashew/bean cream.
- If you watched Forks over Knives, here is their website with recipes: <https://www.forksoverknives.com/recipes/>
- Want to make a drastic improvement in your health and bloodwork? Try the [Engine 2 Seven Day Rescue Challenge](#). Take the challenge.... You will be amazed at your results.

I am sure there are many, many more ideas out there... Explore and enjoy.

Be safe. Remember to Spread comfort, not fear; hope, not despair. Practice empathy, share your joy, stay strong and be positive.

In love and solidarity,

John

Join our video meeting on Sunday, April 5th at 3 PM – see next page



PFLAG ONLINE VIDEO MEETING

While our chapters have canceled in-person monthly meetings due to the COVID-19 pandemic, we are going to meet online to support each other.

Join us for a

PFLAG Online Video Meeting

organized by the PFLAG Council of Northern Illinois on

Sunday, April 5th 3–5 PM

Special Guest: Mike Ziri of Equality Illinois

Paying and nonpaying members of all chapters are invited

We will use **ZOOM** meeting technology, which is free, easy to use, and works on computers, tablets, and smartphones. If you need technical support, please email to opendoors@pflagillinois.org in advance.

We recommend using a device with a larger screen for better videoconferencing experience, as it will allow you to see more attendees at once.

In an effort to protect privacy of attendees, we request that you RSVP by emailing your name and chapter name to opendoors@pflagillinois.org by the end of Saturday, April 4th to receive the meeting PASSWORD

We reserve the right to deny admission if we cannot verify your identity.

[Click here to join the meeting on 4/5 at 3 pm](#)

PTI Chicago is going to hold their chapter meeting online on April 9th – see page 5 for details.

All chapters interested in holding their own online meetings are encouraged to email opendoors@pflagillinois.org for technical support.



News from PTI Chicago

by Bill Guilfoile

We hope you are all staying safe and healthy during this difficult time.

PTI Chicago held our monthly meeting at Center on Halsted on March 12. We had two hours of sharing and supported each other as well as welcoming several new members. The Covid-19 pandemic was a significant topic of discussion.

While we are complying with the Illinois and Chicago stay-at-home order and in consideration of our members health and welfare, **our future meetings will be held by Zoom Pro for PTI Chicago members until further notice.**

We will have the same schedule for our meetings being the second Thursday of the month from 7:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m.

A meeting invite with Zoom link will be sent to members the week before the meeting.

Our next meeting will be on April 9, 2020.

Zoom works with laptops, desktops and mobile phones (both Android and iPhone) and it is quite easy to use.

Only PTI Chicago members will be invited to join the meetings.

We will maintain confidentiality and will be monitoring those that join the meeting. We will not be recording any meetings.

Members should please feel free to contact Bill Guilfoile by e-mail (ptichicago1@gmail.com) or phone with any questions.

News from PFLAG McHenry

by Toni Weaver

Fortunately PFLAG McHenry got its March meeting in before the shutdown took place. Marco Floreani from the biopharmaceutical company ABBVIE joined us to discuss strides being made at ABBVIE to promote equality in the workplace. (Last Fall, members of the PFLAG Council of Illinois had the honor of making a presentation to members of the ABBVIE LGBTQ+ Employee Resource Group (ERG), thus establishing a relationship between PFLAG and ABBVIE at least on the local level.)

I'm really excited about the resource The Savvy Ally (www.savvyallyaction.com) because it provides us another tool in our toolkit when we reach out to "new" parents, members of the community, and educators. There's a link to "free stuff," handouts we can reproduce and distribute. One handout is titled "Supporting Your LGBTQ+ Child." Other handouts include "Glossary of Terms," "Common LGBTQ+ Bloopers," and for school staff, "Best Practices for LGBTQ+ Inclusive Schools." The website's originator, Jeannie Gainsburg, has also written a book, *The Savvy Ally*, which I've just ordered and look forward to perusing during these days of home confinement.

Another excellent resource, especially for educators, is HRC's website www.welcomingschools.org. We now have so much excellent information to put into the hands of the folks who run our schools. It's up to us to get that information into general circulation!

Our meetings may have closed down for now, but our work of talking with "new" parents continues. My phone still rings, so our ability to be helpful listeners continues despite the onslaught of the coronavirus. Together we all can still

MOVE EQUALITY FORWARD!



News from PFLAG Rockford

by Phyllis Gallisath

We welcomed regulars and newcomers to our monthly meeting with 16 in attendance. After introductions, we had conversations on the diverse facets of our group's heritage. Discussion ranged from the delicious foods that come with our cultures to our city's fun ethnic festivals, historical stories of our lineage, and the current trends of DNA tests.

What We've Been up to

The Liam Foundation had their committee meeting on Thursday, February 27th. They raised \$1,300 for Liam's 20th birthday fundraiser through PayPal, with a majority of the donations in the amount of \$20. Film students from Rock Valley College are making a commercial for The Liam Foundation to use when we're ready to promote the organization in the media.

The **Adult Peer Support Group** met on Feb 8th and a group of six folks were led through discussions by guest leader, Skye, in place of Paige.

We applied for a grant through PFLAG National for diversity and inclusion training.

Current Business

Finally, our **Social media and website development** needs have been answered! Kenny, a new intern with The Liam Foundation will be responsible for social media and website work and will be helping with PFLAG as well. Kenny's parents are going to pay for our web hosting.

In the past, we've hosted monthly **PFLAG Rockford Social Events**. We would like to revisit this effort this year. We need to possibly elect a chair to organize these events.

Open Floor Discussions:

The Liam Foundation wanted feedback on what new support groups we'd like to see offered in our

community. Numerous suggestions were offered: a Christian LGBT+ group, mental health, HRT support, substance abuse &/or sexual assault group, and a dating/relationship group (addressing how to navigate dating through transition).

Our groups spent time discussing how Christianity is often used as a shield or weapon against understanding the LGBT+ community.

A Rhetoric professor from Rockford University visited this meeting. They would like to focus a fall 2020 semester Rhetoric course on the LGBT+ community. The course would have a final project for students to contribute to the local LGBT+ community. We discussed possible projects that would benefit PFLAG Rockford: having them create online/web content, make brochures, and create a Resource List to host on our website. It would be beneficial to have queer Rockford University alumni have a presence for this project. We're excited to see where this opportunity leads!

News from PFLAG Aurora / Fox Valley

by Tom Purl

We are fortunate to meet early in the month (March 8th) so the Aurora/Fox Valley chapter was able to have our meeting before people were asked to stay home.

Our presentation this month was about the *2020 Trans Youth and Family Summit* that was hosted by *Youth Services* in Glenview. This event is a wonderful opportunity for families to meet, share ideas and attend workshops. For more information about this year's event and to sign up for their newsletter please visit <https://ysgn.org/trans-summit/>.

We also discussed proposed fundraising events for the 2020 Aurora Pride Parade. We're crossing our fingers that the parade will still happen as scheduled.



News from PFLAG DuPage

by Kristin and Margaret

We are thinking about each of you and missing our normal activities and interactions with our PFLAG family. It is with heavy hearts that we have to announce that:

PFLAG DUPAGE Meetings have been CANCELED thru APRIL 30th!

We are very sorry to have to take this unprecedented move and cancel PFLAG DuPage meetings thru the end of APRIL 2020. We have been advised by our national office that all in-person meetings should be suspended at this time due to the Corona virus and in accordance with the CDC and WHO guidelines.

We know that our meetings provide support that often cannot be found elsewhere. You can also ask for support by emailing us at pflagdupage@yahoo.com at any time.

We hope that this is truly temporary and we will be back in full swing soon. Until then, please take care of yourself and those around you.

Somewhere Over the Rainbow – Counseling Transgender Individuals and Those Who Defy the Gender Binary

by Courtney Milligan

I was invited to speak on a panel at the event organized by McHenry County Regional Office of Education, PFLAG McHenry, and the McHenry County Mental Health Board on February 5th. The event was a workshop for Social Workers, teachers, therapists, psychologists, and educators. It was very informative. I got there early and manned the PFLAG table. About 50 people attended the discussion.

I shared our story. I felt it was important to share how young my child was and how firm she was on who she is, the stick figure drawings with long hair and mermaid tails and dresses (she was drawing herself at 3), and I said how it's been talked about, how can children know this at such a young age, and I said I knew that I was a girl at around 3! And ended with that. I felt it was important to share the defining moment (although I didn't know it was a moment at the time) on how my child took a garbage bag at 4 years old and threw out all "boy toys" – put them all in the trash. How I also had never heard the word "transgender" and I thought that maybe my son was gay, attracted to the cute waiters at Chili's. Just ended with seeking professional help and being told my child was trans.

Public speaking is not easy for me, but it's amazing how my child has given me a voice, a voice I feel I never had. It was like someone else was speaking through me. Words just fell out. It definitely pushes me out of my comfort zone, and I'd love to do more of this.

*“it’s amazing how my
child has given me a
voice, a voice I feel I
never had”*



Breaking the Silence

by John Hickey

Please note: The following article was written before the Covid 19 pandemic. Please exercise sound judgment and follow WHO and [CDC](#) guidelines and practices. We do not recommend any social gatherings at this time. The events referenced in this article are for another time when the risks are much lower....

April 24th marks the 25th year of [Day of Silence](#). A nation-wide, student-led day of action, where LGBTQA+ students and allies take a vow of silence in protest of LGBTQA+ bullying and discrimination at school. An important part of the day is at the end, when the students **break the silence**. Breaking the silence can come in many forms including school assemblies. Letter writing to elected officials, or events where the students might share their experiences. It can be a powerful day promoting awareness, and opening hearts and minds, empowering our youth and building allies.

Be sure to support the students in your life who might be interested in participating in this day. Consider contacting the GSA at a school near you to see how you can help. Many high schools and middle schools have clubs that may go by another name. We refer to them generically as GSAs which may stand for Say Straight Alliance or Gender / Sexuality Alliance.

I first heard of GSAs and the Day of Silence the year after my son came out. I have to admit that at first, I really didn't understand the premise very well. Today, I have a great appreciation for the message that the Day of Silence teaches and especially the importance of Breaking the Silence.

Day of Silence reminds me of all the progress we have made in society because of the brave people who have broken the silence. While he was ahead of his time, Harvey Milk had it right:

“... Once they realize that we are indeed their children, that we are indeed everywhere, every myth, every lie, every innuendo will be destroyed once and all. And once you do, you will feel so much better” – Harvey Milk



There is great power in coming out. It wasn't until we began to have highly visible people come out as part of the community that fear began to subside. It was slow and often painful, especially for those brave enough to be the first visible pioneers in their fields. But, the impact has changed the world forever. Now, it is virtually impossible to find someone who thinks that they don't know someone who is Gay or Trans or part of the LGBTQA+ community. That is due in large part to people coming out and speaking up and sharing their stories.

I love that people are sharing their stories. As every PFLAGer knows, we learn so much from those who share their journeys with us. Today, there are more groups helping to bring those stories to the public. I want to put a plug out for the folks of [OUTspoken](https://www.facebook.com/OUTspokenChicago/) <https://www.facebook.com/OUTspokenChicago/> and [OUTWORDS](https://outwords.org/) <https://outwords.org/> for the storytelling events that they organize and promote. If you have not yet attended one of their events, you might want to remedy that. These are personal stories, sometimes humorous, sometimes emotional, always insightful and moving.

In love and solidarity,

John

Day of Silence is organized by GLSEN (formerly the Gay, Lesbian, & Straight Education Network). For more information on how to participate, check out their website at: <https://www.glsen.org/day-of-silence>



Dear Equality Illinois Supporter,

“Stay home if you’re sick.” That’s common advice given to avoid spreading an illness. However, not all workers – including LGBTQ workers who care for chosen families – have the option of staying home.

The importance of an inclusive paid sick days policy is more evident now than ever in the midst of the coronavirus pandemic. The Illinois House of Representatives has the opportunity to act by passing the **Healthy Workplace Act** (SB 471). This bill will guarantee paid sick days for all Illinois workers and their families, including chosen families.

[That is why now, more than ever, we need you to tell your state representative to support the Healthy Workplace Act.](#)

Equality Illinois believes that all families, including LGBTQ people who are often part of chosen families, should have the opportunity to take time off from work to care for their health care needs and the health care needs of their family members. Importantly, the Healthy Workplace Act has an inclusive definition of family member to include chosen family. Many LGBTQ people build their own families – chosen families – because they are ostracized and rejected by others because of who they are or who they love. The Healthy Workplace Act takes a big step forward for LGBTQ workers.

[Click here to tell your state representative to support the Healthy Workplace Act.](#)

Also, thank you to Illinois House Deputy Majority Leader Jehan Gordon-Booth, former state senator Toi Hutchinson, Women Employed, the Shriver Center on Poverty Law, and our partners in labor for their leadership on the Healthy Workplace Act.




Mike Ziri
Director of Public Policy

Equality Illinois builds a better Illinois by advancing equal treatment and social justice through education, advocacy, and protection of the rights of the LGBTQ community. Learn more, act, and support our mission at www.equalityillinois.org



Changing the Human Conversation on Love and Inclusion
www.FreedHearts.org

FreedHearts Virtual Resources

| | |
|---|--|
|  <p>LGBTQ Chosen Family</p> | <p>An intimate, vibrant online group for LGBTQ people who have been rejected by their own families. They come together to be CHOSEN FAMILY to each other, providing acceptance, affirmation, support, encouragement, friendship and love! For more information or to join, just click here</p> |
|  <p>Moms of LGBTQ Children</p> | <p>A place to get encouragement, and talk with other MamaBears about issues related to our LGBTQ children, faith-related issues, and everything about being a Mom! This is a private Facebook group. For more information, click here to email us</p> |
|  <p>Moms of Transgender Children</p> | <p>A special group just for Moms of transgender kids! Get encouragement, and talk with other MamaBears about issues related to our trans children, faith-related issues, and everything about being a Mom! This is a private Facebook group. For more information, click here to email us</p> |



FreedHearts Virtual Resources
(continued)

| | |
|---|---|
|  <p>Extended Family</p> | <p>This group is for family members of LGBTQ people who want to come together for encouragement and to talk about how best to love, affirm and support their LGBTQ family member. This is a private Facebook group. For more information, click here to email us</p> |
|  <p>Dads of LGBTQ Children</p> | <p>Just for Dads! A place for guys to get encouragement, and talk with other Dads about issues related to our LGBTQ children, faith-related issues, and everything about being a Father! This is a private Facebook group. For more information, click here to email us</p> |
|  <p>MamaBear Advocates</p> | <p>For Moms who would like to move into advocacy on a local & national level. A great place to connect, get support, and learn how to be a powerful, effective advocate for your LGBTQ child. This is a private Facebook group. For info, click here to email us</p> |
|  <p>Video Channel</p> | <p>The FreedHearts YouTube Channel is home to dozens of short videos on a variety of topics, as well as multi-video courses. We are adding new videos soon! This is a great site to check out & bookmark. Just click here</p> |



Virtual Conferences

We have three transformational online video courses, including one just for parents and one just for LGBTQ. These are comprehensive, multi-session courses that you can download and even use in small groups. There is a cost, but if finances are an issue, we have scholarships available. Just email us and we will help. [Just click here](#)



Powerful Articles

Susan has written more than 500 articles and has millions of readers. Just this year, she has nearly 200,000 new, unique readers. Articles on a variety of topics for parents, LGBTQ, allies, those in the church, and anyone wanting to learn more. [Please click here](#)



Extensive Resources

Our resources page has a rich collection of links on current, relevant issues, connecting you with powerful articles and incredible organizations. [Click here!](#)

COMPLETE THE 2020 CENSUS

A complete and accurate count is critical for you and your community, because the results of the 2020 Census will affect community funding, congressional representation, and more.

Everyone has a story...



OUTWORDS
journey

"OutWords Journey" provides a supportive environment that hosts monthly storytelling events and promotes both entertainment and safety for individuals who identify as or are allies of LGBTQI+ community.

OutWords Journey has already forged relationships with alliance organizations including PFLAG, Outspoken Illinois, 360 Youth Services and several welcoming/affirming churches to assist those seeking counsel and general information in their journey to wholeness among friends and families! Join us at one of our upcoming events!



HAVE A STORY YOU WANT TO SHARE?
Contact Us Today!
Outwordss@gmail.com

Q Chat Space

Let teens 13-19 know about **Q Chat Space** (www.qchatspace.org) through which CenterLink, in collaboration with member centers, is providing 10 weekly live-chat supportive discussions.

Click [here](#) for promotion materials.

Q Chat Space is anonymous. Participants are from the US and beyond. There is no video or audio, only typing. Chats last for 1.5 hours.

Conversations are facilitated by CenterLink's youth programming staff.

Web Resource Recommendations

by Toni Weaver

The Savvy Ally

<https://www.savvyallyaction.com>

a tool for adults and kids alike, one which gives tips and ideas for creating an inclusive environment that's designed for building trust. Particularly pay attention to what's offered under "Free stuff." Here you'll find handouts with TONS of good ideas!

What is pansexual?

What is the difference between pansexual and bisexual?

We got answers!

Article at lgbtqnation.com by Daniel Villarreal

<https://www.lgbtqnation.com/2020/02/pansexual-difference-pansexual-bisexual-got-answers/>

I made it halfway through before throwing up my hands and thinking it would all be just so much simpler if we didn't feel the need to LABEL everyone. We are what we are – damn fine human beings! Right?

Maybe Jesus Actually Did Say Something About Homosexuality After All

by Dr. Robert N. Minorin bible study

<https://whosoever.org/maybe-jesus-actually-did-say-something-about-homosexuality-after-all/>

This column is for those who might be interested in theological topics as they relate to our interest in everything LGBTQ, especially since the "religious right," i.e. "religious wrong" are so adversarial toward us.



photo by Quenton Galvin

Interview with Kim Oclon, the author of MAN UP

Open Doors: What was the most difficult part of co-founding your school's first GSA?

Kim Oclon: Surprisingly, starting the GSA wasn't difficult. First, it was being aware that the school where I worked didn't have one. I had a transgender student transfer at the start of his senior year. He asked me if we had a GSA and I had no idea. I emailed the Activities Director and she told me we indeed did not have a GSA but the idea of starting one had come up several times. After that, it came together relatively quickly. Three other teachers and I got the word out to let the student body know a new club was starting up. We had over twenty kids come to our first meeting. After that, the challenge was to maintain attendance and figure out what this brand-new group needed. Many kids were at the very beginning stages of exploring and understanding their gender and sexuality. On the other hand, the student who got the ball rolling was already very comfortable with himself and very open about his journey. Some attendees had limited knowledge of the LGBTQ+ population. Plus, these teachers and I had NO experience running a GSA. Over the course of the year, we had several students share some pretty intense things and we had to learn how to best approach those subjects and

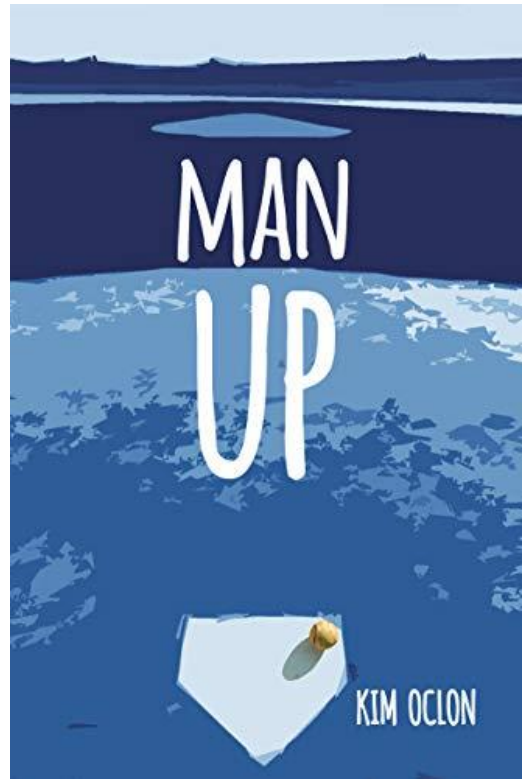
realize when we needed to go to an outside source even though the club has a strict confidentiality policy.

As far as pushback goes, we didn't experience very much, I am happy to say. We had a couple parents call and say their student said they were going to these meetings. They wanted to know what that meant, what we did, and what we discussed. Many parents had never heard of a GSA. For our first Day of Silence event, a couple parents wanted to know why we were forcing kids to participate (we weren't) and another declared she would be calling her kids in absent for the day so they would not be involved in the event. I had one of her kids in my class and he could have benefitted from being in school that day.

During my five years of sponsoring the club and from what I understand from subsequent sponsors, maintaining members is the hardest part. I think that's mainly due to the busy and packed schedules students keep. They have sports, clubs, jobs, and other obligations that don't allow them to attend regularly.

MAN UP is about David, a baseball player with a (secret) track-star boyfriend. After keeping his sexuality a secret for so long, he learns about allies in the school and the various types of support others need.

Read an excerpt from *MAN UP* in the [March issue](#) of *Open Doors*, on pages 20-21.



Order the book directly from the publisher Trism Books www.trismbooks.com or find it in your local independent bookstore. Amazon is temporarily suspending nonessential deliveries due to the coronavirus pandemic, so we encourage you to order from the [publisher](#) at this time.



Interview with Kim Oclon, continued

Q: The Illinois Inclusive Curriculum Law signed in 2019 requires Illinois schools teach contributions of LGBTQ+ people. How much do you expect it will change the level of LGBTQ+ acceptance among school administrations and among students? How long do you think it will take to make a noticeable difference?

A: I wish I knew what the curriculum would actually look like in the classroom, all the way from elementary school to high school. I don't know what will be done or can feasibly be done to ensure that all schools implement the curriculum effectively. You might have heard about the uproar in a particular suburb regarding a visit from a children's book author who has a book about activists as children. Because Harvey Milk was on the cover and other LGBTQ+ figures were in the book (but not a part of her presentation), her visit was cancelled. I don't know what the curriculum will look like in a community that is already so resistant and not accepting of the LGBTQ+ population. If this community is resistant to an illustration of a LGBTQ+ figure, I don't know how this bill will change the attitudes of the administration, which is so sad because you know these are the students that need the curriculum the most.

If anything, the law will remind people (administrators, teachers, students, and parents) that LGBTQ+ people have been around FOREVER. It seems kind of silly to say that but because we are hearing about the community more, many might think it hasn't been around for that long. While our understanding and level of acceptance is relatively new, the existence of this community is not. Also, I am hoping it will highlight that someone's sexuality and gender identity is just one part of who that person is. An important part, but just one part. I think about Alan Turing. Yes, he was a gay man, but he was also a groundbreaking computer scientist who was vital in deciphering

“starting the GSA wasn't difficult... maintaining members is the hardest part”

German codes in WWII. It is also important for students to learn that despite his success and contribution to the war effort, Turing was still seen as a criminal.

As for the second the part of the question, I have to honestly say that I have no idea. However, with this curriculum being introduced to children in elementary school, knowledge of these important figures will start early. By the time they get to middle school or high school it will seem like a regular part of the curriculum, just like covering the solar system in science class. It might take a generation of children before the curriculum is not seen as just another aspect of what is taught in school.

Q: Do you expect that a day will come when your book will be seen as a literary document of its time, but no longer portraying conflicts one could encounter in real life?

A: Wow. This is such an awesome question. I guess the simple answer is: I hope so. We can read books that take place a hundred years ago and experience a world where computers and cell phones didn't exist and be in complete disbelief that people managed to live without such things. Or, we can read an account about Women's Suffrage and try to comprehend that there was a time when it was believed that women were not capable of handling the responsibility of voting. It is amazing to think that some time from now that one, my book is still being read, and two, readers will experience an unfathomable time in history where someone was bullied and felt insecure simply for loving someone.

“the [Illinois Inclusive Curriculum Law] will remind ... administrators, teachers, students, and parents that LGBTQ+ people have been around FOREVER”



Q: Please share your experience of publishing this book. Are publishers easily accepting LGBTQ+ stories?

A: In the time from when David, the main character in MAN UP, was first conceived in 2009 to now, when he finally gets his own book, I have seen many positive changes in the publishing industry. After I finally sat down to start writing David's story and would share pages with fellow writers, they would comment how it was uncommon to see novels featuring LGBTQ+ characters and how we need more of them. I didn't write this to be groundbreaking, it was just an idea I had and I went with it.

There is definitely a strong push during the last few years to publish stories that feature a diverse cast of characters. Agents want these stories. Publishers want these stories. The public, for the most part, wants these stories. I had the opportunity to hear Adam Silvera speak in 2015 when his debut novel, MORE HAPPY THAN NOT, was released. He is a gay man and his novel featured a gay main character. He shared that when his agent first started submitting the book to publishing houses in 2013, one actually suggested that Silvera make the main character straight. I feel very confident in saying that is NOT something you would hear from a publishing house seven years later.

Q: Are you planning to write more?

A: Definitely! I have a manuscript out on submission, which means it is trying to find a publisher, and I just finished the first draft of a manuscript that takes place from the summer of 1967 to the summer of 1968 in Chicago, Madison, and Vietnam. It's another YA story that features queer characters but I never thought I would attempt historical fiction. There is still so much research I have to do!

“It is amazing to think that some time from now ... readers will experience an unfathomable time in history where someone was bullied and felt insecure simply for loving someone”



Watch: PFLAG Academy Online

On Demand sessions for allies:

- [So You Think You Can Ally? Advanced Ally Engagement Skills for PFLAG Chapters](#)
- [What Would You Do? Tips and Tools for PFLAGers in Tough Situations](#)

to help you create conversations about LGBTQ+ equality, manage moments of conflict, and more.

Center on Halsted:

BEHAVIORAL TELE-HEALTH SERVICES *ARE OPEN*

Center on Halsted's Behavioral Health Department is now serving all currently-enrolled clients via telehealth services. We can offer sessions either by phone or video, please reach out to your therapist to schedule a session. All therapists are answering their voicemails, emails, and responding to our electronic health patient portal.

773-472-6469 ext. 460

behavioralhealth@centeronhalsted.org



CENTER ON HALSTED FOOD DRIVE *FOR SENIORS*

Accepting the following food + essential donations

- Milk
- Eggs
- Can goods
- Veggies
- Pasta (and sauces)
- Ensure
- Toilet paper
- Clorox wipes

Donation drop-off at 3656 N. Halsted • 9 am - 6 pm

Alan Emerson Hicks

*self-described
"Creator of
temporal
sculpture;
Destroyer of
video tape"*

Website: ARTSLANT

FB: [Alan Emerson Hicks](https://www.facebook.com/AlanEmersonHicks)

IG: [@emerson_428](https://www.instagram.com/emerson_428)



"Adam", "Eve" and "Apple"

Artist Statement

My artwork is about transformation. I collect plastic commonplace objects and societal detritus; bottles, grocery bags, caps, hangers, video tape and use them to make sculpture. I want the viewer to see the objects of their everyday lives anew, hopefully changing the way they dispose of these items. In my work hangers are transformed into a giant "precious" diamond, bottle cap rings become fragile "glass" constructions and grocery bags become startling colorful towers. My work is a commentary on what our society views as important and unimportant.

Interview with the Artist

Q: Who inspired you to become an artist?

A: I come from a family of creative people. My grandmother sang opera and my aunt and uncle both painted.

Q: Your works are very diverse: you use different media, techniques, genres. When you find a style that works well and is appreciated by your audience, what drives you to change it and experiment further?

A: I primarily work with found materials so when I'm confronted with an artistic challenge I try to solve it through the use of found materials. I paint, draw and sculpt using detritus. I find all my work you be an experiment. I try to make detritus mimic many things, paint, lace, marble, etc.



↶ Sun Dancer

↑ ZAP BAM KAPOW

↓ "Carnival Bride" "Carnival Maiden"

Interview (continued)

Q: Where do you source materials for your creations?

A: Artists are collectors. When my artist friends learned I was working with found materials, particularly plastics, they started saving materials for me. I've also been know to dumpster dive for materials for my earlier works. I also find dollars stores a good resource.

Q: New technology offers new media and tools to a sculptor. What do you think of future possibilities for your art from that perspective?

A: I find 3D printing to be very fascinating. I would love to see my figurative sculptures reproduced through 3D printed technology. I'm also a performance artist and I've worked with video and sound. It would be nice to use this media in a museum setting.



Interview (continued)

Q: I feel that your works contain “tongue in cheek” humor and at the same time they are infused with kindness. Is that just my personal impression or your real message?

A: My work does contain a lot of humor, so does my performance work. I enjoy taking the materials I create with and elevating them for a museum audience. I also infuse a lot of hidden humor in my collages. My collages bring the audience you see in the details.

Q: What can society do better to help creative people realize their potential and bring new works of art into existence?

A: Society can support artists better. We need diverse collectors. Society needs to trust their own esthetics and realize there's more than one type of artistic beauty.

↓ Super Series "Frostbite" "Scorcher"
(works were in progress during this picture)



↑ Carnival Horse
↓ The Saxophonist

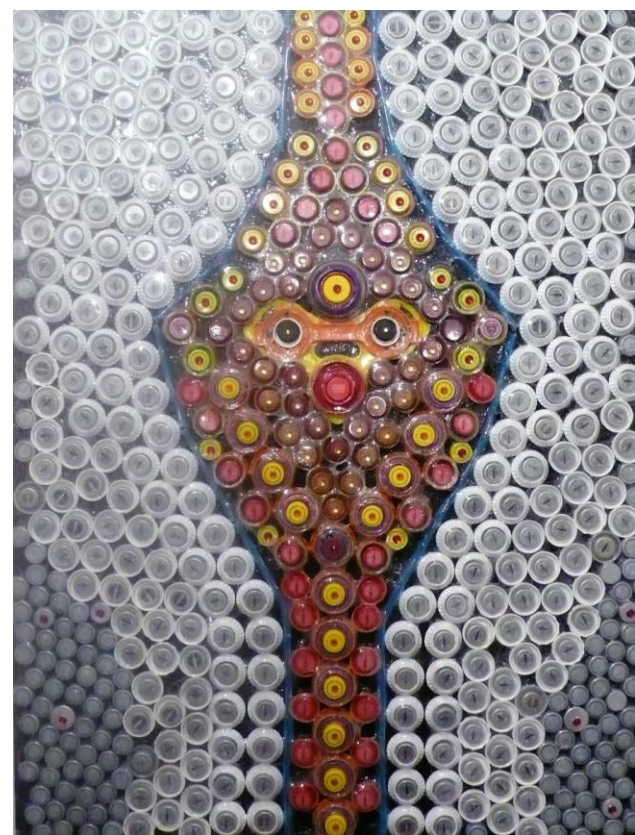




Earth Angel



The American Tower, July 1, 2011



African Mask

Twilight

“Society needs to ... realize there's more than one type of artistic beauty”



PFLAG Northern Illinois Chapters

PFLAG McHenry
Meetings held 2nd 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 2nd 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 3rd Sunday – 6 p.m.
Winnetka Presbyterian Church
1255 Willow Rd, Winnetka, IL
pflagptnorthshore@pflagillinois.org

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

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

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

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

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

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

PFLAG Bolingbrook
Meetings held 2nd 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. 163rd, Homer Glen, IL
pflaghgl@pflagillinois.org

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

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

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

PFLAG Ottawa
Meetings held 4th 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

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