



Photography
by Lex Barberio
pages 11-15



November 2020 | PFLAG Council of Northern Illinois Newsletter

opendoors@pflagillinois.org

Monthly Open Doors

SUBSCRIBE



President 2, PFLAG National 6, Chapter Reports 8-10, Photo Art 11-15, Biking for Charity 17-18, Theater 19, Book 19

Honor and Remember

LGBTQ+ History and Visibility Matter

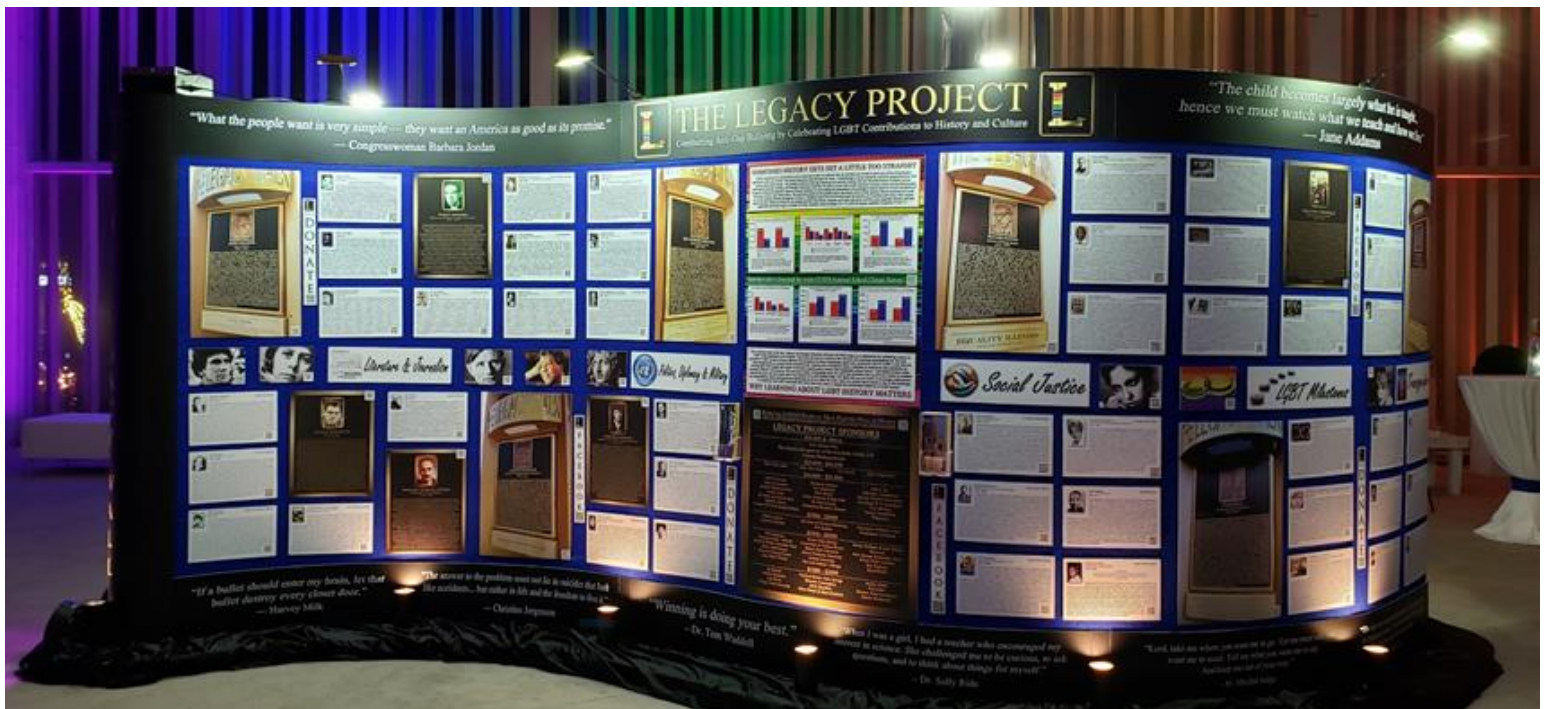
As many folks know, October was LGBTQ History Month in the United States. One of my favorite ways to learn and reflect on LGBTQ history is to take a walk on North Halsted in Chicago. The half mile stretch of Halsted between Belmont and Grace is home of The [Legacy Walk](#), an amazing place to learn about the life and contributions of many famous people in LGBTQ history. The Legacy Walk is made up of 10 pairs of rainbow pillars, each home to bronze plaques paying tribute to important figures like Civil Rights organizer Bayard Rustin, Activist Harvey Milk, Transgender Icons Marsha P. Johnson and Christine Jorgensen ([map](#)). The Legacy Project accepts nominations for the Walk and makes new dedications annually in October during National Coming out day (Oct. 11).

The Legacy Walk is one of many amazing creations and contributions by Victor Salvo, Co-Founder and Executive Director Victor Salvo and the other dedicated folks at The Legacy Project. Visit their website (www.legacyprojectchicago.org) to view the latest Legacy Walk Dedication and to learn more [about their organization](#) and other exciting projects like their traveling exhibit, The [Legacy Wall](#) and the educational [Lesson Plans](#) they developed to help support inclusive curriculum initiatives.

Victor Salvo has been a featured speaker at many PFLAG meetings and other community events.

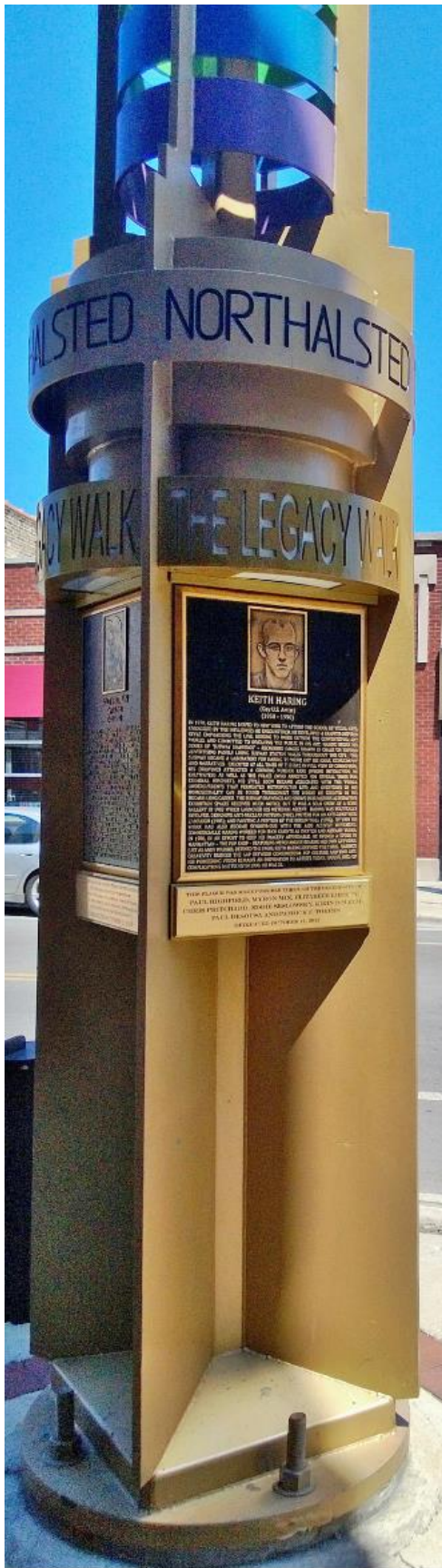
You can check out several interviews of Victor online:

Continued →



Legacy Wall





Legacy Walk Display

Watch this Pride month 2020 [Zoom interview](#).

Legacy Project Co-Founder and Executive Director Victor Salvo sits down with the hosts of The Jam to chat about Pride 2020, Illinois's new LGBTQ Inclusive Curriculum, and where LGBTQ history fits with the current state of affairs in the country.

Listen to this October 2020 SiriusXM Radio Interview Highlighting LGBTQ History on the [Dean Obeidallah Show](#).

Legacy Project Co-Founder and Executive Director Victor Salvo discusses the powerful impact LGBTQ contributions to World History and Culture have on those who least expect it...

November brings us some other important dates for Visibility and Awareness:

Take time in your chapter meetings and in your personal life to explore and honor LGBTQ history, mark Awareness and Remembrance days and know that this journey enriches your life.

Enjoy the Fall weather! Stay safe. And be sure to Vote, Vote, **Vote!!!**

John

Transgender Awareness Week

Second week of November

The purpose is to educate about transgender and gender non-conforming people and the issues. It leads up to Transgender Day of Remembrance.

Intersex Day of Remembrance (Intersex Solidarity Day)

November 8

Observed to highlight issues faced by intersex people; marks the birthday of Herculine Barbin.

Transgender Day of Remembrance

November 20

Honors the memory of those whose lives were lost in acts of anti-transgender violence.

International Stand Up to Bullying Day

Last Friday of February (23rd) and third Friday of November (16th)

A semi-annual event in which participants sign and wear a pink shirt to take a visible, public stance against bullying.





Vote Early!

- Avoid the long lines of Election Day.
- Exercise your right to vote.
- It feels great.
- Be heard.
- Be counted.
- ***Your voice matters!***

Vote! Vote!
Vote!

Dear Equality Illinois Supporter:

We're heading to the finish line of Election season, folks. With so much on the line and no certainty about the results, Equality Illinois will be there for you no matter what happens. On November 5, from 10:30 to 11:30 AM, our What Now? Post-Election Town Hall will offer us all space to hear from experts who will provide both an analysis of what happened as well as actionable next steps on what comes next.

Gun violence prevention advocate Kina Collins, immigrant rights advocate Mony Ruiz-Velasco, and our own Policy Director Mike Ziri will join us for this discussion about the way forward on the issues we care deeply about once Election Day is over.

RSVP today [HERE](#).

You will receive the Zoom information in an email before the event. (PS - RSVP as soon as possible! Only the first people to sign up will be able to join the Town Hall.)

We hope to see you there,
Emily Boyce
Director of Development

Equality Illinois

EQUALITY ILLINOIS

WHAT NOW?
A POST-ELECTION TOWN HALL

THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 5
10:30AM - 11:30AM VIA ZOOM

MONY RUIZ-VELASCO
Alianza Americas

KINA COLLINS
Gun Violence Prevention Advocate

MIKE ZIRI
Equality Illinois

For additional information or question please contact Emily Boyce at eboyce@eqil.org





Volunteer Leadership Opportunity

The PFLAG Aurora / Fox Valley Chapter leader, Carmi Frankovich, is retiring from her post. First, I want to express how very grateful we are to Carmi for her leadership in revitalizing the chapter over the last several years.

Thank You Carmi!

This vacancy presents an opportunity for new volunteers to come together to help lead and continue the great work of the chapter and forge a path based on their view of the needs of the community. In an effort to develop a plan forward and restart chapter meetings

(via Zoom), we will be hosting a Zoom meeting with interested parties in the coming weeks. Please email info@pflagillinois.org if you are interested in participating in the meeting. Yes, I mean you... Go ahead and click the email link to drop us a note.

Still not sure... Check out this article:

[5 Reasons why we think volunteers are great people!](#)



Articles:

- [Pope Francis Endorses Same-Sex Civil Unions](#) – *WBEZ*
- [Trans Athletes Are Posting Victories and Shaking Up Sports](#) – *Wired*
- [There's Drama in the Queer Penguin Community](#) – *The CUT*
(if you are a fan of *Parks and Recreation*, then you will especially like this story)
- [This gorgeous songbird is half male, half female](#) – *National Geographic*

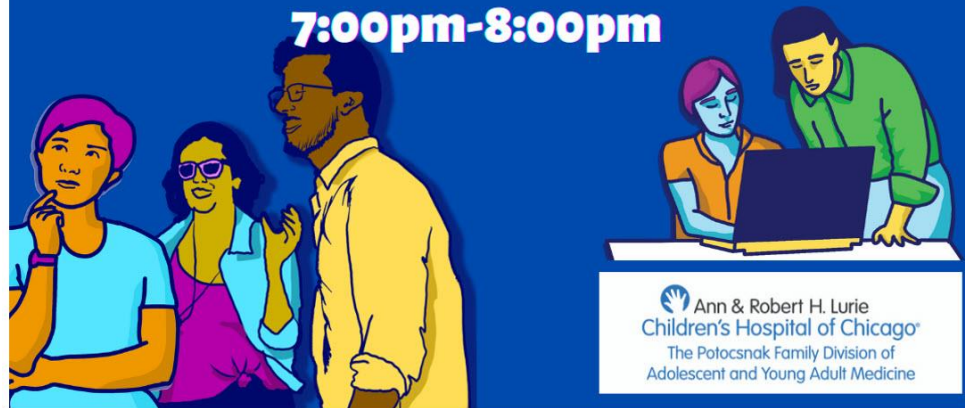
Free Virtual Education Session for Parents/Guardians!

Gain the knowledge and confidence to talk to your youth about HIV/AIDS, PrEP, and Sexual Health!

PFLAG Northern Illinois Council

Nov 05. 20

7:00pm-8:00pm



Ann & Robert H. Lurie
Children's Hospital of Chicago®
The Potocsnak Family Division of
Adolescent and Young Adult Medicine

Register to participate at <https://bit.ly/340b5bl>



From PFLAG National

ILLINOIS

[Chicago's LGBTQ neighborhood dropping 'Boystown' nickname.](#) Last week, the alliance announced that it would no longer use the nickname in its marketing campaigns when referring to the neighborhood, which sits on the city's North Side. Instead, it will revert to the name Northalsted, to become more inclusive of all in the community.

MEDIA

[ALA: Some of the most frequently banned books feature LGBTQ stories.](#) A great deal of the most frequently challenged books of the last decade center around LGBTQ characters and themes, an analysis from the American Library Association revealed. In honor of "Banned Books Week" the ALA's Office for Intellectual Freedom published lists of the top 10 most challenged books of 2019 and the top 100 most frequently banned books of the decade.

[ILGA launches 3rd edition of Trans Legal Mapping report.](#) The global LGBTQ+ organization released this report (available for free in English and Spanish) detailing the impact of laws and policies on trans persons in 143 UN member States across the globe.

[Campus Pride announces most LGBTQ+-friendly colleges and universities for 2020.](#) PFLAG National's partner Campus Pride released its annual list of the 40 most LGBTQ+ friendly American college and university campuses. To qualify, schools must score highly on the Campus Pride Index and feature inclusive policies, programs and practices. The full list is free and publicly available.

HEALTHCARE

PFLAG National's partners at the Center for American Progress issued [The Chaos of Repealing the Affordable Care Act During the Coronavirus Pandemic](#), a report which outlines how the ACA's repeal during the coronavirus pandemic would be catastrophic for individual and public health. It also includes a table showing how many people in each state would be noted as having a pre-existing condition based solely on COVID-19 diagnoses.



Three Steps to Being Supportive When Someone Comes Out

Just because Coming Out Day has passed, doesn't mean you won't have someone who needs your PFLAG support in the near future. So stay safe and take these steps to engage:

1. **Learn:** Check out the list of books available at pflag.org/comingoutbooks to learn more about the diversity of coming-out and disclosure experiences for LGBTQ+ individuals and their loved ones.
2. **Watch:** PFLAG Academy Online On-Demand includes [When Someone Comes Out: A PFLAGers Guide to Demonstrating Support and Acceptance](#). There are also many individuals and families who share their coming-out stories on Tumblr, Facebook, and YouTube in the hope of providing support to others who are just beginning their coming-out journey.
3. **Share:** Use social media to share PFLAG publications such as [OUR CHILDREN](#) and [OUR TRANS LOVED ONES](#) (también [disponible en español!](#)) as well as information about [how to find a local PFLAG chapter](#) for parents and families looking for more information after a loved one has come out.



Celebrating Abbvie Ally Week with PFLAG

by **Marco Floreani** (He/Him/His)

PFLAG and Abbvie PRIDE teamed up for a second year in a row to present a panel discussion on Allyship.

We came together to hear and discuss: “Why Allyship is so important in support of our LGBTQ+ Community” and “What does it mean to be a good Ally?”

Approximately 65 participants attended the Zoom event held on October 15 to hear from the Hemmer family: Dan, Kelly and Ray, Emma Vosicky and John Hickey.

A heartfelt presentation and discussion was held around several important points. Some of the presentation/discussion points from the meeting were: It’s so important making someone feel safe, communication is key with everything, questions should be about clarification, be honest when you’re not ready to do something and that neither side has it easy. Let people know that you are an ally, wear an ally button, bracelet, show you’re an ally in emails, introduce yourself with your pronouns and let people come to you. Showing your

support in small ways can be very powerful and carefully letting people know that you’re an ally can make a big difference in someone’s life. Also, go out there and do some research. Hear LGBTQ+ stories and make use of these. All with the goal of creating a wonderful support structure where people can be themselves!

Our Abbvie PRIDE participants were so impressed with the panel. Each of the panelists were so kind to share their personal stories and guidance on what good allyship is. Abbvie PRIDE members commented that this event made a thoughtful impression on them and were thankful for our panelists helping them better understand what it means to be an ally. A special big thanks to Dan, Kelly, Ray, Emma and John for sharing their time with Abbvie PRIDE. And thank you to John Hickey for partnering with Abbvie PRIDE to assemble such a wonderful, diverse panel for our Abbvie PRIDE ERG to participate in. We hope to collaborate on future events! For any questions please contact Marco Floreani (marco.floreani@abbvie.com) or John Hickey.



News from PTI Chicago

by **Bill Guilfoile**

PTI Chicago held their October monthly meeting using Zoom because of the Covid-19 Pandemic on Thursday, 08-Oct-2020. We also invited the members of PTI North Shore and PTI McHenry to participate.

We had nine parents participate in the meeting with three new members joining us. 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 12-Nov-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 bill.guilfoile@gmail.com.

Resource for Employers:

Supporting Intersex Inclusion in the Workplace prepared by Out & Equal Workplace Advocates:

<https://outandequal.org/supporting-intersex-inclusion-in-the-workplace/>

News from PTI McHenry

by **Andrew Zanevsky**

There is a leadership change at PTI McHenry. Marya Flynn has stepped down for health reasons. We owe Marya a great debt of gratitude for creating this group, for sharing her kindness and knowledge and helping others do the same over the years. We wish her to get well soon!

Mary Genzler, who has often performed co-leader duties, has agreed to take over the chapter leader position when face-to-face meetings resume.

I will continue hosting PTI McHenry meetings over Zoom on the 4th Wednesday of every month, at 7-9 pm, until it is safe to have face-to-face meetings again.

News from PFLAG McHenry

by **Karen Graham**

PFLAG McHenry met via Zoom this October and welcomed John Hickey, President of the PFLAG Council Northern Illinois as our featured speaker. I appreciated being reminded of several elements of PFLAG that we don't talk about often enough. A big thank you to John for being there and reminding us how valuable and available PFLAG is in northern Illinois. First, did you know there are 18 chapters in Northern IL? And we are so fortunate to have chapters devoted to supporting parents of transgender individuals. We talked about what it means to be an ally, and that there are degrees of allyship. As an ally you can be anywhere on the spectrum from being quietly supportive to being on the front lines of changing laws. We talked about implicit bias and perspective which encouraged us all to think about what we're doing to foster inclusion and stop biased-based bullying. John's talk helped us all realize that there are many ways to be an ally and support PFLAG - many ways to engage in our organization. From helping at conferences, parades, and events to assisting with our monthly meetings and contributing to this online magazine! It's so important that we're here supporting one another.

News from PFLAG Hinsdale

by Barb Medley

We were happy to greet two new participants at our October zoom meeting. It's gratifying to be able to provide support during this strange, socially distanced time.

We also welcomed back Carolyn Wahlskag from 360 Youth Services, who provided an update on the wonderful work they do. Carolyn shared the great news that this past spring, 360 Youth Services was awarded the HRC Innovator Seal.

360 Youth Services' main office is in Naperville, and they serve DuPage and neighboring counties with housing services. They wear many hats. Their group home, called Cornerstone, has 8 spots and is overseen by DCFS as guardian. They are also involved in substance use prevention, including providing education in the 6th to 12th grade and counseling services for "at risk" youth.

Their transitional housing program consists of 38 beds for 18-24 year olds who are homeless, about half of whom are LGBTQ. Residents are paired with a counselor to help them work toward getting a waged job, whether it be finishing or continuing their education, or help seeking employment. When residents are ready for rehousing, 360 provides security deposits and first month's rent. They are currently assisting ten. 360 has hired a new therapist; they also have a job coach and psychiatric nurse practitioner. During the COVID pandemic, they've been considered an essential function. But, due to COVID, many young people lost their jobs. Their savings were diminished and they couldn't move out, so those on the waiting list remain and others now experiencing homelessness have no options. DuPage PADS funding is gone.

360 Youth Services had a five-year federal grant that ended last year. Their reapplication did not receive funding, so they've been self funding for the past year. Of course, all the good work they do is expensive, and they rely on donations from folks like us who appreciate all they do for those who are marginalized and at-risk. Please consider making a contribution. There is a donation button on their website, 360youthservices.org. They could also use hygiene supplies and ready to eat food, such as toilet

paper, paper towels, soap for every use, body wash, boxed mac and cheese, pop tarts, and ramen. Gift cards to a gas station, Aldi and Wal Mart are greatly appreciated.

Our November speaker will be Ray Maher Marie from the Howard Brown Health Center, who will talk about Howard Brown's healthcare program for LGBTQ elders.

News from PFLAG Ottawa

by Ken Brown

PFLAG Ottawa continues to meet via Zoom. In September, our guest was Ashley Purpura, who lives in Ottawa with her partner. Ashley has started a project she calls "Colourfully Connected." (That's Colourfully with a "u"). The project encourages people to make and send colorful cards with messages of love, affirmation, and hope to LGBTQ folks and beyond. Ashley is working with some local merchants and has also been in touch with The Center on Halsted and Howard Brown Health Center about the project. Ashley can be reached at: ashpurpura@gmail.com; or colourfullyconnected@gmail.com.

In October, we plan to watch a PFLAG National presentation entitled "When Someone Comes Out: A PFLAGers Guide to Demonstrating Support and Acceptance." The presentation is very informative, and the presenter explores some new terms, concepts, and research. It gives helpful guidance on how to support those seeking assistance on coming out.

In November, our guest speaker will be Len Meyer, the downstate Community Engagement Manager for Planned Parenthood. Len's region includes the Planned Parenthood office in Ottawa. Among other things, Len will speak about the services Planned Parenthood offers to LGBTQ+ individuals, and about their use of the pronouns "they, them, and theirs." We look forward to having Len as our guest.



News from PFLAG Deerfield

by Jodi Zavos

PFLAG Deerfield welcomed Andie Baker, Vice President of Howard Brown's Center for Education, Research and Advocacy, to our October Zoom meeting. Andie gave an informative and timely presentation. The Center for Education, Research and Advocacy is centered through a public health lens. Its rich history includes participation in clinical trials for the first Hepatitis B vaccine, participation in HIV research and treatments, and the HEALE curriculum on gerontology. The focus for the last six months has been on COVID-19 in the areas of telehealth; the establishment of community care stations with mobile testing; a COVID-19 hotline; health education; contact tracing; and tech assistance to help expand contact tracing programs.

The Center for Education, Research and Advocacy has partnered with Northwestern for research centered around COVID-19. Andie noted that research is needed on the direct impact of COVID-19 on the LGBTQ + community. Gender identification and sexual orientation data is needed for testing and outcomes; data which is currently not being collected.

A portion of Andie's talk was action oriented. Andie stated that the current "flat" income tax structure in Illinois inadequately funds public services; a yes vote for the proposed "Fair Tax" Amendment could help provide needed services for the LGBTQ+ community. Andie also remarked on the Public Charge Rule which affects LGBTQ+ immigrants; the proposed HUD rule that removes equal housing access; and the HHS attempt to reverse portions of the Affordable Care Act that protect transgender and nonbinary individuals from discrimination while seeking out health care and insurance coverage. The importance of voting was emphasized, and the Center for Education, Research and Advocacy has been actively involved in getting out the vote.

Our meeting concluded with open discussion, supportive conversations, and hopefully the beginning of some new friendships. We look forward to "seeing" each other next month. Please join us!

News from PFLAG Rockford

We met virtually on October 5th for our monthly meeting with 8 folks in attendance. After introductions, we had conversations about our favorite Halloween candy, which included: Reese's Peanut Butter Cups, Kit Kats, Twix, and maple flavored candy corn.

PFLAG Rockford is going back to **virtual meetings** due to spikes of COVID cases. Since links will be sent out to email lists or registered participants, please be sure to stay updated on events through Facebook event pages and partnering organization's websites as they occur. Many require registration for limited capacity due to COVID.

Phyllis and Amber provided quick **updates about Queer Prom 2020**. The DiversCITY youth group continues to work on event specifics with the influence of COVID and will be shifting it to a virtual event. More details to come!

Phyllis shared that PFLAG Rockford has applied for **a grant for The Liam Foundation** through Community Foundation of Northern IL. The grant is for a year's worth of operating costs for The Liam Foundation. We anticipate hearing back in January 2021.

Website updates:

- PFLAG Rockford's is being redirected from PFLAG National until we can get a dedicated website maintenance individual. Visit it here: <http://www.pflagillinois.org/pflag-rockford/>
- The Liam Foundation's is up and running! Visit it here: <https://www.theliamfoundation.org/>



All photos courtesy of Lex Barberio



Interview

Please tell us about finding your path and your unique voice as an artist. Who has inspired and encouraged you?

I've always thought that art is self-exploration exposed, and that's where an artist's voice comes from. The art I create is personal, introspective, and manifests at times when I feel the need to unfold or examine something within myself. I've found that inspiration is fleeting but the people who are invested in my art, happiness, and success have had a huge impact on my life. My parents and family have always been my biggest supporters and have shown their support by giving me the tools and the love I need to move forward. My beautiful partner, Kelsey, has been my rock since day one, she's helped me become more professional and is in the trenches with me every time I shoot. Last but not least, my photography mentor of 8 years, Ginny Dixon, taught me all the invaluable technical aspects of photography as well as how to self-edit.

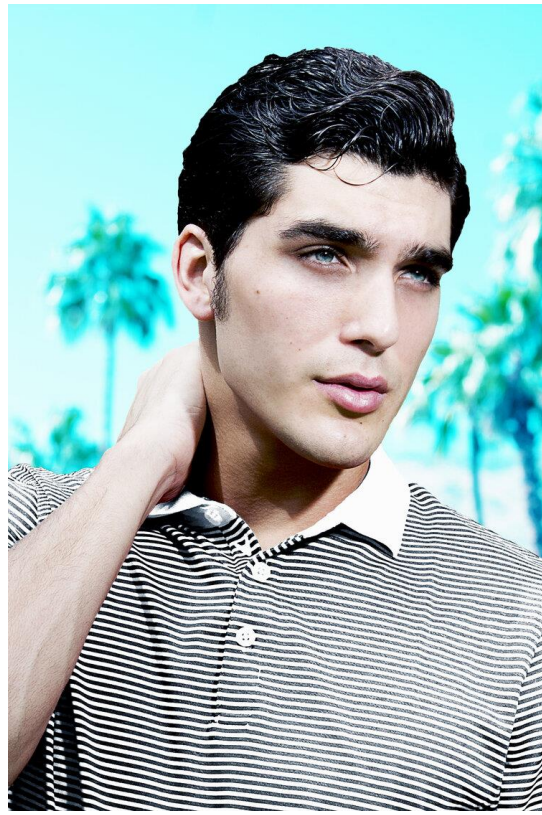
Photography by Lex Barberio

Lex Barberio (he/she/they) is a queer, New York based, Miami raised artist who grew up seeking and believing in magic. Today, that magic translates into art and serves as the foundation for her originality in conceptual photography.

Enjoy Lex's amazing photographs and an interview that we have conducted by email.

Find more works through web links at the end of this article.





from the Dreamscape series ↑

How does your creative process work? Do creative ideas come to you unexpectedly, does something trigger them, do you plan and work to find a creative solution to a specific task, is it explainable at all, or is it pure magic?

When I was younger and less developed, my creative process was as simple as seeing something and shooting it – sometimes it still is for smaller shoots. These days, however, I have spent more time crafting the story within the photograph and putting in the hours to ensure I'm creating interesting work. That being said, when I'm working on a series or a set, I break it down into a few steps:

“My success is never my own. I rely on my team to get every idea across the finish line”

STEP ONE: I look for a space that I find interesting and immerse myself in it. I let all the thoughts around that space simmer until it culminates into a loose idea, or sometimes a solid one (if I'm lucky).

STEP TWO: Once I have the idea, I talk about it. This step is so important because it prevents me from becoming an echo chamber and thinking that every idea I come up with is a good one. I have a trusted group of people who I can bounce thoughts off of, who will give me honest feedback, and who will often help me elevate the idea.

STEP THREE: When I have a solidified concept, I begin to think through the details and figure out what my options are – this usually results in creating a mood board that becomes important for the next step.

STEP FOUR: My success is never my own. I rely on my team to get every idea across the finish line. Step four is all about finding the right models, makeup artists, stylists, and hairstylists to work with who can make my vision come to life.

Interview with Lex Barberio (continued)

Speaking of magic, you mention on your website that it is the foundation of your originality. Would you share more about this? And if you had a magic wand, what would you change in the world?

Nothing is more delightful and bewildering than a little bit of magic. Growing up I consumed a lot of fantasy movies and books and often imagined what my life would be like if I lived in those worlds. Today, with the help of editing, I can create my own fantasy worlds and bring people into them. My sweet spot is when my work makes the viewer feel like they have one foot in reality and one foot in a dream. There is beauty in most things in life-- if I had a magic wand, I would change the way people see things and give them the gift of seeing that beauty.

***The Ambisextrous* ↓**



To experience “The Ambisextrous” project in its holographic fluidity, visit <http://www.lexbarberio.com/the-ambisextrous>

How has COVID-19 impacted your work, study, and social life?

COVID-19 has left me with a lot more time on my hands than I had anticipated. As a whole, the solitude we experience every day has given me a new appreciation for life and has helped me savor the moments when I do get to interact with other people or be outside of the house. It has made certainly made shooting more difficult, but it has also made every project more deliberate.

Your project “The Ambisextrous” demonstrates that gender and sexuality aren’t just on a spectrum but fluid. Do you think that they are fluid for most people or only some?

I firmly believe that gender is a human construct and most everyone is fluid. Some people are more open to fluidity than others, but in my personal opinion, it's silly to think that gender and sexuality are black and white when we live in such a colorful world.

In your opinion, what would it take for society to accept the spectrum and fluidity of gender and sexuality as the norm? How long would it take?

I'm not exactly sure what it would take for society to accept gender and sexual fluidity... Every year it gets better, but we still have a long way to go. I think once people begin to listen to each other, actually understand each other, respect each other, and look out for each other, we'll get a lot closer to full acceptance.

“I can create my own fantasy worlds and bring people into them”

Hydrophilic ↓



What projects do you have coming up in the next year?

I'm proud to say that I got invited to have a solo exhibition at The Museum of Contemporary Art Long Island! The exhibition will debut in June of 2021, they will be showing *The Ambisextrous* as well as my new series called *HE/SHE/THEY* where I will be showing the range of LGBTQA+ people that fall under each pronoun. My goal with both of these series is to promote the acceptance of our community by educating people who are not a part of it.

We wish you great success with this exhibit and will be happy to follow up next year!

Visit these sites to enjoy more of Lex Barberio's works:

- [Instagram](#)
- lexbarberio.com
- [Facebook](#)
- [Pinterest](#)

Email: lex@lexbarberio.com



from the Dreamscape series ↑ ↓



“it's silly to think that gender and sexuality are black and white when we live in such a colorful world”





HIV RESOURCE HUB EFA Grant Awards up to \$1,500

The Emergency Financial Assistance is a one-time award that offers assistance with food, housing, and utilities. Who qualifies?

- HIV Positive
- PrEP Users
- Live in Chicagoland
- Financial Hardship due to COVID-19

Call 1-844-482-4040 to apply



📅 November 2 + 3 ⌚ 10 am - 3 pm

SILVERFORK

Cohort 32

Now taking applicants for next Silverfork Cohort 32 Silverfork is a FREE, 9-week culinary arts and job readiness program. To apply please email: silverfork@centeronhalsted.org.

📍 Center on Halsted | 3656 N. Halsted

[LEARN MORE HERE >](#)



📅 Friday, Nov. 20 ⌚ 9 am - 3 pm

Mental Health First Aid Online Virtual Training

MHFA teaches you how to identify, understand & respond to signs of mental illness and substance use disorders. Acquire skills you need to reach out and provide initial support to someone who may be developing a mental health or substance use problem.

📍 Virtual Class

[RSVP HERE >](#)

ANDREW MORTENSEN COMPLETES TRANSCONTINENTAL BICYCLE RIDE

Furloughed airline employee raises more than \$5,000 for LGBTQ+ youth suicide awareness

LAKE BLUFF, IL, OCTOBER 13 - After just 44 days, Andrew Mortensen, 29, arrived in Yorktown, VA, successfully crossing the country by bicycle, raising more than \$5,000 (to date) for LGBTQ+ suicide awareness.

Mortensen joined The Trevor Project's volunteer team in January 2020. Aware of the challenges of coming out after his own journey, he desired to give back as a counselor supporting LGBTQ+ youth.

Mortensen completed training for e-counseling and crisis intervention by February of 2020 and soon after began regular volunteer shifts with The Trevor Project's TrevorChat team.

Just weeks later, the devastating effects of the COVID-19 pandemic rippled through the economy. Mortensen was one of thousands of Americans unexpectedly furloughed from a career in the airline industry. With many hours of new time on his hands and marathon races postponed, Mortensen began supplementing his amateur distance running with bicycling, exploring the extensive Chicagoland trail network on increasingly longer rides. By early August, he'd outfitted his bike with camping equipment and set out for overnight trips across the Montana and Utah mountains.

Tackling some of the most challenging climbs in the country, he returned home with a new confidence to dream bigger: he would ride across America in support of LGBTQ+ youth suicide awareness.



"I realized I had the tools - free time, a warm weather window, a bike, some fitness, and an ambitious goal - to uniquely support a mission I'm passionate about. It easily became 'Why can't I?' instead of 'Why should I?'"

After a month of further planning and training, Mortensen set off with a determination as big as his dream, kicking off his ride in Neah Bay, WA with sights set on the Victory Monument in Yorktown, VA, 4,400 miles east.

On October 7th, after cycling 100 miles a day for 44 days, he landed in Yorktown with more than



\$5,000 in donations (to date). Rather than return home, he made a right turn south.

Outfitted in his new, orange Trevor Project tee, he's headed along the Atlantic Coast to the Florida Keys continuing on his mission to raise funds and awareness for LGBTQ+ suicide.

"I'm so grateful for the overwhelming support and encouragement. If pedaling just a little more changes one mind around suicide, this whole ride will have been worth it."



Further information is available below:

- [Donation & fundraising](#)
- [Andrew's journey on Instagram](#)
- [Live tracking](#)
- [Daily recap and ride photos](#)

NEWSLETTER



<https://outwords.org/>

"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, and 360 Youth Services, and several welcoming/affirming churches to assist those searching for counsel and general information in their journey to wholeness among friends and families! Join Us!

Partners of Trans Folx

This support group meets monthly on Zoom. Email ptfzoom@gmail.com if you want to join.

Web Site Performance

We have upgraded the hosting plan of our web site www.pflagil.org, which has greatly improved site performance. Please visit the site for the list of chapters, resources, an archive of Open Doors issues, and to pay your PFLAG membership dues. Please email your comments and suggestions on contents and design to opendoors@pflagillinois.org.



THEATER

PRIDE



[BUY TICKETS:](#)

A PAIR OF LUNATICS

November 19th & December 3rd at 7pm

A one-act comedy that premiered in London in 1898, He and She meet for the first time in an asylum and each mistakes the other for an inmate.

THE PROPOSAL

December 17th & 30th at 7pm

Ivan, an hypochondriac, has a proposal for Natalya the neighbor. That is, if they can ever agree on anything.

BOOK

In [*The Queer Advantage: Conversations with LGBTQ+ Leaders on the Power of Identity*](#), Andrew Gelwicks relates his personal struggles growing up and coming to terms with being gay. He interviewed 51 of the world's most successful and inspiring leaders on how being queer has **positively impacted** their careers and lives. The result is an arresting compilation of conversations.

The diverse group of trailblazers include people from various industries – Fortune 500 CEOs to Olympic champions, movie and music greats to writers and political leaders. Some you will know, such as **Billie Jean King, Barney Frank, Michael Kors, George Takei, Adam Rippon, Lee Daniels, Margaret Cho** – and others you may not.

**Write for
Open Doors:**
opendoors@pflagillinois.org



WANT TO WORK FOR
Q CHAT SPACE,
AN ONLINE COMMUNITY FOR LGBTQ+ TEENS?

SEEKING:
Q CHATTERS (AGES 13-19)

MORE INFO:
QCHATSPACE.ORG/
WORK-FOR-Q-CHAT

Q CHAT SPACE



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

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 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 Homer Glen / Lockport Meetings held Last Tuesday, 6:30–8 pm
Cross of Glory
14719 W. 163rd, Homer Glen, IL
pflaghgl@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
revlohnbach@gmail.com
plagkankakee@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

Parents of Transgender (Chicago) Meetings are held the 2nd Thursday – 7 pm
Center on Halsted
3656 N Halsted, Chicago 60613
pflagptchicago@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 Oak Park Meetings held 4th Sunday – 3 pm
First United Church
848 Lake St, Oak Park 60304
pflagoakpark@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

meetings suspended

meeting in-person outside

- online meetings

Click anywhere on the map to open it online

