

PFLAG

August 2020 | PFLAG Council of Northern Illinois Newsletter

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Monthly Open Doors

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Resilience, Kindness and Empathy

A Winning Combination

Greetings fellow PFLAGers. I sincerely hope this message finds you and yours healthy, happy and thriving. I recognize that these are indeed challenging times. While times are trying even for the most fortunate of us, times are especially difficult for those of us who have been impacted personally or within our family and friends circle. The pandemic and recession are both taking their toll and we need to continue to show our resilience, innovation and spirit. We are all going to stumble and sometimes fall. Usually it's through no fault of our own. Life happens. So, it's important for us to be there for each other.



Kindness and empathy are sometimes the best support we can offer each other. When we stumble, of course we want to take the opportunity to reflect and learn. But, the important thing is that we get right back up and continue to do our best. I am inspired by the words of author, Bonnie St. John:

“I learned that people fall down, winners get up, and gold medal winners just get up faster...”
“What you do when everything goes right doesn't tell me who you are. It's what you do after disaster that shows your character most.”

– 1984 Paralympics Medalist, Rhodes Scholar and Business woman Bonnie St. John

I am proud of all of the work done by our local PFLAG chapters to continue to provide support in our communities. Zoom and other solutions are proving to be great bridges during the pandemic. This is especially true for those of us who have been with PFLAG for a while and found our comfort zone. However, for those who are new in their journey, they may be having a more difficult time and feel especially vulnerable engaging online. It is often easier to start with a one on one conversation. So, for PFLAGers who are comfortable doing so, I would ask you to consider volunteering with your chapter to provide one on one support phone calls or even to meet with people new on their journey (of course only if you are comfortable with that, and then, only with masks and proper social distancing). As we know, it is often difficult to come out as an LGBTQIA+ person or even to navigate those early days developing your comfort as an ally. It's a process and it often needs to start with one or one conversations. We don't get an abundance of calls or emails from new PFLAGers, but when we do, it is great to have people who can be there to lend an ear and share their experience. If this sounds like something you are interested in supporting, please let me know by writing to info@pflagillinois.org or contact your chapter leader directly.

Even if you are not able to help field calls, please

consider other ways you can be visible as an ally to the community. Your support and visibility go a long way toward creating an affirming world and it likely has more impact and means more than you will know. Let your kindness and empathy show.

Stay Safe!

In love and solidarity,

-- John Hickey



PFLAG: Committed to Inclusion, Anti-Racism Work, and Ending White Supremacy

In June 2020, [PFLAG National signed onto a letter of unity](#), committing to embracing anti-racism work and ending white supremacy. We signed this statement because for PFLAG National, this is not performative activism. PFLAG National has so much more work to do, but we are proud of the work that we've been engaged in to transform who we are and how we carry out our mission.

Just a few ways this has happened include:

- In 2014, the formal establishment of the Board Diversity and Inclusion Committee to drive board-level change around racial and ethnic inclusion (learn more in this issue of the PFLAGPole);
- In 2016, the passage of a Board-level Unity and Inclusion policy to center our ongoing efforts;
- Continued intentional focus on racial and ethnic diversity on our National Board and National Staff. The PFLAG National staff is currently 53% Black, Indigenous, and People of Color (BIPOC), and the PFLAG National Board is currently 35% BIPOC.
- Addressing racial inequities by investing with Industrial Bank, the only African American owned and operated financial institution in Washington, DC;
- Making a commitment to supporting minority-owned, union businesses for our procurements—recent examples include vendors for catering, printing, translating, and ASL services for PFLAG events;
- Expanding our programmatic offerings to ensure that the PFLAG Chapter Network is integrating inclusion work, including
 - Numerous PFLAG Academy Online sessions focused on diversity and inclusion for chapters and working with families of color;

- Translations of all PFLAG National publications to Spanish (and more to come); and
- Expanding our PFLAG National Convention offerings to include nearly 50% of sessions focused on racial and ethnic diversity and inclusion;
- Creating intentional partnerships with Black, Indigenous, and People of Color (BIPOC)-led and centered organizations, including the NAACP, National Queer Asian Pacific Islander Alliance (NQAPIA), Freedom Center for Social Justice, Hispanic Federation, The League of United Latin American Citizens (LULAC), UnidosUS, Waves Ahead, Muslim Advocates, The Anti-Defamation League, and The Leadership Conference on Civil and Human Rights (LCCHR); and
- The launch of our PFLAG Inclusion Grants program to offer financial and staff support to chapters creating community-based engagement programs to make our chapter network more inclusive for all families and to support local BIPOC-led LGBTQ+ events.

<https://pflag.org/our-commitment-inclusion-anti-racism-work-and-ending-white-supremacy>

When everyone can truly say that **Black Lives Matter & Trans Lives Matter, only then will we be on the road to a world where **ALL Lives Matter**. Please, Support Inclusion and Equality for ALL People!**





Remember to exercise your right to VOTE

With COVID still impacting our lives, you may want to consider requesting a mail-in ballot. How to apply, deadlines and processes vary from county to county. Check with your County Clerk’s office for the process where you live. Many offer online application making it quite easy. Here are some links for information on how to request a mail in ballot in these local counties:

- [Boone](#)
- [Cook](#)
- [DeKalb](#)
- [DuPage](#)
- [Grundy](#)
- [Kane](#)
- [Kankakee](#)
- [Kendall](#)
- [Lake](#)
- [LaSalle](#)
- [McHenry](#)
- [Will](#)

Click here to access The Illinois State Board of Elections’ portal for vote by mail applications, by county



THE LGBTQ INCLUSIVE CURRICULUM LAW TAKES EFFECT JULY 1, 2020!



Starting with the 2020-2021 school year, LGBTQ contributions will be included in the history taught in Illinois public schools

Students in Illinois public schools will learn about the contributions of lesbian, gay, bisexual, and trans people in state and national history because of the Inclusive Curriculum Law, which takes effect on July 1, 2020 for the 2020-2021 school year.

The Inclusive Curriculum Law is the initiative of Equality Illinois, the Illinois Safe Schools Alliance (a program of the Public Health Institute of Metropolitan Chicago) and the Legacy Project and was sponsored by State Rep. Anna Moeller (D-Elgin) and State Sen. Heather Steans (D-Chicago). The law passed the Illinois General Assembly last year with bipartisan support and was approved by Governor JB Pritzker on August 9, 2019.

An inclusive curriculum can have positive, affirming benefits and help counteract some disturbing trends. Sadly, in schools across Illinois and the United States, LGBTQ students are told, through bullying, harassment, and exclusion, that they do not belong. These conditions have created a school environment where LGBTQ students are forced to hide who they are to protect themselves. According to GLSEN’S 2017 School Climate Survey, 88% of LGBTQ students in Illinois have heard the word “gay” as a slur. And only 24% of LGBTQ students in Illinois were taught anything positive in classrooms about people like them.

Illinois is one of five states to enact such a law. The other states are California, New Jersey, Colorado, and Oregon.

Individuals who want to get involved and ensure effective implementation of the Inclusive Curriculum Law can sign up for an electronic newsletter developed by Equality Illinois, the Illinois Safe Schools Alliance, and the Legacy Project. The registration link is <https://www.ilsafeschools.org/inclusive-curriculum-updates>.



From PFLAG National

TAKE ACTION

[Sign up for the Equality Act Phone Bank](#). You'll call your Senators, and then you'll join this phone bank to call others and invite them to do the same. You'll receive a quick OnDemand video training, an easy to use web dialing tool, and live support. You can make these calls from anywhere at any time that's convenient for you during the 12-hour window.

[Submit your comment opposing the HUD's anti-transgender proposed changes to the Equal Access Rule TODAY](#). On July 24th, the Department of Housing and Urban Development released a proposed amendment to the Equal Access Rule, allowing homeless shelters to decide to house people based on their biological sex, not their gender. If enacted, this rule would encourage emergency shelters to force trans and cisgender women who present with masculine characteristics, such as facial hair, to sleep in the men's shelters, putting them at risk of harm. This was made clear by a [leaked memo](#) telling staff how to "spot" a trans woman.

But there's still time to oppose this proposed rule change. We have until September 22nd to raise our PFLAG voices in opposition to this proposed change to the Equal Access Rule. You can also share your story about why transgender people deserve access to shelter under the trending tag #HousingSavesLives

Consider this suggested message:
I'M A MEMBER OF PFLAG, AND I OPPOSE THIS PROPOSED RULE THAT WOULD HARM TRANSGENDER PEOPLE. ONE IN THREE TRANSGENDER PEOPLE HAVE BEEN HOMELESS AT SOME POINT IN THEIR LIFETIME AND 70% WHO HAVE BEEN IN SHELTERS REPORT EXPERIENCING HARASSMENT THERE. MORE THAN 40% OF HOMELESS YOUTH ARE LGBTQ+, SO INVITING HARM TO SUCH A VULNERABLE POPULATION IS CRUEL AND INHUMANE.

[Submit your comment opposing this rule change TODAY](#).

FEDERAL

[Reps. Tlaib and Pressley introduce The BREATHE Act of 2020 on July 7th, backed by Black Lives Matter Movement](#). The bill calls for a sweeping transformation to the policing and criminal justice system in the U.S. and includes requests for funding and resources to realize the bill's aims, [easily viewable in this bill summary](#).

[The Pentagon effectively bans flying the LGBT Pride flag in numerous military spaces by omission](#). The Pentagon published a list of approved banners which excluded both the Confederate Battle Flag and the LGBT Pride flag from being flown anywhere besides museums, grave sites, and monuments.

[Trump administration sued for plan to end transgender protections in healthcare by 23 states](#). The 23-state coalition of state attorneys general is moving forward in blocking next month's implementation of the anti-transgender rule. Absence of these protections would allow healthcare providers to refuse treatment of people based on their gender identity.

GLOBAL

Montenegro - [The nation formally legalized same-sex civil partnerships](#). Montenegro, with a population of 620,000, becomes the 32nd member nation to recognize same-sex civil partnerships and the first European nation outside the EU to do so.

Poland - [President Andrzej Duda proposes constitution change that would ban adoptions by LGBTQ+ couples](#). Poland was this year ranked the worst country in the European Union for LGBTQ+ rights [in a poll by Brussels-based ILGA-Europe](#).

Russia - [At least 38 people detained at a protest in support of LGBTQ+ activist Yulia Tsvetkova](#). Moscow's police detained several people who protested on June 27th the arrest of LGBTQ+ rights activist and artist Tsvetkova, who faces up to six years in prison if convicted. (See [Julia's artwork on page 6 of the July issue of Open Doors](#).)

Spain - [Villanueva de Algaidas locals fly rainbow flags in protest of the flag's removal from the town hall](#). After the rainbow flag was taken down from the town hall due to complaints, residents flew many throughout the town to show solidarity with the LGBTQ+ community.

Thailand - [The Thai Cabinet approved a bill to legalize same-sex unions](#). The bill still requires passage by the Thai Parliament to become law. While stopping short of full marriage, the bill would provide numerous rights to same-sex couples, including the ability to adopt children and manage assets jointly.

Scotland - [Scotland to become first country in the world to add LGBTQ+ history to school curriculum](#). In an effort to educate children on issues faced by the LGBTQ+ community, Scottish public schools have plans to implement these inclusive lessons in 2021.



From PFLAG National (continued)

Israel - [Israel moves to ban conversion therapy.](#) The bill still must pass two more readings in the Knesset until it becomes law. The bill would suspend the licenses of psychologists who administer this so-called therapy for at least five years.

Sudan - [The nation abolishes death penalty for homosexuality.](#) This change came from the hard-fought efforts of the [Bedayaa Organization](#), whose mission is to build LGBTQ+ community, share experiences, and access legal/health services in the Nile Valley regions of Egypt and Sudan.

Turkey - [Turkish television show's filming license blocked due to including a gay character.](#) After the filming license for "If Only" was blocked by the government because of the inclusion of a gay character, Netflix cancelled the show.

United Kingdom - [Boris Johnson, the Prime Minister of the UK, pledges his support for a ban on gay conversion therapy after the government completes a study on the topic.](#) Regarding the practice "absolutely abhorrent" and without "place in a civilised [sic] society" Johnson announced that a study would be undertaken to determine how widespread the practice remains in the nation.

Tunisia - [A Tunisian court sentences two men to two years in prison for consensual same-sex activity.](#) Although calls from the UN and internal lawmakers have challenged the anti-LGBTQ+ legislation, the country continues to prosecute individuals for consensual same-sex activity.

MEDIA

[Facebook and Instagram ban all content promoting conversion therapy.](#) The company explicitly stated that any message either advertising or promoting the practice would be swiftly removed and considered hate speech.

[Hallmark plans to center LGBTQ+ characters in future holiday movies.](#) After growing concerns that Hallmark would have no LGBTQ+ inclusion in its upcoming movie lineup, the company announced that they are in 'active negotiations' to have LGBTQ+ storylines, characters and actors.

[Owen Bondono is the first openly transgender educator to win Michigan's Teacher of the Year Award.](#) When he received the award, he [said](#) "I was cautioned by MANY that as a trans person, no one would want me in the classroom with their kids. I want others to see that transitioning isn't a barrier to living the life you want. I'm a #proud MYeducator."

[Madonna reveals being fined by Russia for LGBTQ+ affirming speech.](#) The singer announced on social media that Russia fined her \$1 million for speaking on LGBTQ+ rights during her 2012 St. Petersburg performance, also mentioning that she didn't pay.

PFLAG Origin Story: <https://pflag.org/our-story>



"But seeing those straight parents out there on the streets saying, 'yes, I'm here in this parade because **I love my kid** and I am not ashamed' kills me every time. Anyway, the reason this exists, **the reason this phenomenon exists** in America, the reason there are all of these totally normal average moms and dads out there with this dignified, remarkable tears-inducing public proclamation of love for their kids is because of this specific incident—**this moment in time.**"

—Rachel Maddow

January 11, 2013/The Rachel Maddow Show, MSNBC



News from PFLAG Homer Glen, Lockport

by Michelle Eckmayer

Our chapter held a Pride Party in the Parking Lot this year to celebrate Pride month. We were able to play Pictionary with Team Rainbow crushing Team Unicorn. Friends brought their families, suited up with their best Pride gear and had fun blowing bubbles, chalk art, music and just having fun making new friends. We did all of this while social distancing and wearing masks. We also celebrated our 1 year anniversary of being a chapter!

Cross of Glory Church, where our meetings are held, made us a video wishing us a Happy Pride and letting our members know, they are loved **just the way they are!**



News from PFLAG Deerfield

by Jodi Zavos

Once again PFLAG Deerfield held our July meeting on Zoom. This time we were joined by Grecia Magdaleno, the Policy and Advocacy Manager for Illinois Safe School Alliance. Grecia works with students, parents, teachers, school administrators, advocates, and community partners to promote safe and supportive educational environments for LGBTQ+ youth. They provide policy consultation in schools/school districts to make more inclusive and gender affirming policies not only for students but for teachers as well. Grecia specifically mentioned their efforts to support transgender teachers through policy. Grecia also provides advocacy support for individual students; and is working with groups such as Equality Illinois and The Legacy Project to help implement the Inclusive Curriculum Law which ensures the inclusion of LGBTQ people in the history curriculum taught in Illinois public schools.

Grecia reported that Inclusive Curriculum is now law. It is an unfunded mandate for grades K-12; and must be taught by 8th grade. The Legacy Project has created lesson plans and curriculum which can be viewed online. The advisory council of Illinois Safe

Schools is responsible for guidance and will address any push back that arises. Inclusive Curriculum will not be a special unit but rather will be folded into existing curriculum. It will not include inclusive sex education. Grecia emphasized that Inclusive Curriculum is a work in progress and a rolling launch is planned.

Grecia also spoke on the Palatine District 211 Transgender Locker Room policy which grants transgender students unrestricted access to bathrooms and locker rooms of their choice. A student fought for four years to receive a gender affirming education. This policy is a result of that fight. It is a big win and was powered by all who showed up in support. However, policy cannot change all behavior and a discussion followed about the continued vulnerability of transgender students.

Lastly, Grecia provided resources regarding anti-oppression, body positivity, and restorative justice. They stressed the need for us to take care of each other during this politicized pandemic. So PFLAG Deerfield will continue to “take care of each other” through Zoom until we can once again meet in person. Please join us when you can!

News from PFLAG Hinsdale

by Barb Medley

Because our July meeting fell over the holiday weekend, we did not have a speaker but gathered via Zoom to catch up on the month and discuss current concerns. Our August meeting will feature our guest, Kim Ocion. She recently wrote a young adult novel entitled **Man Up** ([Trism Books](#), [Amazon](#)). She'll talk about her book and what inspired her to become a writer. Kim will also tell us about the recent changes in the publishing industry regarding LGBTQ characters and stories.

News from PTI Groups

by Andrew Zanevsky

PTI Chicago and PTI McHenry continue holding monthly meetings over Zoom on the 2nd Wednesday (Chicago) and 4th Wednesday (McHenry) of the month, at 7-9 PM. Members transgender individuals are welcome to join.

If you are on the mailing list of one of the 3 PTI groups (Chicago, McHenry, or North Shore), then you should receive Zoom meeting invitations by email. If you are not on these mailing list of cannot locate invitations, then please email bill.guilfoile@gmail.com (Chicago) or opendoors@pflagillinois.org (McHenry).



News from PFLAG DuPage

by Kristin Shulman

PFLAG DuPage Makes Lemonade Out of Lemons!

When the Illinois stay-at-home order first went into place, we canceled the March PFLAG DuPage meeting, and told our scheduled speakers we hoped to meet them in the fall. As time has gone on, it seems unlikely that our large group (usually 35 or more attendees) will meet in person anytime in 2020. So, we have made lemonade out of the lemons that have been handed to us. Our July meeting was our fourth meeting held over the Zoom platform and we had a fantastic program with Erica Snider and Pete Cholewinski, our canceled March speakers, from Fermi lab speaking on setbacks and success of being out in the workplace. We are all getting more comfortable with the Zoom platform and we had a good discussion with our speakers.

With our meetings moved to an online platform, we have had both old and new attendees from afar able to participate. Which gave us an idea! Distance is currently not a hurdle. Why not take advantage of meeting virtually, and invite speakers from faraway places to be part of our program.

Our August speaker, will be **Sandra Conti** (a past member of PFLAG DuPage) who recently moved to Arizona. Sandra, a mental health therapist, will speak about being the mother of a transgender son, how he came out to the family, her feelings around his coming out, and finding PFLAG for support. We are delighted that Sandra will be joining us.

Mx. Anunnaki Ray, an intersex social activist and educator whose work focuses on an individual's right to bodily autonomy, and the right to express their true gender identity will join us in October. Anunnaki will be joined by his husband to lead us in discussion. Anunnaki has spoken at both the Portland, PFLAG National convention in 2017 and the Kansas City, PFLAG convention in 2019. We are excited to be able to have Anunnaki and his husband join us!

If you would like to participate in either of these meetings, or all of our meetings, please email us at PFLAGDuPage@gmail.com to be added to our email list to get the Zoom links for our meetings. We hope to make more lemonade with other speakers and guests from faraway places. **PFLAG DuPage meets the third Sunday of each month at 2 PM.**

News from PFLAG Ottawa

by Ken Brown

PFLAG Ottawa has been meeting via Zoom for the last three months. We used the May meeting to catch up with each other and plan for the future. In June and July, we had some very special meetings that we opened up to the greater community of Open Table Church, the church where we hold our in-person meetings.

In June, our speaker was **finn schneider**. finn is non-binary, uses "they, them, their" pronouns, and uses all lower-case letters in their name. finn is on the faculty at the University of Minnesota, and is the child of one of our PFLAG members. finn gave a very powerful and personal power-point presentation via Zoom. They discussed their life journey, their transitions on many levels, and their close and supportive relationship with their mother. We had 32 in attendance for finn's presentation.

In July, we had another special meeting to support the Black Lives Matter movement, and to inform and educate on matters of systemic racism. Two local Black males spoke via Zoom to our PFLAG members and the greater Ottawa community about how they experienced racism in their lives. They had different experiences, one growing up in Ottawa, and the other in southern Georgia. One of the speakers, who grew up in and still lives in Ottawa, is an LGBTQ individual, now married to his husband. He is a long-distance runner who runs for North Face in the United States and around the world. He spoke of being detained in Hong Kong simply because of his race, and of the tensions he felt running in another country where being gay is illegal.

In sum, the Zoom meetings have worked for us so far, and they have helped us to expand our reach.



News from PFLAG Oak Park

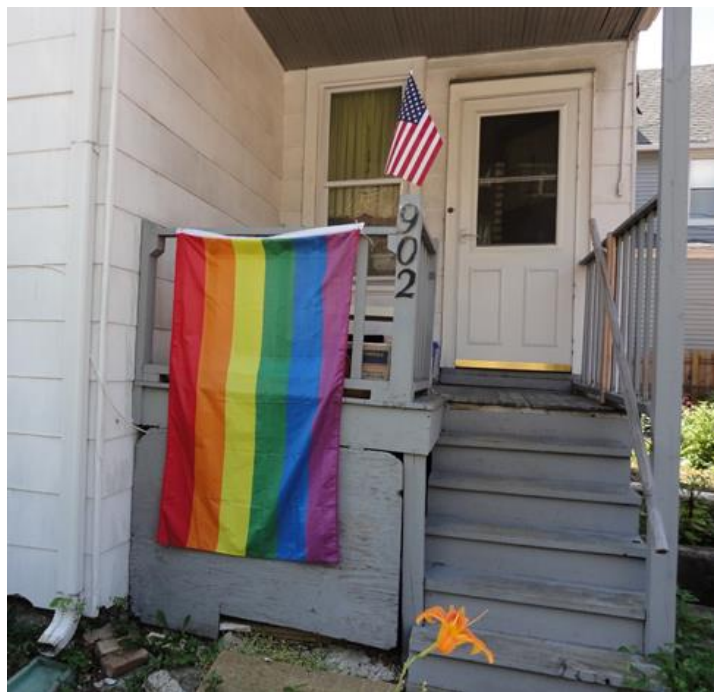
by Nancy Johnson

We are pleased with our Zoom meetings! In June, our guest was Joanne Despotes (jdespotes@gmail.com) who spoke to us about her experiences in the 80s with AIDS. She is an RN, and was one of the people involved with the trials of AZT (the very first drug which was successful in treating HIV!)

Joanne's job involved talking to possible subjects in the trials, and then administering the drug. She came to know her patients very well during those scary days. She told us some of the personal stories they had told her. We encouraged her to write some of her experiences so others could see what she saw. We hope she will!

We will have an ad in the Wednesday Journal for their 40th year anniversary. It's full color and mentions our Zoom meetings.

This month our guest will be Mike Ziri, of Equality Illinois. We look forward to our visit with him.



Nancy Johnson's June/July combo decorations

News from PTI Rockford

We were able to meet in-person again for our monthly meeting on July 6th with nine (9) folks in attendance. After introductions, we had conversations about what we have missed most since COVID started. Discussions ranged from the difficulty of meeting new people (face to face is so much easier!), going to work, missing summer community events, missing Pride Month celebrations, conventions, parades, concerts and more.

Current Business

- Our regular meeting space at the Rockford Public Library is currently unavailable due to COVID 19 safety concerns. Our monthly PFLAG Rockford meetings, the Adult Peer Support Group and DiversCITY Queer Youth Group will now be hosted at The Liam Foundation Office until further notice. **The Liam Foundation Office is located at 124 Water Street, in Office 303A** ([map](#)).
- On July 8th, DiversCITY Youth Group met virtually and hosted a guest speaker, Scottie, who shared her life experiences as an intersex individual and how she's inspired to make a difference in our community by serving on LGBTQ+ groups, like The Liam Foundation. Our virtual group sessions have not been well attended by teens. We're excited to meet in-person starting in August with a new date/time/location. Stay tuned to our Facebook page for updates. [Click me for more info](#)
- Curt provided our financial updates. Our Chapter's current balance is \$8,079.25, which includes the grant awarded to DiversCITY for \$3385.00 from the In Youth We Trust Council.
- Amber provided quick updates about Queer Prom 2020. The youth group continues to work on event specifics with the influence of COVID.
- Our group needs more promotional and supportive material. The group agreed to spend funds to print another batch of information bookmarks and order supportive guides from PFLAG National.
- For the second year in a row, I Bike Rockford held a fundraiser ride with the proceeds benefiting PFLAG Rockford. We're thankful for local organizations that have the initiative to promote visibility and diversity in our community.

Upcoming Events:

- **Adult Peer Support Group:** Adults 18 and over will meet **Saturday, July 18th, 3-5pm** at the The Liam Foundation. Please see the Facebook event page [HERE](#)
- Phyllis and Scottie will staff an info table at the **815 Activist Expo** to promote PFLAG Rockford and The Liam Foundation. The event is scheduled for **July 18, 2020, 5:00p-7:00p**, at Good Shepherd Lutheran Church, 1829 N. Rockton Ave. [Click for Info](#).
- **The Liam Foundation** monthly meeting will be on **Thursday, July 30, 2020, 5:30p-7:30p** at The Liam Foundation's office, located at 124 North Water Street, suite 303A (on third floor). Please see their Facebook page [HERE](#)
- **PFLAG Rockford's August Meeting** will be on **Monday, August 3, 2020, 5:30p-7:30p** at The Liam Foundation's office, located at 124 North Water Street, suite 303A (on third floor). Please see the Facebook Event page [HERE](#)
- DiversCITY Queer Youth Group will meet on **Monday, August 17, 2020, 6p-8p** at The Liam Foundation's office, located at 124 North Water Street, suite 303A (on third floor). Please see the Facebook Event page [HERE](#)

Open Floor Discussions:

- The group chatted about a "Pride 2.0" since Rockford's Pride Month events were canceled due to COVID. Phyllis shared that a lot of other places are planning events for September. The group chatted about planning some low-key events or bigger events, like a block/alley party at The Office Niteclub. We'll need to discuss this more at our next meeting.

- A discussion started on how we'd like to see the partnership play out between The Liam Foundation and PFLAG Rockford. We'd like to partner for trainings and outreach for professional organizations, schools, and other organizations. The Liam Foundation continues to plan for hosting new support groups we desperately need offered in our community. Suggested support groups are: 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). Phyllis proposed that if The Liam Foundation is partnering with PFLAG Rockford, the PFLAG Rockford insurance will cover The Liam Foundation, so wouldn't have to provide that.
- The group had conversations about faith and the queer community.
- Patrick Murphy, a PFLAG member, published the first chapter of his book in the *Elgin Pride Zine*, a zine of amazing art, poetry, and creative writing by local LGBTQ+ artists and creatives. You can download the zine for free [HERE](#)

Have a great one,

Your PFLAG Rockford Team:

- Founder and President, Phyllis Gallisath
- Treasurer, Curt McKay
- Secretary, Amber Kresol
- Adult Peer Support Group Advisor: Paige Marchini
- And our amazing members and volunteers



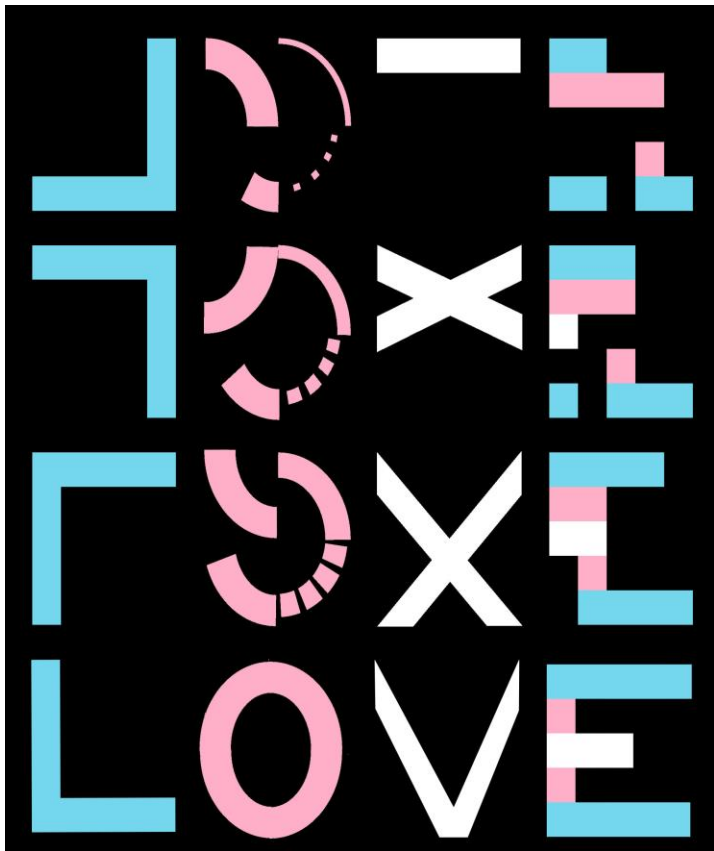
HOUSING • HEALTH CARE • HUMAN CONNECTION

The **CRIB Overnight Shelter** has moved to the new Night Ministry site – click [HERE](#) for details.

Get published in Open Doors!

Send stories, photos, art to:
opendoors@pflagillinois.org





Progressive Love, 2018



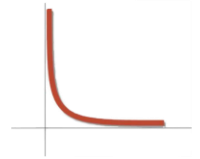
Love Songs, 2019



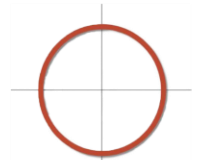
Love is a Simple Puzzle (in PFLAG Colors), 2019

ALL YOU NEED IS

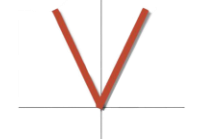
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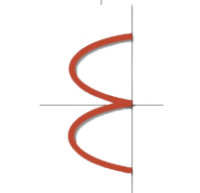
$$x^2 + y^2 = 9$$



$$y = |2x|$$



$$x = -3|\sin y|$$



All You Need Is Love of Math, 2014

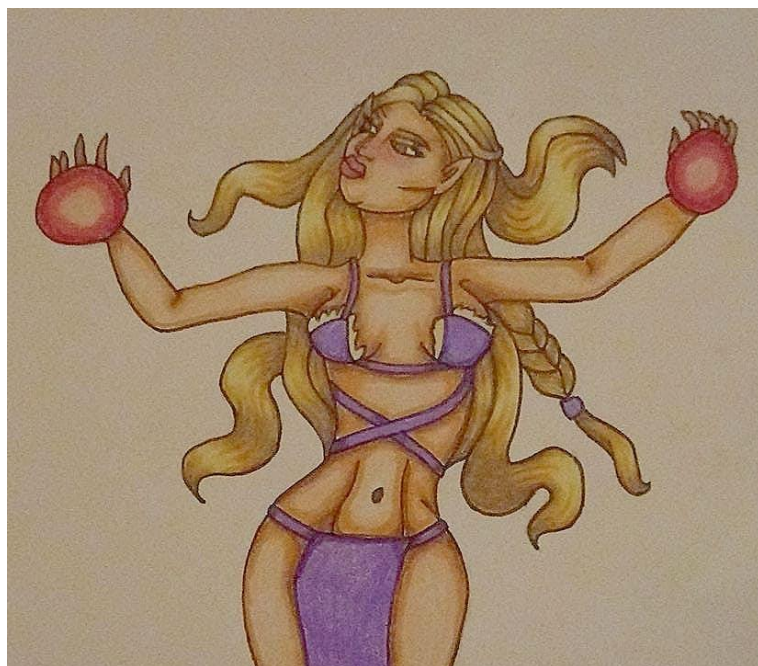
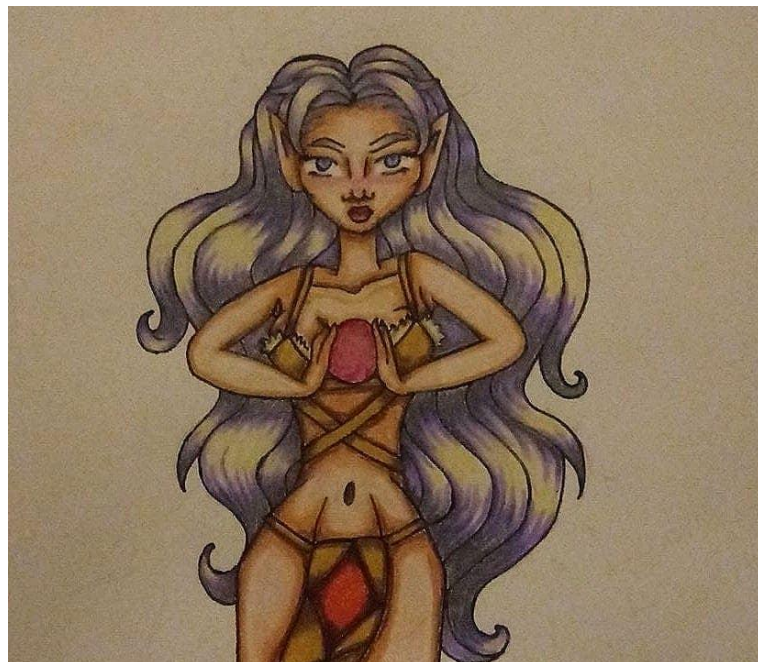
YOUNG ARTISTS

Art by Finn McClaurin, 15

Inspired by *Good Omens* (novel by Terry Pratchett and Neil Gaiman; mini-series on Amazon Prime)



Art by Justine Janosko, 17



Gender neutral marker on IL Birth certificates:

<https://www.equalityillinois.us/gender-neutral-designation-on-illinois-birth-certificates/>

I CAN'T BE TRANSPHOBIC

by Astrid Portner, Author and Scientist

Sometimes parents of transgender and gender-fluid individuals write: "I can't be transphobic, otherwise I wouldn't be [in this online forum]!" And I think that this kind of statement stems from defensiveness of being called out for saying something that someone else says is transphobic. "I can't be transphobic," we think, "because I love my kid and I'm fighting so hard to support them." And I 100% believe we all love our kids and we're all doing the best we can to support them. None of us want to see our kids get harmed and definitely none of us want to do the harming.

But "that's transphobic" is not an act of judgment. It's not an accusation against your character. It is a statement of fact that what you said or did is something that harms trans people. Thoughts, feelings, words, and actions can all be transphobic. And sometimes it's not as direct as misgendering, but it can still represent or perpetuate an attitude toward or understanding of trans people that's harmful. "I miss my little girl," can mean a lot of things to a parent and can express a very real, painful sense of loss. But it's also transphobic, because it perpetuates the notion that my son was ever a girl, and that's simply false. Trans boys are boys even when they are still considered and presenting as girls. Denying that directly or indirectly is transphobic. It simply is; it perpetuates a misunderstanding of trans people that is used to hurt us.

Now, I don't think anyone here is a transphobe; I don't think anyone here hates trans people. But we were all born and raised in a transphobic society and none of us are immune to that messaging. I'm a trans woman several years into my transition and *I* sometimes struggle with transphobic thoughts and feelings. It happens. There is A LOT that we have to unlearn, and that takes time. My kid is non-binary and uses they/them pronouns and *I get it wrong*. It's a change, it takes effort, we all make mistakes.

But here's the thing: not being transphobic isn't good enough. For the sake and safety of our kids, it can't be. To shamelessly reference Black Lives Matter: we have to be anti-transphobic. We need to actively work to not just unlearn those messages, but to eradicate them wherever we find them. We should be gentle, we should be understanding, we should offer compassion and support, but we also must help people understand why things they might say or think are hurtful for

trans people and they should change it. None of us should be comfortable with transphobia, even in closed groups for parents of transgender individuals. Especially in such groups.

Everyone should feel safe here, and everyone should feel they can express themselves and what they're going through. But part of that HAS to be an understanding that we can be wrong and a willingness to be corrected and to learn.

The grief some parents feel when their kid comes out or transitions is real. There is a real sense of pain and loss and it is important, as with any difficult emotion, that parents can express that emotion and process it. Emotions like that don't go away if you ignore them or bury them, they fester and they poison us and they seep out in ways and at times when we don't want them to. It's important that grief can be processed here, away from our kids, so that they aren't hurt by our struggle. But it's also VERY IMPORTANT to recognize what that grief is. It's grief over expectations, over the life we had planned, over the way we internalized our notion of who our kids were and what that said about us. It's grief over what we thought we had, and fear of the change that will come, and fear that we've accidentally hurt our kid. It is NOT grief over the death of a child, and treating it that way in word or deed is transphobic. Our children did not die; they are more alive and more authentic than they ever had been, and that should be celebrated.

"My son doesn't have a problem with it." Your son is a child. This means two important things. First, it means that there's a lot they don't know, especially about the history of the trans community, the implications and perceptions from society, the ways seemingly-innocent things are used to hurt us. I am glad that your son isn't being hurt, but that doesn't mean that what you're saying or doing isn't problematic. Remember: we want to be anti-transphobic. We want to do better than just "not hurting anyone." But secondly and more importantly, your son is a child and children for the most part crave the acceptance and affection of their parents. And they will allow things from their parents that they don't actually want, or even things that hurt them, because that desire is so strong. I'm distressingly close to 40, I have a decade-long career in a highly specialized field. I am smart, confident, independent. And I would STILL give my parents as much slack as they need if it means they smile when I visit. I'm still scared to advocate for myself against them because I don't want them to be disappointed in me. How much more so for a kid who still lives with you, who's still new to life and trying to find their place in the world?

Be kind to each other. We aren't all on the same path, but the destination is the same. Be gentle when calling people out, but also take a moment (or six) when you're called out and try to let go of the defensiveness and accept that we're all trying to be better.



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 held 1st Monday – 5:30 pm
The Liam Foundation
124 N Water Street, Suite 303A (3rd floor)
Rockford, IL 61107
rockfordpflagchapter@gmail.com

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

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

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

PFLAG DuPage
Meetings held 3rd Sunday – 2 pm
St Paul Lutheran Church
515 S Wheaton Ave, Wheaton 60187
pflagdupage@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 Bolingbrook
Meetings held 2nd Sunday – 2 pm
305 E Boughton Road, Bolingbrook, IL 60440
pflagbolingbrook@pflagillinois.org

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

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