



Open Doors

NEW PROJECTS

Let's focus on the positive: **love, joy, hope, inspiration, gratitude, awe, humor**. Let's celebrate **empathy** and **creativity**. Let's work on building a **kinder** future world! If we want to change the society for the **better**, let's put our minds together and work on making it happen.

What new **exciting** things are happening at PFLAG – nationally and locally – in the New Year 2023?

As PFLAG is entering its 50th year, it's working on **new branding**, which will include a new visual style, logo, and related materials. Program names and acronyms may change too, although we don't have all the details yet. The www.pflag.org web site is expected to be redesigned early next year. This **eagerly** anticipated update will impact our web site www.pflagil.org as we incorporate the new style after PFLAG National makes the change. Chapter logos will need to change too. Brochures, pamphlets, chapter banners, pens, buttons, T-shirts, and other items carrying the old branding will need to be updated. While these changes will take some work, I see our visual style **modernization** as an **opportunity** to **promote** PFLAG better.

The PFLAG Council of Northern Illinois (PCNI) has decided to organize a summer picnic in 2023 for all chapters. We are calling it **PCNIc 2023** 😊 A planning committee has been formed and started exploring possible locations and drafting the program of the event. We invite volunteers interested in **helping** with this effort to join the committee – please email to opendoors@pflagillinois.org if you would like to **contribute** your time and talents. The plan is currently to hold an outdoors event in July-August (but with a shelter available in case of rain). We'll organize a potluck lunch, **entertainment**, and group activities. It will be a **fun** family event for people of all ages. Bringing kids and supportive family members is **encouraged!**

Our 2022 Power of Advocacy Conference took place on October 8th and was a big **success**, judging by

conference survey responses and informal comments that we've received from attendees. Just a week after the conference, PCNI held its quarterly Council meeting. The **excitement** about the conference was so **high** and **ideas** for the next conference were so **abundant** that PCNI decided to form a **2024 Conference** Planning Committee right away. Several people have already volunteered, and we are going to start that work soon. If you are interested in serving on the committee, please email to opendoors@pflagillinois.org.

Corporations and other organizations often ask PFLAG to send someone to represent our **ally** community at **Pride** awareness events, make a presentation, **share** information, and answer questions. These events may be in-person or online and normally require a one-time **commitment** from a PFLAG volunteer. To handle these requests more **efficiently**, we are implementing a list of **PFLAG Ambassadors**. If you'd like to occasionally represent PFLAG at such events, **please** email opendoors@pflagillinois.org and I'll add you to the list. You'll periodically receive emails about requests to represent PFLAG and will choose which ones to take. This requires no upfront commitment, just your **willingness** to consider such **opportunities**.

Do you have suggestions for new PFLAG projects? We are an organization operated by volunteers, and your **support** and efforts is what keeps PFLAG going. **Please share your ideas** with me or your chapter leaders and let's see how we can make it a reality. We can't sit and wait for someone else to make things better. We have the **power** to do it!

Let this Holiday Season and the New Year be cheerful and safe for you and your loved ones!

Andrew Zanevsky (he/him/his)

President
PFLAG Council of Northern Illinois



FEDERAL

[President Biden releases proclamation in honor of National Adoption Awareness Month.](#)

In the proclamation, the President stressed the need to end anti-LGBTQ+ discrimination in adoptions and foster care. Contact your representatives and tell them to vote YES on the PFLAG-informed and -endorsed [John Lewis Every Child Deserves a Family Act](#) to ensure fairness for LGBTQ+ children and prospective parents in adoption and foster care.

GLOBAL

[Japan - Tokyo begins awarding "partnership certificates" to LGBTQ+ couples.](#) The partnership certification system will allow LGBTQ+ couples to receive public housing and benefit from public welfare programs. The city has already received hundreds of applications and certified 115 so far. Across the country, the partnership system has issued over 3,000 certificates to couples.

MEDIA

[Miss Puerto Rico and Miss Argentina reveal they secretly got married.](#) Fabiola Valentín and Mariana Varela posted a photo on Instagram celebrating and announcing their marriage in Puerto Rico. The newlyweds publicized their relationship after keeping it private for 2 years.



These articles are excerpted from *Policy Matters*, an email publication of PFLAG National. Become a PFLAG member to receive the full newsletter:

<https://pflagil.org/membership-and-donation/>

The painting on the cover of this Open Doors issue is *Le Sorcier d'Hiva Oa (Marquesan Man in a Red Cape)* by Paul Gauguin, 1902.

According to *Wikipedia*, the model for *Le Sorcier* may have been Haapuani, an accomplished dancer as well as a feared magician, who was a close friend of Gauguin's. The androgynous nature of the image has attracted critical attention, giving rise to speculation that Gauguin intended to depict a *māhū* (i.e. a third gender person) rather than a *taua* or priest.

Read this article on the Tate Britain site for more information about *māhū*: Vargas Llosa, Mario. [The men-women of the Pacific.](#)

Membership Dues and Donations

If you haven't yet paid your PFLAG annual membership dues, please do so at pflagillinois.org/membership-and-donation

Please also consider donating in addition to paying for membership to support PFLAG's regular operations and special projects. Your generosity matters and is very much appreciated!

Donate your time as a PFLAG volunteer! All leaders on the state level (PCNI and local chapters) are volunteers. The organization wouldn't exist without their passion and talent. There are permanent positions as well as large and small projects. Email opendoors@pflagillinois.org for details.

Help EqIL

Equality IL is collecting stories for a future bill requiring cultural competency training for providers. If you have a positive or negative experience with a health care provider, please see the story collection links below:

secure.everyaction.com/0f16G_3yfEWP7IC3XdIMhA2



News from PFLAG Hinsdale

by Barb Medley

Our November 6th speaker was Mike Ziri, the Director of Public Policy for Equality Illinois. He joined via Zoom to update us on pending legislation and share how each one of us can be part of this important process.

In Illinois we have excellent LGBTQ policies, exclusive to the Midwest. In 2021, Illinois repealed the HIV criminalization law, passed the Keeping Youth Safe and Healthy Act, and expanded access to HIV prevention drugs through community pharmacies. By contrast, in the rest of the country, more than 3,000 anti-LGBTQ bills were filed in 2022, most targeting trans people. This all leads to increased online harassment, increased bullying in schools and sadly, increased violence against trans people.

Mike highlighted ongoing legislative efforts. The Keeping Youth Safe and Healthy Act provides for new learning standards and sexual health education in schools (age-appropriate, inclusive, and scientifically accurate). Since it is not a mandate, 69% of school districts do not provide any kind of instruction (per the Illinois State Board of Education data report of August 2022).

Equality Illinois has a proactive agenda and is working across the state for more representation in government, in communities and on committees. In 2023 they are focusing on cultural competency education in health care. Almost half of trans people don't seek the care they need because of past treatment experiences. HB 4654, Health Care Cultural Competency, is an initiative that would establish cultural competency requirements as part of continuing medical education for a range of health care professionals. This type of education would best equip providers to affirmingly serve their patients, including patients from communities that have historically

been excluded from affirming treatment and care. The legislation is the initiative of a working group of organizations that advocate for and support and affirm LGBTQ people, people living with HIV, people with disabilities, and communities of color. Please contact your legislative representatives and ask them to vote for this bill.

Disrupting Disparities for LGBTQ Older Adults (HB 4656 and SB 3490) are also bills that Equality Illinois is supporting in 2023. An initiative of AARP of Illinois, AIDS Foundation Chicago, Center on Halsted, Equality Illinois, Howard Brown Health, Pride Action Tank, and SAGE, this legislation creates a three-year Commission on LGBTQ Aging, establishes an LGBTQ Older Adult Advocate at the Illinois Department on Aging, and requires providers that are funded by or contract with the Department to complete LGBTQ older adult awareness and competency training. This initiative would keep Illinois moving forward as a leader in advancing equity and affirming care for LGBTQ older adults and older adults living with HIV. Mike encourages us to contact our representatives and ask for support of these bills as well.

At our December meeting, we'll gather and enjoy a meal together, something we haven't done during Covid. We will not have a speaker in January, as our meeting falls on New Year's Day.



PFLAG Hinsdale decorated a tree at Brookfield Zoo



News from PFLAG Deerfield

by Sue Ginsburg

While we didn't have a speaker this month, our discussions and opportunities for support filled up the two hours, we could have gone on! We were reminded again that there is a need for support groups for siblings of trans youth, as well as parents. Perhaps one day, there will be more effort into pulling this together. We all agreed that this was an area that needed more exploration and discussion.

Most importantly, we talked about the need for more paid members. Reminding all that PFLAG National is first and foremost our lobbying arm to Congress. And nothing shows power more than the numbers of paid members we have across the country! We were reminded of the Day of Remembrance this month, as we support our trans brothers and sisters in their struggles for equal rights. **Don't forget to write your senators to support The Respect for Marriage Act and The Equality Act.** We need to show them that we support codifying these acts to protect marriage equality and equality for all!

News from PFLAG Oak Park

by Nancy Johnson

Our Chapter is beginning to navigate a change in our outreach and support. Phil has reported that most of the calls he's been getting are from parents of transgender children. We see that we must provide these parents with the best support we can.

We have been approached by OPALGA+ to co-sponsor an event for parents of transgender children. What do we want to see? What do parents want? We are considering a potluck for starters.

We are inviting trans activist Ben Greene (<https://www.bgtranstalks.com/>) to speak to us via ZOOM at our meeting tomorrow. We are planning an event in January with Ben in person.

We are at a beginning stage now, and are hopeful for our future.

News from PFLAG DuPage

by Bonnie Clemens

We had our first hybrid meeting this month! We had seventeen people in person and another eight joined via Zoom. The meeting went smoothly, and the Zoom participants commented that they felt very much included. It's nice to have this option in our toolkit. We will be continuing with the hybrid format for the foreseeable future.

Our meeting fell on the Transgender Day of Remembrance which we recognized with a moment of silence. We included the victims, family and friends of the recent Colorado Springs shooting in our thoughts. We felt fortunate to be able to be together on that day, knowing that we were surrounded by the love and comfort of our PFLAG family.

On a lighter note, we viewed the short documentary "Mama Has a Mustache". This is a short, quirky, fully animated documentary about gender and family, as seen through children's eyes. The film is based on audio interviews of kids ages 5-10. Sound bites from the interviews are combined with clipart and mixed media to explore how children can experience a world outside of the traditional gender binary. We highly recommend this charming film if you ever get the chance to view it.

PFLAG DuPage wishes everyone a safe and happy holiday season. If for whatever reason you find yourself dispirited, we hope that you will reach out to your PFLAG friends.

News from PFLAG Evanston / North Shore

by Andrew Zanevsky

Our newest chapter – PFLAG Evanston / North Shore has a vibrant presence on several social media platforms, has organized events besides monthly meetings, and is actively participating in PCNI. The chapter meets on the **first Tuesday of every month at 7 PM.**

If you'd like to attend chapter meetings to get acquainted with its enthusiastic leaders and other members and to support the chapter, please email pflagevanston@gmail.com.



News from PFLAG McHenry

**by Toni Weaver, Raina Hodgson,
and Julie Schoen**

PFLAG McHenry met in person for our November meeting with a focus on Transgender Day of Remembrance. As an early acknowledgement of TDOR we highlighted the lives of many lost souls from the United States with a slide show presentation. The visual images of these beautiful people who tragically lost their lives due to violence connected us to them where merely reading their names would not have. We brightened the mood as much as we could by focusing and sharing their everyday achievements and messages of love from their families and friends. We also shared legislation and other positive happenings for the LGBTQ+ community. The sharing of positive news was to remind ourselves that despite the tragedies, there are people working for good and for better days ahead. We provided resources for our meeting attendees to help facilitate their own observances of TDOR on and around November 20th. We ended our meeting with sharing, snacks and a brief discussion about our December holiday meeting and potluck.

On a more uplifting note, PFLAG McHenry has a long history of involvement with our local schools, providing trainings for school personnel, offering pride and transgender flags for display in the schools, staffing resource tables at school events, and visiting GSAs to share a parent's perspective.

In October, both Carol Fetzner and Toni Weaver were invited by a Woodstock North HS social worker to share resources with her group of gender diverse students. In November, a panel of McHenry members attended a meeting of the McHenry HS GSA, telling their stories and allowing the students to ask questions of their own.

While hearing from parents was good, hearing from someone closer to their own age was 100% better. Skye Schoen, the 18-year-old son of McHenry board member Julie Schoen, absolutely stole the show with an essay he wrote detailing the story of his growing

awareness of gender dysphoria and his successful transition to the person he knows himself to be.

Thanks also go out to Roxie Kaminski, Karen Graham, Lynn Hettermann, Marco Floriani, and Toni Weaver who moderated the panel. Each person presented a different perspective. Roxie has a gay daughter, Karen, a gay son, Lynn, a son who first identified as gay and then later realized that gender identity was the real issue, and Marco, a member of the LGBTQ+ Employee Resource Group (ERG) at ABBVIE, who spoke on welcoming workplaces in the corporate world. This marks the second time we've been invited to the McHenry HS GSA!

As November comes to a close, we at PFLAG McHenry wish you all a very happy & safe upcoming holiday season.

Community Partnerships

by Toni Weaver

I'm proud to say that out here in McHenry County we've formed partnerships with two local business owners. Arlene Lynes, owner of **Read Between the Lynes** on the Woodstock Square, and John McCall, owner of **The Flag Store** in downtown Crystal Lake, have both graciously agreed to display our PFLAG booklets in their stores, thus widening our outreach into the community.

Arlene carries books on LGBTQ+ topics, and John sells a wide variety of Pride merchandise with a focus on the many types of flags that identify the wide range of sexual orientations and gender identities. Both merchants put out a donation can for people who wish to contribute towards the cost of the PFLAG booklets.

Perhaps our other PCNI chapters might consider such an outreach in their communities!



News from PTI Chicago

by Christine Peters

An OWL attended our Parents of Trans Individuals support group, thanks to PFLAG Chicago Metro! We borrowed their Meeting Owl, a camera/mic/speaker device that allows live and virtual members to participate. PTI Chicago held its first Hybrid meeting attended by 4 in-person participants at Center on Halsted and 11 people on Zoom. All felt it was a success, thanks to the persistence of President Bill Guilfoile, and we will continue to have Hybrid meetings going forward!

One outstanding topic from this session focused on faith communities and their roles in supporting or negating trans folk. This seemed to be especially painful for members who identify as devout Catholics. One parent expressed a passionate desire to create a forum within her Mexican-American church to welcome and include queer, nonbinary, and trans youth who need acceptance and support from their religious group. She knows there are other struggling parents within her church, but they are not necessarily visible to one another. It was suggested that reaching out to parents and youth where they live and where they currently seek counsel widens the number of people who can access a supportive community.

A number of resources were put in the Zoom Chat to share for everyone's reference:

- A Trans Day of Remembrance service was held at the Unitarian Church of Evanston on November 20th. This somber but affirming vigil is still available to view at www.youtube.com/watch?v=zFnJrhVTpIQ
- Please encourage trans friends and loved ones (16 years and older) to take the U.S. Trans Survey. It was last completed by 28,000 trans and nonbinary people in 2015. It's so important to collect information from a diverse sample in 2022. The deadline is 12/5/22 www.ustranssurvey.org

- Our next book club selection is **Sorted: Growing Up, Coming Out, and Finding My Place (A Transgender Memoir)** by Jackson Bird



We also announced that December is the annual election for the PTI Chicago Board. Current Board members, Bill Guilfoile, Molly Malone, Francey Oscherwitz, and Christine Peters, have agreed to serve another year. We are excited that Terry Brugger has agreed to join the board and share their talents and background with the group!

Let's get more members attending in-person (F2F) at upcoming meetings at Center on Halsted in Room 200 at 3656 N. Halsted, Chicago, 60613. You are still welcome on Zoom on the second Thursday of each month, including **December 8th, 2022 from 7:00 p.m. - 9:00 p.m.** Participants will receive an email with the link and password to enter the meeting. Parent/s, guardians, or family members of transgender, non-binary, or gender diverse individuals who would like to join us for the first time should e-mail PTI Chicago President Bill Guilfoile at bill.guilfoile@gmail.com

Get published in Open Doors!
Send your articles, essays, poetry,
movie and book reviews,
art works, and photos to
opendoors@pflagillinois.org



HOW TO HANDLE NON-AFFIRMING FOLKS (AND OTHER CRISES!) DURING THE HOLIDAYS

This is an excerpt from a blog post by Heather Hester (she/her) - DEI Speaker, Podcaster, Coach, Chrysalis Mama. Heather was also one of the panelists at our Power of Advocacy Conference in October. Be sure to check her website www.chrysalismama.com. [Click here](#) if you'd like to read the full article.

How do we cope with, manage, and respond to non-affirming or unsupportive folks with a spirit of grace, patience, and education while also maintaining protective boundaries and empowering our kids?

The answer is *carefully*. We need to be clear on what we hope to accomplish by engaging in a conversation around this topic. To access this clarity, we need to have educational points of reference beyond our intuition and unconditional love. We also need to have a strong sense of boundaries.

Having a few responses that are your own special blend of grace, patience and education are helpful. Here are a couple of broad topics to help:

1. **Time** – It takes everyone time to adjust to the change in their movie reel. As you know, so many factors go into this. Some people just need a minute to process the information!
2. **Facts** – Knowledge is not only power; it is calming, centering, and confidence infusing. Have the basic facts down that are specific to your child, and then begin to expand your knowledge from there. The resource section of my [website](#) is a great place to start as is my new book, [The Language of LGBTQIA+](#).
3. **Boundaries** - Setting and clarifying your boundaries works wonders in allowing you to stay connected to your truth. Teach your child how to do this as well; it is an invaluable life skill.

Holiday gatherings are a favorite time to come out to friends and relatives, so what do you do when your child comes out and faces a non-affirming or unsupportive response?

Boundaries can be a little more difficult with a family member or friend. And, those who are strongly anti-LGBTQ tend to approach this topic with a lot of fire. So, how can we prepare?

Know your facts, stay calm, and breathe.

If you don't have an answer to a specific question, it's okay. Offer to share the resources that have helped you. I have handled this by saying that I know to the core of my being that God created our son, Connor, to be exactly who he is and that I'm happy to share research that supports that feeling. Another powerful response is: anyone who thinks that being LGBTQ is a "choice" has clearly never known or supported someone through the coming out process. **NO ONE CHOOSES THAT!!**

The complete opposite situation is possible here as well where your child knows there are non-affirming or unsupportive people at one or more of your holiday gatherings and they just don't want to go. **Honor that.** I know it can be hard when there are expectations of others at play. This is one of those moments where a pause and a breath can give so much clarity. What is more important - Aunt Susie's feelings or that your child knows that you have their back no matter what?





Open Space Arts
OpenSpaceArts.com

Pride Film Fest in December will feature great new films that have been recognized at international fests around the world. Plus, there is a fun program of **Hot Holiday Shorts**.

[Click here](#) for press releases, schedule, website, and social media links.

THANKS TO HER - Feature Length Film – **November 30 – December 12**

Directed by Sam McCoy, Written by Sam Orlowski.

Millie Blake, a high school soccer star and straight-A student, is serving a month of community service at a local nursing home after a fight at school. At the nursing home, she is stuck with the instigator of the fight - another senior student who is outspoken about her identity. Initially, the two girls butt heads, but the tension quickly blossoms into friendship as they learn more about each other.



[\\$10 ticket to watch THANKS TO HER from anywhere!](#)

The next issue of Open Doors will be released at the end of January, as we traditionally skip one issue at the end of the year.

**Happy Holidays
to you and your loved ones!**

US premier of Tom Whalley’s raunchy very adult British panto, **Jack Off The Beanstalk** is running from November 28 through December 18, 2022 at the PrideArts Center:



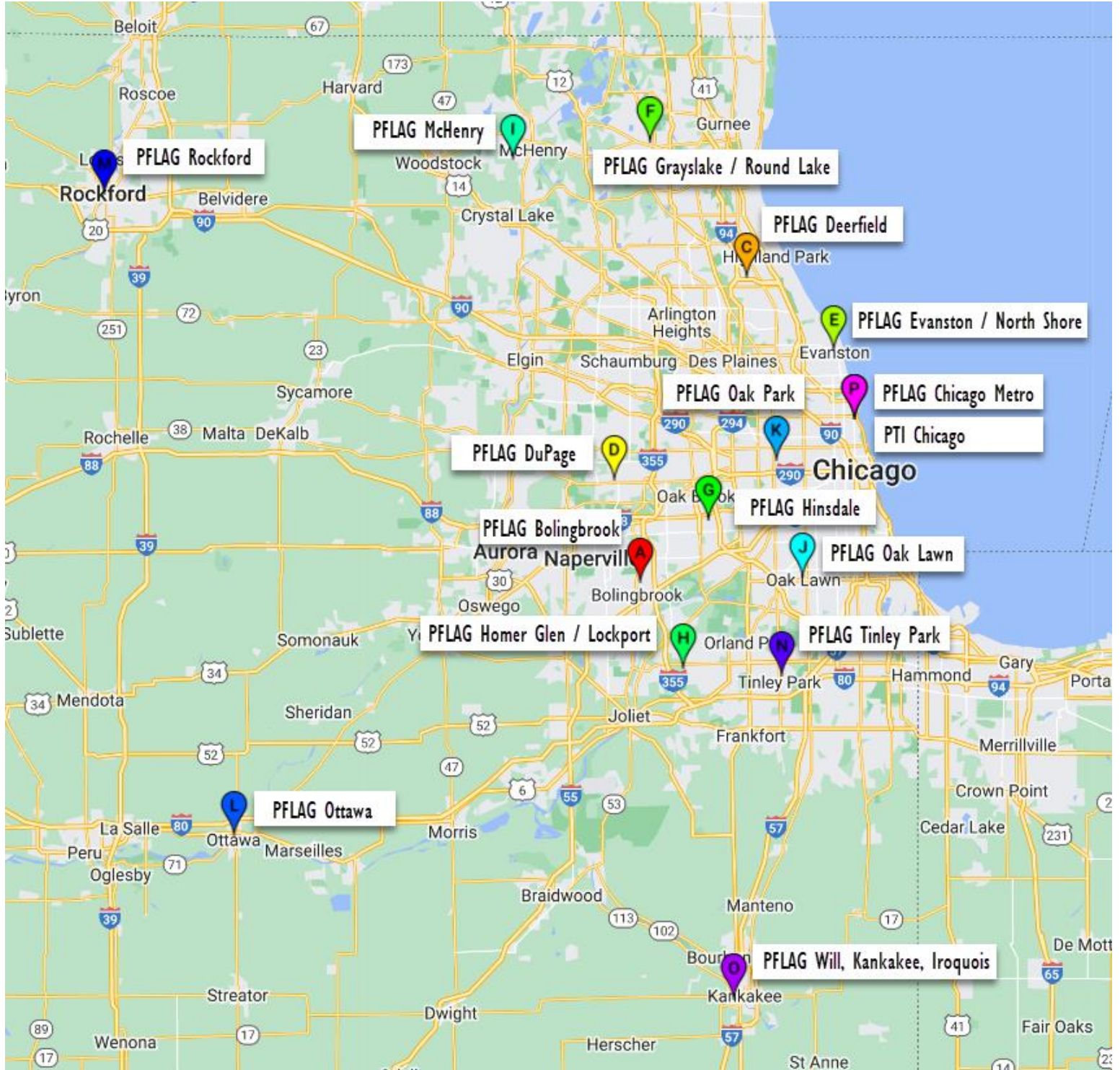
[BUY TICKETS HERE](#)

Survey for Activists

LGBTQ+ people and their allies are invited to participate in the survey *Motivators for Transgender and Gender Diverse Related Activism and Policy Action in the United States* approved by the Michigan State University Institutional Review Board. The survey takes 15 minutes and is anonymous with an option to also participate in a follow-up non-anonymous interview. Access the survey directly at tinyurl.com/tgdaactivismsurvey.



PFLAG Northern Illinois Chapters



Click/tap anywhere on the map to open it online and find meeting dates/times/locations. Some chapters are meeting online on Zoom, and some are returning to in-person meetings. Contact the chapter for details before your very first meeting and watch for chapter announcements if you are a member.

