Cover artwork by Peter Thaddeus <u>www.thaddeusart.com</u> IG: @thaddeus_art

September 2020 | PFLAG Council of Northern Illinois Newsletter

opendoors@pflagillinois.org

Nonthly Open Doors





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Greetings fellow PFLAGers. As the pandemic continues, I sincerely hope this message finds you and yours healthy, happy and thriving. This month, I want to again underscore the importance of our support for each other and especially those new in their coming out journey who might be feeling especially isolated.

I am very 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. Keep up the great work! These meetings are so important to us all and I have been especially impressed by the amazing support and educational programs provided. Zoom allows us to open up our participation to speakers and participants from near and far.

There also continues to be a real need for more individual / one one-on-one talks and support. Therefore, I simply want to remind everyone of this need and encourage the use of more intimate, small group or one-on-one meetings to supplement our monthly meetings. This format provides a more comfortable setting for folks to find comfort and support and learn about the wealth of information and resources available out there.

Ask: So, for those who are new in their journey, don't hesitate to ask your local Chapter what other options they may offer for small group support. It's a great way to have a private talk as you start to navigate the coming out process to help you learn and get more comfortable.

Volunteer: If you are a Chapter member willing to help by participating in small group support, please be sure to let you're your Chapter leader know or let

me know at info@pflagillinois.org. You might just find this to be the most rewarding volunteer work you have done. PFLAG provides some great resources on Facilitation Skills. While it is mostly geared toward the Chapter Group facilitation, it is very applicable to small group sessions too.

Connect: Chapter leaders, please remember to continue to offer small group support as appropriate even though we are not meeting in person. Keep your short list of members who are experienced and willing to help out with small group sessions. Please, reach out to me or other Chapter leaders within the Council if you need any assistance or additional contacts to help out. We all have the same mission and are happy to help where we can.

PFLAG is a peer support group. You are a vital part of how we work. Let's continue making connections, to build community, helping to bring order from the chaos and confusion, and lifting each other up.

Stay Safe!

In love and solidarity,

John Hickey







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:

- <u>Boone</u>
- <u>Cook</u>
- <u>DeKalb</u>
- <u>DuPage</u>
- <u>Grundy</u>
- <u>Kane</u>
- <u>Kankakee</u>
- <u>Kendall</u>
- <u>Lake</u>
- <u>LaSalle</u>
- <u>McHenry</u>
- <u>Will</u>

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

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!



When everyone can truly say that Black Lives

VIDEOS:

Song: Calum Scott - *No Matter What*: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kBIhqNT5gsE



TED Talk: *I've lived as a man & a woman -- here's what I learned* | Paula Stone Williams, 15 minutes <u>https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lrYx7HaUlMY</u>





From Equality Illinois

The Inclusive Curriculum Law

The Illinois Inclusive Curriculum Advisory Council (IICAC), which includes Equality Illinois, Public Health Institute of Metropolitan Chicago's Illinois Safe Schools Alliance (The Alliance), and the Legacy Project, are developing tools and collating resources to support educators and school administrators with the implementation of the Inclusive Curriculum Law (ICL). Below is an overview of each organization's work to support the lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer and questioning (LGBTQ+) community:

- As the state's civil rights organization for LGBTQ people, **Equality Illinois** envisions a fair and unified Illinois where everyone is treated with dignity and respect and where all people live freely regardless of sexual orientation, gender identity, or gender expression. To achieve this vision, we advance LGBTQ-affirming policy initiatives, help LGBTQ communities across Illinois build and use power, and work to ensure LGBTQ people are represented at governmental tables where decisions are made.
- The mission of **The Alliance** is to promote the safety, support and healthy development for LGBTQ+ youth, in Illinois schools and communities, through advocacy, education, youth organizing and research.
- The mission of the **Legacy Project** is to illuminate and affirm the lives of LGBTQ people; to honor their experiences and accomplishments; to collect and preserve their contributions to world history and culture; to educate and inspire the public and young people; and to assure an inclusive and equitable future.

Since Fall 2019, IICAC has collaborated with Illinois State Board of Education and representatives from Illinois Education Association (IEA) and Illinois Federation of Teachers (IFT) to develop a variety of resources for educators. See below for a brief overview and links:

• ICL Overview - <u>https://www.phimc.org/wpcontent/uploads/2020/05/Inclusive-</u> <u>Curriculum-One-Pager.pdf</u>

- Frequently Asked Questions -<u>https://www.phimc.org/wp-</u> <u>content/uploads/2020/05/Inclusive-</u> <u>Curriculum-FAQs.pdf</u>
- Lesson Plans The Legacy Project launched its <u>Education Initiative</u> in 2013. They are adapting the resource portal to serve as a searchable repository of a variety of lesson plans that will help teachers identify historically significant LGBTQ people who contributed significantly to every subject/field presently studied in Illinois public schools. The portal is accessible at <u>https://icl.legacyprojectchicago.org/</u>
- Guidance The Inclusive Curriculum Implementation Guidance will include frameworks, strategies, tools, and resources needed to begin the process of implementation in the classroom. Although the full document won't be published until later in the year, a condensed edition is accessible at <u>https://www.phimc.org/wpcontent/uploads/2020/08/ICL-Implementation-Guidance-Condensed-Edition-Final.pdf</u>

Chicago LGBT Hall of Fame Announces 2020 Inductees

http://chicagolgbthalloffame.org/chicago-lgbt-hall-offame-announces-2020-inductees-virtual-ceremony/





From PFLAG National

COURT

SCOTUS sets November 4th for Fulton v. City of

Philadelphia case's oral arguments. The case to determine whether a tax-funded foster care agency can refuse LGBTQ+ people from fostering or adopting children, denying kids a forever family, is readying for its day at the U.S. Supreme Court. Read the <u>PFLAG National and Family</u> <u>Equality amicus brief on the SCOTUS docket</u> (have tissues handy).

Federal judge in New York rejects Administration rule removing transgender people's healthcare coverage and protections. The federal government attempted to repeal the ACA's existing nondiscrimination protections that include gender identity under the definition of sex, but U.S. District Court Judge Frederic Block issued a preliminary injunction blocking the repeal.

Federal judge rules against Idaho's sports law. U.S. District judge David Nye ruled on August 17th in an <u>87-page</u> <u>decision</u> that the law barring transgender girls from competing in girls' sports violates the Equal Protection Clause of the Constitution.

Federal judge rules in favor of equal access to bathrooms for transgender Florida teen. The U.S. Court of Appeals for the 11th Circuit's August 7th ruling ensures that transgender students in the St. Johns County school district are allowed to use the restroom of their affirmed gender and that a public school may not harm transgender students by establishing arbitrary, separate rules for their restroom use.

<u>New York Supreme Court Justice rules cosmetic</u> <u>surgeon to pay \$375,000 in damages for HIV</u> <u>discrimination, violating the American with</u>

Disabilities Act. The surgeon, Emmanuel A. Asare, MD, was ordered on August 19th to pay three men \$125,000 each for refusing to perform surgery on them because they have HIV, a violation of the ADA. Department of Justice investigators also discovered that he tested patients for HIV without their knowledge.

Iowa Court of Appeals dismisses case opposed to Medicaid not being required to cover genderconfirming surgeries. The August 5th ruling followed an appeal filed on behalf of two plaintiffs by the ACLU after <u>Polk</u> <u>County District Court judge David Porter dismissed the case</u> on July 19th, ruling that the issue was not ready for judicial review.

<u>Federal judge allows Louisville photographer to</u> <u>refuse to serve same-sex couples' weddings.</u> U.S.

District Judge Justin Walker of the western district of Kentucky ruled that the Louisville Metro Government could not penalize a photographer for advertising that she only photographs and blogs about opposite-sex weddings, blocking enforcement of the city's Fairness Ordinance against the photographer, who was seeking a religious exemption.

MEDIA

Disney Channel's "The Owl House" makes history with Disney's first bisexual lead character. "I'm bi! I want to write a bi character, dammit!" series creator Dana Terrace tweeted. "Luckily my stubbornness paid off and now I am very supported by current Disney leadership."

Major league baseball team commentator suspended after using anti-LGBTQ+ language during game broadcast. Cincinnati Reds commentator Thom Brennaman was pulled from air after using the word, following a commercial break. The team issued a statement calling his comment "horrific." *Outsports* ran two opinion pieces, one from co-founder Cyd Zeigler about why he should not be fired, another from <u>Managing Editor Dawn</u> <u>Ennis about why he should</u>. Via PFLAG National's long-time partnership with MLB, Brennaman will be working with the Learning and Inclusion team--which runs PFLAG National's Straight for Equality[™] program--as part of a learning process about the language he used, why it is problematic, and how he can learn from the experience.

Marvel Comics historically has first same-sex

wedding of gay superheroes. On the last page of "Empyre" No. 4, which was released in comic book stores the first week of August, readers learned that Young Avengers co-founders Hulkling and Wiccan are married. The wedding ceremony, attended by other Young Avengers, was revealed in a flashback.

Director Lilly Wachowski confirms that *The Matrix* is a trans allegory. After twenty-one years of speculation, Wachowski outright stated the underlying themes were meant to parallel her transgender experience.

FEDERAL

Letter to NIH results in leading COVID-19 Vaccine Trials to include HIV+ people. Two manufacturers, Moderna and Pfizer, have agreed to include HIV+ people in their Phase III clinical trials. Moderna's trials are partially federally funded. PFLAG National was among the inaugural signers of the letter to NIH Director Francis Collins that garnered more than 1,000 signatures as it progressed.

Dr. Fauci says there is no clear evidence that HIV heightens COVID-19 risk. Speaking at the 2020 International AIDS Conference in early July, Fauci discussed how knowledge on HIV in relation to the coronavirus is still evolving, though it is clear how the virus disproportionately

affects marginalized communities.

LGBTQ+ rights issues largely excluded from State Department's human rights commission report. The controversial commission came out with the 60-page report, which also included remarks criticizing the U.N. Human Rights Council, a group that has been very supportive of the global LGBTQ+ community in recent years.





A guide to the 2020 vote prepared by the PFLAG National:

https://pflag.org/blog/get-out-vote-2020

Learn how to register to vote, educate yourself and your social circle, mobilize resources, protect yourself and others from vote suppression, learn about your rights and advocacy opportunities.



Join leaders and friends at PFLAG National for *Moving Equality Forward*, a virtual event to honor legislative champions of equality, learn about PFLAG National's new initiatives to support LGBTQ+ people and their families during the pandemic, and to hear how PFLAG National is continuing the work of changing hearts, minds, and laws.

https://pflag.org/event/moving-equality-forward-virtual-event

If Just This One Idea About Manhood is Changing, There's Hope...

Essay by Dr. Robert N. Minor

It was a competitive nine-year-olds' baseball game. Grandson's team was in the process of experiencing their first loss of what was so far an eight-game season. ...

Click here to read the full essay.

Get published in Open Doors!

Send stories, photos, art, book & movie reviews, links to: <u>opendoors@pflagillinois.org</u>





News from PFLAG Hinsdale

by Barb Medley

Our August meeting was held via Zoom and included our guest, Kim Oclon. She talked about her a young adult novel, *Man Up*. We had a great interactive conversation, and she gave us some book recommendations that are among her favorites. Kim previously taught high school English and started the school's GSA. She loved writing from an early age. In high school she had a writing class with an inspiring teacher, took additional classes and began writing.

Man Up is Kim's first novel. She likes to think about the title, *Man Up*, accented on the "up" as opposed to "man down" – or in other words, being courageous. In the book, David, the central character, is asked by his baseball coach if he is gay. David is hoping to finish senior year without anyone noticing. Although he is forced out of the closet before he thinks he's ready, with his accepting parents' support he makes the decision to embrace who he really is. The book is available through Amazon, but Kim encouraged buying from independent bookstores. It's available locally at Anderson's and through <u>www.IndieBound.org</u>.

Kim reads mostly young adult novels and loves sports, and recommended the following books:

- *Two Boys Kissing*, by David Levithan a fun read about boys trying to set the world record for the longest boys' kiss.
- *Openly Straight*, by Bill Konigsberg a boy transfers to an all-boys' boarding school and tries to keep his sexuality secret.
- *More Happy than Not*, by Adam Silvera the main character pursues the Leteo Institute's memory-alteration procedure to escape his unhappiness.
- All Out: The No-Longer-Secret Stories of Queer Teens Throughout the Ages – a young-adult queer anthology through time and genres.
- *A High Five for Glenn Burke*, by Phil Bildner – a book for middle-graders that weaves the real history of Los Angeles Dodger and Oakland Athletic Glenn Burke – the first professional baseball player to

come out as gay – into the story of a middle-schooler learning to be himself.

- *Pulp*, by Robin Talley a historical book. Kim said she's not a history fan but was very moved by this book, which weaves together the lives of two young lesbian women connected across generations through the power of words.
- *The Great Believers*, by Rebecca Makkai an adult novel that conveys the scale of the trauma that was the early AIDS crisis and the anger and love that rose up to meet it.
- *Star Crossed*, by Barbara Dee a middle grade novel about a girl wrestling with a crush on another girl as they participate in their school production of Romeo and Juliet.

Kim was so fun – she loves books and loves to talk about them.

News from PFLAG McHenry by Toni Weaver

Maybe it's a sign of the times, i.e. the inactivity brought on by the global pandemic, but it doesn't take much to get me excited! My current love affair is with Zoom's capability of having "breakout rooms"!

We utilized this feature in August since we had three sets of "new" parents, two of whom were interested in the LGB, and one in the T. We began all together with introductions, pronouns, and a reading of our mission statement. Next, we broke into two groups. Then at the agreed upon time, we came back together and brought the meeting to a close.

Another advantage to meetings via Zoom is that we can bring in people from far and wide. A friend of mine in Maine joined in, bringing her many years of wisdom and experience, and one of our past members was going to join us from Delaware. It's a trade-off, I suppose. On the one hand, we can extend our reach wider but, on the other hand, it's at the expense of personal contact. It is what it is, and we have to make the best of it.



News from PFLAG Deerfield

by Jim Levie and Sue Ginsburg

The Deerfield chapter is continuing to hold our monthly meetings using Zoom. While we greatly miss seeing each other in person, Zoom is proving to be a good alternative and actually allows some people living far from Deerfield, including a member who recently moved to Denver, to participate in our meetings. We used Zoom's Breakout Room feature for the first time this month to allow a couple of participants to have their own private discussion about bisexuality while everyone else continued with the main meeting. They then rejoined us when the main meeting was ending.

We were honored to host Mike Ziri at our August meeting. Mike is the Director of Public Policy at Equality Illinois, our state's premier LGBTQ Civil Rights organization. Mike has done important legislative and policy work even while sheltering in place during the pandemic. 2019 was a very successful legislative session, with the following among the accomplishments:

- The Inclusive Curriculum Law was passed, mandating that LGBTQ history must be taught in public schools.
- A new law was passed that requires all single occupancy restrooms in public spaces such as restaurants and bars to be labeled "all gender or gender neutral".
- A policy fix is in place at the Secretary of State's office to eliminate the requirement to have a doctor's letter to change the gender on your driver's license. Also, a third gender marker, X, will be available in 2024 after the state upgrades its outdated computer systems. X will mean non-binary, intersex, someone who does not want to identify, or whatever the person wants it to mean.

Equality Illinois is currently working on several projects, including the following:

The Reach Act, which provides responsible K-12 personal health and safety education. This is more than sex ed! The Reach Act includes information about bullying, consent and different family structures.

• HB 5654, which makes it easier for people to change their gender on their birth certificates.

Mike strongly encouraged everyone to fill out the Census form. Even though it is an imperfect document for the LGBTQ community, it is important to complete

in order to be counted.

The Illinois Action Alliance is a coalition of organizations including the PFLAG Northern Illinois Council, Equality Illinois, Lambda Legal, Howard Brown Center, ACLU, and the AIDS Foundation, to stop the criminalization of people living with HIV-AIDS. The goal of this organization is to repeal a 1980s law that allows prosecution of somebody who knowingly infects someone with AIDS. This law stigmatizes those living with AIDS and works against the public health by discouraging people from getting tested: if you don't get tested, you can't be charged under this law. But we want people to get tested to save lives! Therefore, we need this law off the books.

Applications are available for the 2020-21 Equality Illinois Community Advisory Board. If you are interested, email Mike at <u>mziri@eqil.org</u>

Needless to say Equality Illinois is a most cherished organization for our community! Thanks, Mike!

News from PTI McHenry

by Andrew Zanevsky

We had a great Zoom meeting in August, sharing our stories and expressing love and support for each other. It was a joy to meet a new member and to welcome people from sister PTI groups.

Our next Zoom meeting will take place on Wednesday, September 23, 7-9 PM.

Email: <u>opendoors@pflagillinois.org</u>



News from PTI Chicago

by Bill Guilfoile

PTI Chicago held their August monthly meeting using Zoom because of the Covid-19 Pandemic on Thursday, 13-Aug-2020. We also invited the members of PTI North Shore and PTI McHenry to participate.

We had ten parents participate in the meeting. We again had participation from several people who normally are not able to attend because of the distance of travel to Center on Halsted in Chicago.

We supported one another with our individual needs as well as discussed ways we can actively support our LGBTQ+ community and People of Color during these turbulent times.

PTI Chicago will continue to hold our meetings by Zoom until the situation with the pandemic changes.

Our next Zoom meeting will be on Thursday 10-Sept-2020 from 7:00 p.m. - 9:00 p.m. Members will receive an e-mail the weekend before the Zoom meeting with the Zoom link and password to enter the meeting.

Anyone, who is not a member and is the parent or family member of a transgender, non-binary or gender non-conforming individual, who wishes to participate should e-mail Bill Guilfoile at <u>bill.guilfoile@gmail.com</u>.

Join CAMP Rehoboth LGBTQA+

youth lead & selected book club

The Gay Agenda: A Modern Queer History & Handbook

Tuesday, September 15, 2020, at 6:30 p.m.

If anyone is unable to obtain a copy please let Barbara know as soon as possible.

Please be mindful this book club is specifically open to youth ages 11-19.

For ZOOM meeting ID and password contact Barbara: <u>bantlitz@camprehoboth.com</u>

A joyful celebration of the LGBTQ+ community's development, history, and culture

Compiled and designed by queer power couple Ashley Molesso and Chessie Needham, founders of the popular Brooklyn stationery company Ash + Chess, *The Gay Agenda* is an inviting and entertaining guide that pays tribute to the LGBTQ+ community. Filled with engaging descriptions, interesting facts, and helpful features such as historical queer icons and events and LGBTQ+ acronym definitions - this fabulous compendium illuminates the transformation of the community, highlighting its struggles, achievements, landmarks, and contributions. It also salutes iconic members of the LGBTQ+ community - the celebrities, politicians, entrepreneurs, and ordinary citizens who have made a notable impact on gay life and society itself.

The Gay Agenda is a nostalgic look back for older generations, an archive for younger people, and a helpful introduction for those interested in learning more about the community and its contributions. From James Baldwin and Emma Goldman to Marsha P. Johnson and Jodie Foster; the Pink Triangle and the

JOIN CAMP REHOBOTA LOBTOA+ YOUTA LEAD & SELECTED BOOK CLUB THE GAY AGENDA: A MODERN QUEER HISTORY & HANDBOOK TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 15, 2020, AT 6:30 P.M.

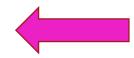
A CAMP REHOBOTH Youth Program







Rainbow Flag to Stonewall and the AIDS crisis; Matthew Shepard and Pulse Nightclub to sodomy laws and Obergefell; drag and transitioning to *The L Word* and the Kinsey Scale, Freddie Mercury and Ellen Degeneres to Laverne Cox and David Bowie, this magnificent digest is a keepsake honoring all LGBTQ+, and the ongoing fight to gain - and maintain equality for all.





Behavioral Health Virtual Fall Therapy Groups • Begins Sept. 14

Trans, Gender Non-Conforming, and Non-Binary • Mondays at 4pm

Queer Women's • Tuesdays at 6pm

COVID Therapy Group • Wednesdays at 6pm

HIV+ • Thursdays at 5pm

LGBTQ Black, Indigenous, and People of Color • Thursdays at 7pm





🗐 September 8 + 9

🕑 10 am - 3 pm

SILVERFORK

Cohort 31

Now taking applicants for next SIlverfork Cohort 31. Silverfork is a FREE, 9-week culinary arts and job readiness program. To apply please email: silverfork@centeronhalsted.org.

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LEARN MORE HERE >



Sept. 17 + 18 ⊙ 10 am - 2 pm

Sign Up for the 2020 WERQ! LGBTQ Job Fair

This year, WERQI will be virtual and has been expanded to two days, Thursday, September 17th & Friday, September 18th. More than 50 major corporations, small businesses, government agencies and non-profits participated in last year's WERQI Job Fair at Center on Halsted.

LEARN MORE HERE >



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BOOK REVIEW

MY TRANS PARENT: A USER GUIDE FOR WHEN YOUR PARENT TRANSITIONS

by Heather Bryant

"<u>My Trans Parent</u> is the book I wish had when I was a kid. I thought I was the only person on the planet with a transgender parent," says author Heather Bryant.

Maybe you just found out your mom, or your dad, is transgender. Or maybe you've known for a while. But now what? When a parent transitions, the whole family transitions. From definitions to names and pronouns, *My Trans Parent* guides readers through every stage of transition.

A moving and educational blend of personal memoir and fascinating interviews, *My Trans Parent* is the **first-ever book** to gather the raw stories of kids who have trans parents.

"It was comforting to know that there was a boy in Norway and a girl in Northern Michigan going through similar things as me," explains Bryant.



An eye-opening narrative of Bryant's childhood is contextualized by a wide range of lived experiences from families across the world.

About the Author:

An award-winning writer, Heather Bryant is an ambassador for the "People with Transgender Parents" community with COLAGE, where she leads workshops and speaks at conferences. "Heather Bryant is the wiser older sister that children of all ages need when their parent transitions," says Lara Lillibridge, author of *Girlish: Growing Up in a Lesbian Home*.

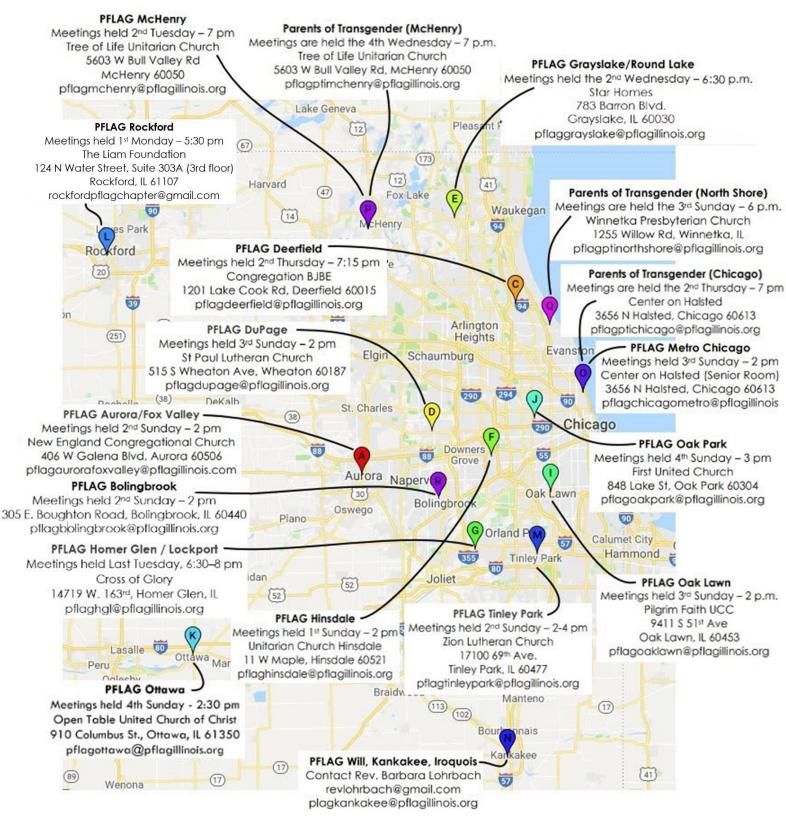
My Trans Parent (Jessica Kingsley Publishers) is available for purchase on <u>Shakespeare and Co</u>, <u>Amazon, Waterstones</u>, <u>Barnes and Nobles</u>, <u>Target</u>, and <u>Book Depository</u>.

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Contribute to Open Doors, get published: email the Editor, Andrew Zanevsky at <u>opendoors@pflagillinois.org</u>



PFLAG Northern Illinois Chapters



Click anywhere on the map to open the list of chapters <u>Click here</u> to open an interactive version of this map



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