



# OPEN DOORS

The Newsletter of the Northern Illinois PFLAG Chapters

## President's Column

### A TIME FOR LOVE *and* SOLIDARITY

In this holiday season, may you spend quality time with loved ones, share some great meals together and find peace knowing that we can always find comfort and solidarity with our PFLAG family.

Personally, I am heartbroken at the despair that seems to have taken such a grip on our community. Never in my life, and perhaps in US history, has there been a more divisive presidential campaign. While the cause for concern is not unfounded, we must not let hopelessness overtake us. Today, more than ever, we need to remain strong and resolute in our commitment to the PFLAG mission of Support, Education and Advocacy. We have come far, and we must continue in our labor of love, supporting each other and standing strong in solidarity for equality.

I stand here today, encouraged and hopeful that we will continue to make progress. Some of our chapters have had record highs in participation at their meetings. More than ever, people are coming together for support and to be a positive force for change. I find this heartwarming and assuring.

I believe in the power of your stories and the power of love. I believe in having dialogue that is conversational and not confrontational. That means looking for the common ground that unites us in humanity and not focusing on what might divide us. Love is love and being out as LGBTQ or as an ally for the community is more important than ever. This holiday season, I plan to keep my conversations constructive; sharing my joys, my hopes and my dreams: My joy, that all of our children and loved ones do have the freedom to marry in this country; My hope that, one day soon, all states will have protections, like we do in Illinois. Protections so that we can all live our lives authentically and get married on Sunday without fear of being fired on Monday because of who we love; And my dream, that one day, all people will come to value and embrace the gift of the full spectrum of human diversity that we all share.

This holiday season, share your joys, your hopes and your dreams allowing your light to touch hearts and open minds. As Gandhi said "The day the power of love overrules the love of power, the world will know peace". The power of love is undeniable.

With love *and* solidarity,  
*John Hickey*

# BECOME A PFLAG MEMBER!



Sign up today!  
It's **NEVER** too late!



## BECOME A MEMBER... **SUPPORT PFLAG**

By becoming a PFLAG member, you will help provide support, education and advocacy. All information we collect from you on this form will remain confidential, and we will only share it within PFLAG.

Membership runs from October 1 to September 30; no partial-year membership is available.



Please check:

☐ New Membership ☐ Renewal Membership ☐ Donation

(Name) \_\_\_\_\_

(Date) \_\_\_\_\_

(Address) \_\_\_\_\_

(City) (State) (ZIP) \_\_\_\_\_

(Preferred Phone ☐ Home ☐ Cell) \_\_\_\_\_

(E-mail Address) \_\_\_\_\_

(Notes or ☐ In Memory of ☐ In Honor of) \_\_\_\_\_

### MEMBERSHIP LEVEL:

☐ PFLAG Superhero \$500+

☐ PFLAG Hero \$250

☐ Parents Flag Waver \$100

☐ Supporting Membership \$60

☐ Household/Individual Membership \$45

☐ Donation \$ \_\_\_\_\_

### SELECT A CHAPTER:

Donations are tax deductible to the fullest extent allowed by law.

☐ Aurora/Fox Valley

☐ Hinsdale

☐ PTI Chicago

☐ Chicago Metro

☐ Joliet

☐ PTI McHenry

☐ Deerfield

☐ Kankakee/Will/Iroquois

☐ PTI North Shore

☐ DeKalb

☐ McHenry

☐ Rockford

☐ DuPage

☐ Oak Park

☐ Sycamore / PTI

☐ Downers Grove

☐ Palatine

☐ Tinley Park

### PAYMENT:

☐ Check enclosed payable to PFLAG

Please charge my credit card (☐ Visa ☐ MasterCard ☐ Amex ☐ Discover)

(Credit Card #) \_\_\_\_\_

(Exp Date DD/MM) \_\_\_\_\_ (CVV - V/MC/D 3 digits on the back - AX 4 digits on the front) \_\_\_\_\_

(Name on Card) \_\_\_\_\_

Please return form to your chapter representative or mail form and to:

**PFLAG Membership P.O. Box 734, Elmhurst, IL 60126**

PFLAG is a non-profit, tax-exempt, all volunteer, local community-based organization of parents, relatives and friends of gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender persons. PFLAG is not affiliated with any ethnic, religious, economic or political group.

OPEN DOORS is a publication of the Northern Illinois PFLAG chapters. Articles that appear do not necessarily reflect the opinions of PFLAG, its Board of Directors or members. We reserve the right to edit any submissions. Priority is given to original work by the membership.

**Send submissions, comments and photos to:**

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og4equality@gmail.com

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[www.pflagillinois.org](http://www.pflagillinois.org)  
[www.pflag.org](http://www.pflag.org)

Be sure to like  
PFLAG Council of Northern IL

facebook

## Insidious Heterosexism

**Heterosexism** – the assumption that all people are heterosexual – hit me squarely between the eyes, for I was guilty of it. You would think that after being in PFLAG for fourteen years, heterosexism in me would be dead, but it reared its ugly head a week or so ago.

Tom, my spouse of 46 years, and I were having dinner at a restaurant, and our waitress and I were discussing food. At one point she referred to her “sweetie” as not liking some food or other. Without a moment's hesitation, I commented that at least he had complementary tastes...

Five minutes later, I looked at Tom and said, “Did you notice what I just said? I assumed her “sweetie” to be male because she is female.” I couldn't believe it. When I least expected it, heterosexist language just popped out, showing me that I was not as fully integrated as I thought I was.

I think it was a powerful teaching moment for me, one that hopefully will continue to inform my language in every social situation. It's so easy to fall into old patterns, but if I want to lead by example, I'd better mend my ways!

by Toni Weaver

Do you have a story to share? A positive experience?  
Know of an upcoming event of interest?

Open Doors wants hear what you have to say.

**Please submit directly to** [og4equality@gmail.com](mailto:og4equality@gmail.com).

**PLEASE NOTE THAT THERE WILL BE NO  
DECEMBER EDITION OF OPEN DOORS.**

**WE WILL BE BACK IN JANUARY 2017.  
HAPPY HOLIDAYS!!!**



## in Our Chapters?

### Deerfield CHAPTER

By Janet Svatos

We were very fortunate to welcome Katie Thomas to our November meeting. Katie is a transgender woman; still married to the woman she married as a man. Her wife loves her for who she is. Katie now spends 3/4 of her time in her female identity and 1/4 as a male. She told us of her three “twenty year plans.”

- During the first twenty years, she was a straight male who met his wife at 17, fell in love and eventually married.
- During the second twenty years she became a family man with children: was a graphic artist and a real estate agent. During this time, Katie began to feel the need to be “this other person” but had family obligations to meet and fulfill.
- She began to come out publicly during the third twenty, cross-dressing and joining a trans club. Katie and her wife are still together.

Katie told us how it came together. They were already married and her wife was patient, she said, when she realized she wanted and needed to be “this other person.” She/he had obligations to meet, and at length found ways to make it work. Her wife loved/loves her and has been her partner in the process. She cross-dressed away from her kids, who didn’t learn until they were adults, about Katie’s female identity.

Katie advised that one should get an education before coming out. “There’s always an opportunity to come out!” she said, but getting an education later in life is much more difficult thing to do. Katie, who’s 78, said that one can have a “decent” life as a trans person and that while it may be out of the ordinary, it’s still satisfying. “We’re all straight and gay”, she said. “It may be to an excess at first, but eventually you get with it.” A discussion of gender issues followed, as we welcomed new members. Some points that were made:

- Lurie <https://www.luriechildrens.org/en-us/care-services/specialties-services/gender-program/Pages/index.aspx> is a good source of information and was recommended as a resource for those needing information on trans issues, providing physical and psychological advice.

- It’s important to establish identity changes on birth certificates/licenses after bottom change surgery has been completed.
- Recommended as a resource, The About Face Theater, LGBT Theater Group  
<http://aboutface theatre.com>

PLEASE BE REMINDED: Next month (December), we will not have a regular meeting, but rather a CELEBRATION OF EACH OTHER, as we welcome the holidays and join in friendly conversation for the entire 2 hours. We ask that if you plan to come, please bring some finger food to share with the rest of us. We’ll resume having our regular meeting in January, with a speaker, etc.

If you haven’t sent in your PFLAG dues for 2017, please don’t forget to do so.



### McHenry CHAPTER

By Toni Weaver

Two years ago, several of the PTI moms took the planning of the November meeting out of my hands. Solemn vigils for the Transgender Day of Remembrance were simply too heavy for the parents to endure – a reminder that their children were very vulnerable to harm. In its stead, they planned a meeting that would uplift rather than depress, focusing on the accomplishments and joys of people who are now living authentic lives. However, the best laid plans of mice and men often go awry. Four “new” parents attended, each with different issues: a woman whose spouse had just come out after 26 years of marriage, a mom whose husband won’t accept the fact that their son is gay, a mom with a transgender teen, and another mom who’s sure her son is gay but hasn’t yet come out. (Our advice: don’t out him but allow him to come out in his own time...he might not even be gay.) The planned program was set aside in favor of a heavy-duty support meeting, the likes of which we haven’t had in a long time!

On Oct. 31 we collaborated with the Regional Office of Education in McHenry County in the planning and execution of another training workshop, this one geared for school support staff: school psychologists, counselors, 4



and social workers. This all day workshop featured AJ Jennings from Illinois Safe Schools as lead presenter with support from Dr. Bonne Estensen from Guided Path Psychological Services. These instructional programs are being very well received here in our county, and more are being requested.

I'm sure that the December meeting, while planned as a holiday social will focus on the election results, and I expect the conversation to be very animated. We know that our advocacy work will intensify in the coming months, and we want to be ready.



## Oak Park CHAPTER

*By Nancy Johnson*

As most of you know, Kate Kroker has been the president of our chapter for a long time. For health reasons she decided to step down, as one of our board members, and will no longer be our president. She's been an excellent president, full of spirit and a staunch advocate for LGBT people. Kate has a sharp wit and I can always lift my spirits by talking to her for a while and hearing her pungent comments about life.

We are going to miss our Kate, but I'm sure she'll still attend when she feels up to it. We want to thank her for her service to our chapter, baking for our bake sales, and getting her relatives to do baking for us as well. She's always volunteered to sit at a table and is very good at drawing folks in and chatting with them. PFLAG needs persistent extroverts like Kate. So Kate, Thank you for being your wonderful, cantankerous, humorous self and please, please participate as much as you're able to!

We held our board elections today. Phil Kroker ran in the vacancy Kate left. The elected members are Phil Kroker and the 4 incumbents, Sylvia Menninga, Nancy Johnson, Sandy Jefferson, and Will Ksander. Our new president is Phil Kroker. The other officers are unchanged.

We are planning a potluck for January 29 at Gy and Sylvia's. We are also planning to do a couple of film screenings at the Maze Branch Library of the Oak Park Public Library. One of the librarians there is interested in working with us on the advertising. The room is smaller than the one we've used in the past, but has a good sound system. We're planning the screenings for February. Details to be announced later.

## Tinley Park CHAPTER

*By Debbie*

Happy Thanksgiving, and we are thankful for all our PFLAG attendees; sharing our hopes, fears, and resources.

Our December meeting will feature a guest pastor, who will give us insight to her work with LGBT youth.

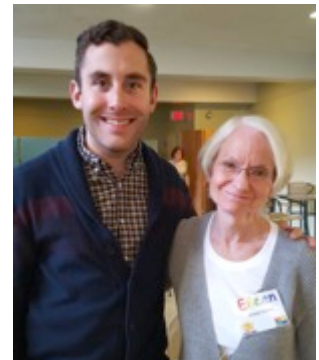
In 2017, we're planning some events to get the PFLAG message out in the community. All are welcome, "2-2-2"-- 2nd Sunday at 2pm for 2 hours.



## Hinsdale CHAPTER

*By Hope Ziarko*

At our November meeting, our guest speaker was Christopher Nolan, co-founder and lead of Rush University Health System's LGBTQ+ Health Committee and a member of the system's Diversity Leadership Council. Rush's committee works to stop discrimination related to gender identity. Mr. Nolan also works with the Human Rights Campaign in an effort to eliminate LGBTQ stigma. He recruits other hospitals to become involved in these efforts by providing education on LGBTQ healthcare. He was a very informative speaker, and we thank Mr. Nolan for all his efforts on behalf of the community.



Our December 4<sup>th</sup> meeting is our annual holiday potluck. We'll also fill stockings with toiletries, candies and warm socks, gloves and hats for The Crib shelter run by the Night Ministry. We wish all our PFLAG friends a wonderful, happy holiday season!



## DuPage CHAPTER

*By Ron & Bernadette Whitfield*

We had another wonderful meeting in November. About 50 people attended to hear the presentation by Michael Bauer entitled "LGBT activism from the Age of AIDS to the

Age of Trump - how to cope and how to persevere." We were spellbound. You could hear a pin drop while he spoke. We learned about his family history (his mom, aged 100½, is the only member of her large family to survive the Holocaust), life with his husband Roger Simon, and their survival through the AIDS epidemic. Mike spoke wistfully as he told us that he and Roger have lost almost all of their friends. It was difficult to see their friends presenting with the frightful symptoms of the disease. During the height of the epidemic it was rare for a month to pass without at least one funeral.

He reminded us that the path to Marriage Equality was a long-fought battle filled with ups and downs. Whatever the near future holds for the LGBTQ community, Mike urged us to not lose heart and remember that the fight for full equality is unfinished — it too is a long-term fight that must not be abandoned. Regarding marriage equality, Mike said that he and Roger never thought they would live long enough to see that day. They went to Canada to seal their commitment to each other. They were overjoyed, obviously, when it became a reality in the United States.

Mike's presentation was followed by a spirited Q&A session. Mike was very candid in his responses. But he left us with messages of hope.

Mike also encouraged us to share his contact information with our fellow PFLAG Northern Illinois chapters. He was very comfortable in our midst and looks forward to meeting more of us. You can contact him at [MBauer2500@aol.com](mailto:MBauer2500@aol.com). You can learn more about Mike at <http://www.chicagogayhistory.com/biography.html?id=787>.

As an aside, we met Mike and Roger after the Pride Parade in June. He approached our table (we were at a restaurant with outdoor seating) and thanked us for loving our children. What a guy! And what an inspiring couple Roger and Mike are! We can't thank them enough for visiting us.

On another note, we are happy to report that our School Outreach Initiative "officially" began with a meeting of 10 interested and passionate people on Nov. 8<sup>th</sup>. We have begun to gather information (lists of services, resources, Websites, videos, books, etc.) suitable for distribution to school administrators and faculty. Our goal is to promote the formation of GSAs in middle schools. Our next meeting is on Dec. 7<sup>th</sup> at 7 PM, St. Paul Lutheran Church, 515 S. Wheaton Ave, Wheaton. All are welcome, particularly those who have experience working with or in schools (faculty, administrators, school board members). PFLAG membership is not necessary. Please spread the word. It

helps immensely to have personal relationships with school administrators and faculty.



## PTI Chicago CHAPTER

*By Arlene Collins*

Our Nov 10th meeting was quite different from our regular PTI meetings. PTI was involved in a quickly planned statewide call hosted by the Trans Ally Coalition. The need for this important and timely call was precipitated by the recent election of Trump/Pence. This call was in partnership with the ACLU of Illinois and other legal advocates to talk more broadly about what a Trump/Pence administration means for ACA, U.S. Supreme Court, Title IX, Marriage Equality, local implications, etc. Approximately 100 people participated in this call with questions at the end.

Some important resources that can explain some of what was discussed during the call:

### List of state Birth Certificate Laws:

<http://www.lambdalegal.org/know-your-rights/article/trans-changing-birth-certificate-sex-designations>

### U.S. Passport Gender Change Process:

<https://travel.state.gov/content/passports/en/passports/information/gender.html>

### Social Security Gender Marker Change:

<https://faq.ssa.gov/link/portal/34011/34019/Article/2856/How-do-I-change-my-gender-on-Social-Security-s-records>

### Illinois State Board of Education Name and Gender Change Regulations:

[http://www.isbe.net/sis/pdf/student\\_demographics.pdf](http://www.isbe.net/sis/pdf/student_demographics.pdf)

### Correction of Birth Records

[http://www.idph.state.il.us/vitalrecords/Documents/Affidavit\\_Cert\\_Correction.pdf](http://www.idph.state.il.us/vitalrecords/Documents/Affidavit_Cert_Correction.pdf)

A second statewide post election update call held on Nov. 15<sup>th</sup> went into more detail in speaking to the position of Trump and Pence towards the LGBTQ community.

We look forward to our Dec. 8<sup>th</sup> meeting where we will celebrate our annual Holiday Pot Luck Dinner. We look forward to joining in the camaraderie and friendship among our members in celebration of the holidays.

# Book review

By Jackie Frett

## **Transgender Teen-A Handbook for Parents and Professionals Supporting Transgender and Non-Binary Teens by Brill and Kenney**

If you have not already heard about what's being called "The perfect follow up to *The Transgender Child*."

Allow me to introduce you to **The Transgender Teen**, the latest offering by Stephanie Brill and Lisa Kenney.

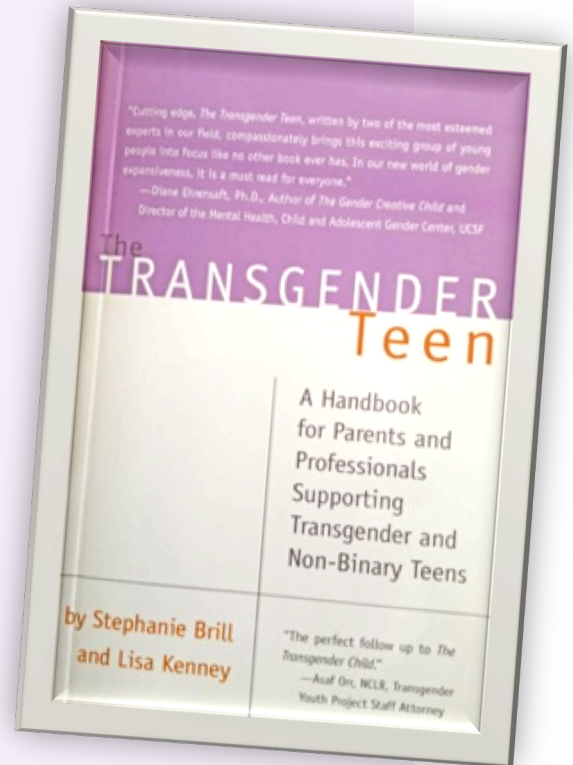
What I love about this book is that the authors dive right in with practical advice for parents.

In chapter one, Being the Parent of a Transgender or Non-binary Teen, they answer questions like; Is this a ploy for attention? Aren't they too young to know? The authors help parents to see that this is a critical time when you must control your fears and listen carefully to your teen.

The authors guide parents to set the tone that will help them during this learning process as they work their way through questions like these.

"What do you do when your son announces he is transgender and asks that you call her by a new name? Or what if your child uses a term you've never heard of to describe themselves (neutrois, agender, non-binary, genderqueer, androgyne...) and when you didn't know what they meant, they left the room and now won't speak to you about it? Perhaps your daughter recently asked you not to use gendered pronouns when referring to 'her' anymore, preferring that you use "they"; you're left wondering if this is just a phase, or if there's something more that you need to understand about your child."

This truly is a handbook with information on professional help, mental health, and how to support your teen on this journey. I am sure **Transgender Teen** will be a welcome addition to your PFLAG Library.



## are you LGBTQ?

Ever spent time in:  
 🏠 foster care,  
 🏠 a group home, or  
 🏠 residential?

### Tell us about it!

The ACLU of Illinois works to protect the civil rights of people in Illinois, including LGBTQ youth.



What is it like for you or other LGBTQ state kids?

What would you change?

How could your experience have been better?

**Your voice matters. You can help make a difference.**

We're available in person, by text, phone, Facetime, Skype or social media.

@ACLUofIL

@ACLUofIL

/ACLUofIllinois



aclu-il.org/DCFS

Contact: Ghirlandi Guidetti  
(pronouns: he/him/his)

Text: 872-216-7830

Call: 312-201-9740 x319

Email: gguidetti@aclu-il.org

Our conversation will be 100% confidential.

# Check this out!



**PFLAG Aurora/Fox Valley**

Meetings held 2<sup>nd</sup> Sunday – 2 pm  
 New England Congregational Church  
 406 W Galena Blvd, Aurora 60506  
[pflagaurorafoxvalley@pflagillinois.com](mailto:pflagaurorafoxvalley@pflagillinois.com)

**PFLAG Metro Chicago**

Meetings held 3<sup>rd</sup> Sunday – 2 pm  
 Center on Halsted (Senior Room)  
 3656 N Halsted, Chicago 60613  
[pflagchicagometro@pflagillinois.com](mailto:pflagchicagometro@pflagillinois.com)

**PFLAG Deerfield**

Meetings held 2<sup>nd</sup> Thursday – 7:15 pm  
 Congregation BJBE  
 1201 Lake Cook Rd, Deerfield 60015  
[pflagdeerfield@pflagillinois.org](mailto:pflagdeerfield@pflagillinois.org)

**PFLAG/PTI Sycamore**

Meetings held LAST Tuesday – 7 pm  
 Federated Church of Sycamore  
 612 W State St  
 Sycamore, IL 60178  
[pflagdekcalbcounty@pflagillinois.org](mailto:pflagdekcalbcounty@pflagillinois.org)

**PFLAG DuPage**

Meetings held 3<sup>rd</sup> Sunday – 2 pm  
 St Paul Lutheran Church  
 515 S Wheaton Ave, Wheaton 60187  
[pflagdupage@yahoo.com](mailto:pflagdupage@yahoo.com)  
[www.pflagdupage.org](http://www.pflagdupage.org)

**PFLAG Tinley Park**

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

**PFLAG Downers Grove**

Meetings held 2<sup>nd</sup> Wednesday – 7p.m.  
 First Congregational UCC  
 1047 Curtiss  
 Downers Grove, IL 60515

**PFLAG Hinsdale**

Meetings held 1<sup>st</sup> Sunday – 2 pm  
 Unitarian Church Hinsdale  
 11 W Maple, Hinsdale 60521  
[pflaghinsdale@pflagillinois.com](mailto:pflaghinsdale@pflagillinois.com)

**PFLAG Joliet**

Contact Maria Prekop  
[maria.prekop@navigant.com](mailto:maria.prekop@navigant.com)

**PFLAG Will, Kankakee, Iroquois**

Meetings held 3<sup>rd</sup> Sunday, 2-4 pm  
 1045 W River St  
 Kankakee, IL  
[plagkankakee@pflagillinois.org](mailto:plagkankakee@pflagillinois.org)

**PFLAG McHenry**

Meetings held 2<sup>nd</sup> Tuesday – 7 pm  
 Tree of Life Unitarian Church  
 5603 W Bull Valley Rd  
 McHenry 60050  
[pflagwoodstockmchenry@pflagillinois.org](mailto:pflagwoodstockmchenry@pflagillinois.org)

**PFLAG Oak Park**

Meetings held 4<sup>th</sup> Sunday – 3 pm  
 First United Church  
 848 Lake St, Oak Park 60304  
[pflagoakpark@pflagillinois.org](mailto:pflagoakpark@pflagillinois.org)

**Parents of Transgender (Chicago)**

Meetings are held the 2<sup>nd</sup> Thursday – 7 pm  
 Center on Halsted  
 3656 N Halsted, Chicago 60613  
[parentsoftransgender@pflagillinois.org](mailto:parentsoftransgender@pflagillinois.org)

**Parents of Transgender (McHenry) – NEW DAY**

Meetings are held the 4<sup>th</sup> Wednesday – 7 p.m.  
 Tree of Life Unitarian Church  
 5603 W Bull Valley Rd, McHenry 60050  
[flynnmb12@gmail.com](mailto:flynnmb12@gmail.com)  
[marygenzler@hotmail.com](mailto:marygenzler@hotmail.com)

**Parents of Transgender (North Shore)**

Meetings are held the 3<sup>rd</sup> Sunday – 6 p.m.  
 Winnetka Presbyterian Church  
 1255 Winnetka Rd, Winnetka, IL

**PFLAG Rockford - NEW**

Meetings are held the 1<sup>st</sup> Monday – 6:30 pm  
 Rockford Public Library  
 215 N Wyman St, Rockford, IL  
 (use entrance off Mulberry St.)

**Please join us for any chapter meeting.**

**If you are not comfortable meeting in a large group, arrangements can be made to meet one-on-one.**  
**Contact any one of our chapters for more information.**