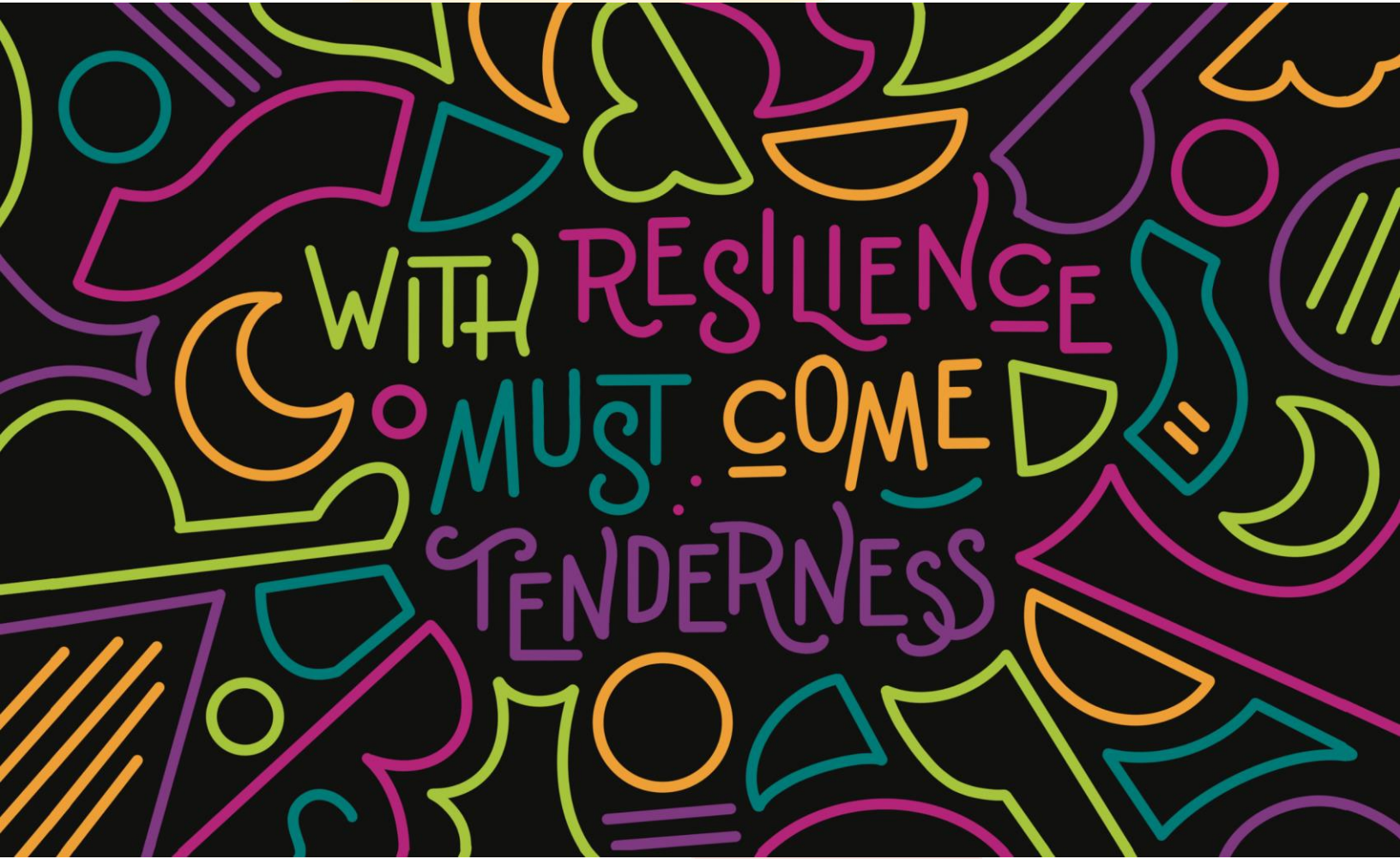


**PFLAG**

**COUNCIL OF  
NORTHERN ILLINOIS**



Art by Jae Lin – see pages 13-17

# Open Doors

**April 2023**

**[opendoors@pflagillinois.org](mailto:opendoors@pflagillinois.org)**

**CLICK TO SUBSCRIBE**

Pride T-Shirts 2, Vote 3, Calendar 3, Chapter Reports 5-10, Fashion 11, Art 13-17, LGBTQ+ Police 18-19, Events, Conferences, Film

# GET YOUR PRIDE T-SHIRTS

Pride Season is fast approaching, and we are busy preparing for numerous Pride events in our neighborhoods. You may already have your Pride gear: flags, T-shirts, accessories. With the rollout of new PFLAG branding this year, it's time to update our Pride wardrobe! I asked Tony Long, CEO of FashionBar Chicago and the wonderful host of our Power of Advocacy Conference last October, to create a T-shirt for PFLAG, and he has gifted us with a great design! The PCNI Branding Committee hopes that everyone attending the Chicago Pride Parade this June or suburban Pride Parades, Fests, and outreach events, will wear T-shirts or sweatshirts with this design, to show that we are the PFLAG Team. It's available in various styles and background colors.

**Please visit PCNI's new online store at [zazzle.com/s/pflagil](https://www.zazzle.com/s/pflagil) to customize and order your T-shirt.** To see only products with Tony Long's design, please use [this link](#).

Here are a few suggestions before you order your T-shirts:

- Pick a product in the store that has either dark teal font (works well with white and light color backgrounds) or white font (works with dark backgrounds) and then customize product style and background color if you like.
- Once you open a specific product page, you'll see customization options on the right side of the product image. **DON'T CLICK ON "Edit Design"**. Select other options in this order:
  - **Style** – if you like the style on the product image, then skip this step. Otherwise, click on "See more" in the Style section and select your desired product style from the menu.
  - **Color & Print Process** – if you like the background color on the product image, then skip this step. Otherwise, select a background color from available options.
  - **Size**. Note that some style/color combinations have fewer available sizes. Black and white basic T-shirts have the biggest choice of sizes.
  - **Quantity**.

Available in different colors and styles. Order today! →

- Before you click the "Add to cart" button, check the product image and make sure that you don't have dark teal font on a dark background or white font on white or a light color background. If necessary, change the style/color.

If you need help with this process, please email [opendoors@pflagillinois.org](mailto:opendoors@pflagillinois.org).

My personal favorite is **Sport-Tek white shirts** (activewear fabric, durable). Basic shirts (**dark**, **light**, and **white**) are less expensive, come in a great range of sizes, but may shrink a bit after the first wash. **Sweatshirts** are good for a colder weather.

Regular shirts have the largest image imprint area; V-necks and sweatshirts have the smallest.

Thank you, Tony Long, for creating this beautiful design for us! The fountain of colorful hearts reflects the spirit of PFLAG so well! We are **Leading With Love!**

*Andrew Zanevsky* (he/him/his)

President  
PFLAG Council of Northern Illinois



# VOTE! VOTE! VOTE!

April 4 will soon be here. The candidates we vote into office will profoundly affect the lives of our LGBTQ+ family and friends. Everyone thinks of the more visible offices such as mayor and city council. However, the offices we need to pay very close attention to are school and library boards.

Do you want people who will bar LGBTQ+ topics from being included in the curriculum? Do you want our libraries to be stripped of LGBTQ+-oriented books? Do you want Gender and Sexuality Alliances (GSA) to be banned from our schools? These boards have the authority to make such decisions.

Do your homework! Research the candidates. Check out [www.illinoisvoterguide.org](http://www.illinoisvoterguide.org). Read your local newspapers; read the letters to the editor; attend League of Women Voters forums. Ask questions. Become informed.

As members of PFLAG (a 501c3) we can't endorse candidates. We can't speak in the name of PFLAG. However, as individuals we can, and we will!

We've fought so long and so hard. Let's not give up the progress we've made. The fight is far from over.

**VOTE!**

## CALENDAR

**April 23**  
2-4pm – ALICE  
Training, Wheaton

**May 14 (Mother's Day)**  
Unconditional Love from  
PFLAG Parents at  
Sidetrack, Chicago

**June 3**  
Outreach Event at  
Maine West High  
School, Des Plaines

**June 3**  
12pm-3pm  
Lombard  
Pride Fest

**June 3**  
Elgin Pride  
Parade (10am)  
and Festival  
12pm-4pm

**June 4**  
11am - Buffalo  
Grove Pride  
Parade

**June 11**  
Noon - Aurora  
Pride Parade

**June 22**  
Carol Stream  
Pride Concert

**June 25**  
Chicago  
Pride Parade

**July 4**  
Wheaton 4th  
of July parade

**July 22**  
11am - 3pm  
PCNIC at  
Herrick Lake

**August**  
Youth Outlook  
Picnic

**September**  
Napier Pride  
Fest

**October 19-22**  
PFLAG National  
Convention,  
Washington DC

## FEDERAL MATTERS

**National suicide hotline bolsters LGBTQ+ program.** The U.S. Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA)-backed 988 Suicide and Crisis Lifeline is expanding its LGBTQ+ program to offer 24/7 text and chat services.

## STATE MATTERS

**Florida - Sixteen state Attorneys General criticized Gov. DeSantis for requesting private medical information on trans students.** The AGs wrote a letter criticizing Gov. Ron DeSantis for his administration asking public colleges in the state for data on their students undergoing gender-affirming care. The Florida office of Policy and Budget asked all public colleges in the state for information on where gender-affirming surgeries were provided and the number of treatments students received.

**Arkansas - Governor Sanders signs gender-affirming care ban law.** Sarah Huckabee Sanders signed SB199 on March 13th which would allow anyone who has received gender-affirming care as a minor to sue their doctor for malpractice within 15 years of them turning 18. The law will effectively ban gender affirming care for minors in the state again, following an injunction blocking enforcement of a gender-affirming care ban which became law in 2021.

**Arkansas - Governor Sanders signs anti-trans student bathroom ban.** She signed the ban into law on March 21st, making Arkansas the 4th state in the country to prevent trans people from using the bathroom that corresponds to their gender identity in K-12 public schools.

**Michigan - Michigan Senate passes bill to include SOGIE in state nondiscrimination protections.** SB 4 would amend the state's Elliott-Larsen Civil Rights Act to include sexual orientation, gender identity, and gender expression as protected classes. The bill is expected to pass in the House and signed into law by Governor Gretchen Whitmer.

**Washington, DC - City to host WorldPride in 2025.** The Capital Pride Alliance announced that the District was chosen to host WorldPride from May 22 to June 8, 2025. 2025 will mark 50 years of pride celebrations in DC.

## GLOBAL MATTERS

**Ukraine - LGBTQ+ Shelter helps queer refugees in Ukraine.** Over 90,000 British pounds have been raised for a shelter in Ukraine that gives housing and classes to LGBTQ+ people affected by the Russian invasion. According to the shelter's security manager's opinion, the year-long war has led to increased acceptance of the LGBTQ+ community from their fellow Ukrainians as solidarity of war overcomes societal prejudice.

## MEDIA MATTERS

**Short film with message of trans acceptance earns Oscar nomination.** *Night Ride* is a 14-minute Norwegian short film, and was the only explicitly LGBTQ+ film to be nominated in a short film category this year.

Click this image to watch the movie online:



This is a small sample of articles from Policy Matters, a weekly email publication by PFLAG National.

**Become a PFLAG member  
to receive the full newsletter:  
[pflagil.org/membership-and-donation/](https://pflagil.org/membership-and-donation/)**



# PFLAG

## EVANSTON

by Sara Keely McGuire

On August 20, 2021 - one day after my 45th birthday, my son revealed his true self to me and asked for a new name. It began a journey that would change our lives and create opportunities for things we never dreamed possible. While we hit the ground running, changed his name at school, and slowly announced our son to the rest of the world, we kept his wellbeing in the forefront of our minds. We followed his pace; we asked his permission, and we lifted him up as he truly blossomed. This was an incredible experience, "post" pandemic, to watch my child rise from silence into real exuberance. It was joyful and fulfilling. To watch my son "become" and to be a part of his finding his true self is a gift I cannot express my gratitude for; he is incredible.

There is another side to this, of course, and that is taking care of ourselves and myself – the other side of joy is fear. Not wishing to bestow my fears on him, my worry, or my grief, I sought help. I looked around for a PFLAG chapter and found a couple of meetings that were basically 45 minutes, equidistant from where I lived on the northernmost side of Chicago and where I work in Evanston. I felt a little at a loss, but am not one to give up. As things were opening, I wanted somewhere I could GO that would be easy. I spoke to a friend, and we started the PFLAG Evanston chapter together. We have been meeting as an executive board for just over a year, and we held our very first open meeting in June of 2022. As we build, we are encouraging folks from that wide swath to come together, celebrate, and support one another. This June, we will mark our first year of chapter-hood with a community event, inviting our LGBTQ+ support and advocacy groups to continue the great work of all. Please get in touch with [pflagevanston@gmail.com](mailto:pflagevanston@gmail.com) if you are interested in this event or our monthly—first-Tuesday chapter meetings.

# PFLAG

## HINSDALE

by Barb Medley

Our March meeting featured guest speaker Ben Greene, a trans international speaker educating others with kindness and empathy to empower active allies of the transgender community. Ben considers himself an educator and ally. He gave a Ted Talk called **Where are You Sitting?** He is a full-time traveling speaker the last several years, talking to groups, schools and individuals, including many PFLAG chapters. Everyone agreed he is an engaging and dynamic speaker who touched us with his presentation.

Ben began by reviewing the language and vocabulary surrounding gender. He then presented his chair analogy. When he came out at 15, he was open to educating others around him, and used a chair to aid in understanding, comparing a hard stool with a soft, cushioned chair. He said, "I am the same person sitting on the armchair as I was on the stool." Comfort level is different for everyone. When a loved one or friend comes out, he said understanding can come on day 50 or day 100, "as long as respect and love start the day."

His advice to parents struggling with their reactions is that if you have emotional issues when a loved one comes out, choose your words carefully because what you say can never be unheard. Rely on friends and groups like PFLAG to discuss your reactions and complicated feelings rather than burdening your loved one.

During our small group discussion following his presentation, we found Ben's emotional re-telling of his personal journey made us even more dismayed about the current battles we're fighting against hateful demonstrations, actions and legislation, and it increased our determination to be allies in every way we can. Ben's website is [www.bgtranstalks.com](http://www.bgtranstalks.com) and his email is [bgtranstalks@gmail.com](mailto:bgtranstalks@gmail.com).

Our April speaker will be our very own Max from our chapter, who will talk about her personal journey being transgender.

# PFLAG

PTI CHICAGO

by **Francey Oscherwitz**

In March, PTI Chicago gathered online with 18 participants—from local newcomers to folks from out-of-state—to confidentially share our stories, open our minds and hearts, and exchange support and resources. Thanks to the tireless efforts of board member Christine Peters, we began our meeting with a special screening of the joyfully optimistic, multi-award-winning 2021 animated short doc **Mama Has a Mustache**, which explores gender and family through the eyes of young children.

In the video introduction she recorded just for our group, filmmaker and university professor Sally Rubin described her

open have abruptly slammed shut. Schools often decline invitations to screen her film.

“Now is a scary time,” she said. “Many people don’t want to hear little kids talk about gender.” (You can view the trailer here. <https://vimeo.com/578932892>).

In the discussion that followed, one parent shared a painful conversation they had recently had with their 13-year-old child. “Do you even know what’s happening?” asked the child, referring to the daily blizzard of anti-trans legislation, hate speech, and attacks. “How come we never talk about it?”

There was a rare pause in our Zoom room as we each wondered: Have I ever initiated this crucial conversation with my child(ren)?

Many of us were stunned to realize the answer was No.

We carry the 24/7 burden of worry, outrage, and woundedness on our kids’ behalf. We commiserate with fellow adults at support meetings and in online groups. But it’s our brave gender explorers—not we—who live on the front lines. We all agreed: Whether they are big or little; “out” to the world or closeted in their room, our kids need

**“Do you even know what’s happening?” asked the [13-year-old] child, referring to the daily blizzard of anti-trans legislation, hate speech, and attacks. “How come we never talk about it?”**

creative process, the unique limitations posed by the pandemic lockdown, and her heartfelt sense of mission: to make people smile and “offer some lightness and fun to the national conversation.”

She neither intended nor expected her labor of love to inspire controversy. But in the two years since the documentary was completed, the tides have turned against transitioning children and their families. Doors once cracked

us to say *to them*, “I know this is a really scary time”—and then be ready and willing to have that conversation.

All are welcome on Zoom on the second Thursday of each month, including April 13th, 2023 from 7:00 p.m. to 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, nonbinary, 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](mailto:bill.guilfoile@gmail.com).

# PFLAG

## OAK PARK

by **Tara Chavez and Jane Zawadowski**

Hello from Oak Park! Our monthly meetings are still HYBRID so members have the choice to join remotely or in person. We've had some great turnout the last several meetings! We continue to welcome more parents of trans individuals than ever, and there is a major need to EXPAND our chapter!



PFLAG was a proud co-sponsor of **“Beyond the Binary: Creating Affirming Spaces for Trans and Gender-Expansive Individuals”** on Tuesday, March 14 for 2 hours. The Oak Park Area Gay & Lesbian Association (OPALGA+) also sponsored the event, which was held at Oak Park’s Brewpoint Craft.

**Hadeis Safi**, Manager and Educator of Community Programs from Lurie Children’s Hospital in Chicago, caught the attention of the full house of about 50 people with riveting slides and stories. Hadeis is full of experience themselves, having had a personal interest and having been an activist since they were 16 years old. With a warm heart and abundant, contagious positive energy, Hadeis

both educated and responded to emergent questions from the audience.



The group robustly engaged with the presentation and with each other, as community, in two break-outs. People were invited, first, to introduce themselves to the people around them for getting-to-know-you. The second invitation was to share ways they found themselves motivated to do something in their personal lives to make the world a better place for trans individuals.



What touched me most about the evening was that we noticed a need for education in the LGBTQ+ community, so that we can grow in our allyship practices for trans, nonbinary and gender expansive folks. And then we had organizational support and passionate supporters to make it happen - wow! From our local hospital that provides medical care for trans people, to the local coffee house that stayed open late to accommodate us, to our beloved PFLAG and **OPALGA** who very much showed up, it



felt it was an empowering evening on individual and systemic levels. Oh, and the vegan trans cupcakes were ah-mazing.

There is a series of events being planned, so please contact [jane.freedomwith@gmail.com](mailto:jane.freedomwith@gmail.com) if you'd like to get involved. We can make cool, important things happen for and with trans and cis people alike, and we hope you might take away some of this feeling of inspiration for transformation.

Looking to the future, we have been in touch with **Ben Greene**, a transgender activist, educator, and resource. **He is available to speak via Zoom at our April 23rd meeting.** This is going to be an exciting opportunity for all members of the community! If you are interested in joining remotely via Zoom to attend the special presentation, please reach out to our Chapter President, Phil Kroker at [pflagoakpark@pflagillinois.org](mailto:pflagoakpark@pflagillinois.org)

Want to feel inspired? Check out Ben's website: <https://www.bgtranstalks.com/> and this **Ted Talk Video (HIGHLY RECOMMENDED):** <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=u9F8WvUSgr4>



We will once again offer the hybrid option at our next meeting, held every fourth Sunday at First United Church of Oak Park, 848 Lake St, Oak Park, IL 60301.

**Our next Hybrid (in person and via Zoom) meeting will be on March 26th from 3 - 5 pm. If you are unable to make this meeting, our next one is scheduled for April 23rd from 3 - 5 pm. Mark your calendars!**

**Publish your artworks, photography, essays, poetry, movie and book reviews in Open Doors:**  
[opendoors@pflagillinois.org](mailto:opendoors@pflagillinois.org)

# PFLAG DEERFIELD

## by Sue Ginsburg

We were honored to welcome **Julio Flores**, the Associate Director of Development at Howard Brown Health, Broadway Youth Center (BYC).

BYC is the Youth section of Howard Brown, which serves youth from ages 12-24 years of age. Its aim is to improve the life experiences for the homeless and underserved youth, which includes health care and social services. It is located at 1023 W. Irving Park Rd. in Chicago. While it doesn't provide over-night facilities, it is open from 9:00 am to 3:00 pm and provides fresh clothing, showers, something to eat, a place to nap, medical services and primary care. It is the largest drop-in program, providing a sanctuary to get off the streets.

Its social services are many.

- Education and employment: GED program; college assistance; resume help
- Behavioral Health Service: individual therapy; gender affirming surgery
- Medical services
- Trans and non-binary programming; small group sessions
- Youth development: basic needs, food, shelter, laundry

Julio emphasized that BYC's guidelines are simple: Respect for others; and it is a hate free zone! While some youth show up at their worst, BYC is at its best with compassion for all. It uses art therapy, dance, self-care, and empathy to help those who walk through their doors reach a better place in their lives and move forward. With leaders like Julio, who is getting his BA in Behavioral Studies, BYC is an amazing place for those who need help.



# PFLAG DUPAGE

by **Bonnie Clemens**

## Monthly Meeting

PFLAG DuPage had another great meeting in March with over 30 people in attendance!

Our speaker was Attorney Brad Dembs J.D., from the law firm Matt Cohen & Associates. Brad spoke to us about his practice ensuring children's rights with emphasis on Special Education, Disability Rights & Human Services Law. Brad's firm is seeing an increasing number of cases around the rights of LGBTQ+ youth, often in the context of school.

Brad is planning a resource event for next fall that would include families, social workers, health care providers, teachers and others. He solicited us for ideas and thoughts on this event. We had a lively discussion about topics that could be addressed and about our past experiences with what has worked best.

In addition, Brad answered a few questions that people had about how the law protects LGBTQ+ youth. Some of the questions were about effective ways to achieve resolution of problems happening in the schools or other establishments. He reminded us of the importance of documentation as a first step in any conflict – that is, keeping a log of any interactions between the parties (meetings, discussions, emails) including names, dates and what was said.

## Naper Pride Health & Resource Fair

Last Saturday, members of PFLAG DuPage manned a table at Naper Pride's 2nd Annual Health and Wellness Fair. The fair was a great success with 70 vendors participating! Here's a link to a short news video supplied by Naperville News 17 (NCTV17) with shout outs from Congressman Bill Foster (D-IL), local clergy, and local mental health providers.

## You're Invited!

Lastly, a reminder to all that PFLAG DuPage is hosting ALICE training in April. This training is open to all PFLAG attendees

from chapters under PCNI. We have over fifteen people signed up so far with plenty of space for more.

## ALICE Training

**Sunday, April 23rd 2:00-4:00pm**

**By Wheaton Police department**

ALICE is a verified training program that gives citizens options when encountered with aggressive intruder or active shooter to increase their chances of survival.

**Sign Up Here:** <https://signup.com/go/MVyadTq>

# PFLAG TINLEY PARK

by **Diane Kaffka**

PFLAG Tinley Park participated in an event at Carl Sandburg High School in Orland Park called **You Matter**. It highlighted services available to high school students in the community. PFLAG and other groups set up tables and spoke to some of the local students. We had a lot of our usual giveaways like pens, stickers, and buttons, which are always a hit.



Kathy and Ray Watters at the **You Matter** event

# PFLAG

## HOMER GLEN / LOCKPORT

by **Michelle Eckmayer**

### Happy Spring from PFLAG Homer Glen Lockport!

Some of our members met in January to help plan the upcoming year's meetings and events. I am excited to have new volunteers for a variety of different positions within our chapter. We now have a social media coordinator, a new secretary, a meeting topic/idea planner, our outstanding treasurer, and myself coming together as a team. I am also extremely grateful for Ray & Kathy King-Watters from PFLAG Tinley Park who have joined us and they add so much to our meetings. I am very excited to see how everyone's gifts can continue

to breathe life into our chapter.

In January, we came together and had an after-holiday regroup/discussion. We have had some new faces and during our planning meeting we decided whenever we meet, we will offer our regular topic for the month but also offer a smaller, separate, more intimate group for people who need to share where they are on their journey and can feel free to do that without hurting other members.

We are trying to be respectful and meet people where they are.

In February, Guardian Angel Community Services in Joliet joined us. They gave an excellent presentation about their organization and led a discussion on "Building Supportive Communities, Sexual Violence, Prevention Education, and You." It was extremely informative and they were filled with a variety of different resources.

In March, we had a special guest speaker, Ben Greene. Ben is an

Educator, Activist & Resource for the transgender community. Ben does LGBTQ+ Inclusion Consulting, speaking, and storytelling, and offers family and allyship support. Ben has spoken at many PFLAG meetings and you can check out his website at [www.bgtranstalks.com](http://www.bgtranstalks.com).

Lastly, our chapter has decided instead of having our annual Pride in the Parking Lot family event in June we will be having a **Friday Night Bingo** fundraiser with a guest comedian and our wonderful friend, Miss Lucy Foozie will be our amazing leader.

**Save the date for a fun night out, Friday, June 30th.**



## Unconditional Love from PFLAG Parents

**PFLAG is returning to the storied gay bar Sidetrack in Chicago on May 14<sup>th</sup>, with its Mother's Day fundraiser.**

Deb Smollen, the leader/organizer of the fundraiser team, has written:

I would like to take a minute to thank all of the volunteers who were able to sign up for our Mother's Day event. As of today, we have filled all of the time slots. For those who are new to this event, our presence and support is very appreciated by the patrons of Sidetrack. I will see everyone soon!

# The Power of Fashion: Part 2 - The Beauty of an Audience!

by **Ann McAuliffe**

Hello, Fashion Aficionados! **Chicago's Fashion Week** is happening in April!

On March 14th, I had the pleasure of attending Vernita Gray Council for Philanthropy (VGC) Meeting at Howard Brown's Sunnyside location on the north side of Chicago. The evening event was a panel discussion featuring Tony Long, CEO of FashionBar Chicago and founder of Trans Media Fashion, a Fashion Designer, 2 HBH Board members, 4 models, and HBH staff members. The topic was a "behind the scenes" peek showcasing the development of the Trans Media Fashion concept.

There was a lively discussion about current events including the wave of anti-trans legislation facing the LGBTQ+ community. One of the most profound panel responses to how Allies can support their Trans loved ones and the broader community came down to 3 simple but powerful actions we can all do:

- 1) Speak UP
- 2) Listen UP
- 3) Keep the "T" in the LGBTQ+ conversation.

For many of the TGNB models, they could barely dare to dream of being a model or walking in a fashion show. They had never seen anyone who looked like them gracing the fashion runways. Being a model seemed like mission impossible. At Tony's first show with Trans and Nonbinary models, there were 20 people in the audience. At the second show, there were over 300 audience members. The message was loud and clear: Visibility Matters. The current generation of models are an inspiration to younger TGNB children and teens who now know they can follow their dreams!

It's up to us to do our part – we need to Show UP. Please join me to celebrate the models who are living their dream walking the runways of a major metropolitan event. Beauty deserves to have an audience!

The Spring Trans Media Fashion Show, press event and cocktail party happens on April 27th at Water Tower Place. Registration details and discounted ticket information are included below.

## Trans Media Fashion

Apr. 27 | 6-9pm | Water Tower Place

Join us for Chicago Fashion Week powered by FashionBar in partnership with Howard Brown Health to showcase trans and nonbinary models to highlight the fluidity of fashion. *25% ticket sales go to Howard Brown's Broadway Youth Center.*

### Get Tickets

Photos: [April 2022](#) | [October 2022](#)

\*Use **TRANS2023** promo code for 25% discount off the ticket price for **General Admission**. [share with your network!]





# Trans Youth & Family Summit

by Sue Ginsburg, Marjie Howard,  
Ann McAuliffe

On a beautiful Sunday morning in March, we attended the 5th Annual Trans Youth & Family Summit 2023 hosted by Youth Services, in Glenview, Illinois. The theme for this year's summit was "Metamorphosis" – a fitting theme in celebration of our Trans loved ones and the arrival of Spring. It was a sold-out event with over 100 families in attendance. The focus was truly on families: there were 18 concurrent educational sessions spread out over 3 sections each lasting 1 hour. There was something for everyone – Youth only, Adults only, General sessions as well as games & icebreakers, childcare & a youth activities space for the younger set.

A wide range of engaging topics were presented including Gender Support Plans, Nonbinary Identities, Estradiol 101, Testosterone 101, Trans-centered Puberty, Trans Affirming Sex Ed, Talking with your Child about their Gender Journey, Navigating Mental Health Systems to name a few. One of the many highlights was the "Parents of Trans Adults Panel". Our PFLAG Ambassadors showed up in a big way to share their family's journey, lessons learned and sage advice as their young person has fully evolved to adulthood. We were impressively represented by Michelle Eckmayer (Homer Glen / Lockport), Deb Smollen (Hinsdale) & Andrew Zanevsky (PCNI).

After lunch, PFLAG Deerfield participated in a Resource Fair of community partners. It was wonderful to be back in person with our colleagues from Center on Halsted, Glenview Public Library, Howard Brown's Minor Youth Hormone Program, The Juniper Center, One Medical, Illinois Safe Schools Alliance, TJLP (Transformative Justice Law Project) & Youth Outlook.

We are so grateful to partner with Youth Services of Glenview / Northbrook to support our PFLAG families ages 4 to 24 in addition to all the other mental & community health services they provide. Without you, our children, adolescents and young adults would not be safe, celebrated, empowered & loved for all that they are.

Youth Services – we stand with you in Pride & Solidarity!



# Jae Lin

Designer, Hand-Lettering Artist | Austin, Texas

## Interview by Ann McAuliffe

With buoyant artwork and typography, nonbinary artist Jae Lin is acting as a beacon of positivity and progress. “My work focuses on trans liberation, loving affirmations and acknowledging the possibility for post-traumatic growth and healing within all of us,” they say. “I also draw cute bunnies sometimes.” Lin said they've become part of “an amazing queer trans art community in Austin,” which has only bolstered the fact that, for them, making art is “a lifeline.” Lin creates all their lettering with ink, marker and brush pens on paper before incorporating digital design and illustration, and all of it feeds their mission to uplift. “I hope I can play a small part in subverting narratives around trans and queer stories, which often focus on how much we suffer and hate ourselves and our bodies,” Lin said. “We also have so much growing, blossoming and flourishing in our stories.”

Jae Lin is the hand lettering artist behind **Doodle Me Alive**, which features affirmations, cute illustrations and other creative projects for trans liberation.

**Contact:** [doodlemealive@gmail.com](mailto:doodlemealive@gmail.com)  
[www.doodlemealive.com/press](http://www.doodlemealive.com/press)  
[@doodlemealive](https://www.instagram.com/doodlemealive)  
[doodlemealive.etsy.com](https://www.etsy.com/shop/doodlemealive)



## Interview

**Open Doors:** How did you discover your passion for hand lettering & doodles?

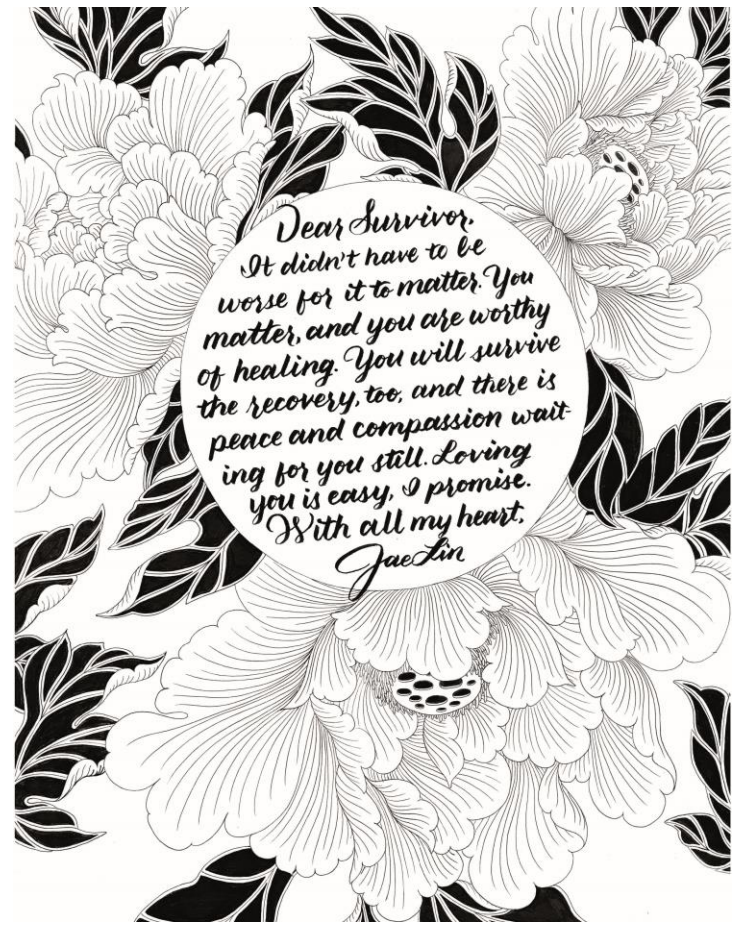
**Jae Lin:** I feel like I've been doing this all my life. I remember being an angsty middle-schooler doodling my favorite song lyrics into discarded books. I practiced calligraphy for a while, but eventually I really fell into step with brush lettering. I've also just loved literature and writing and words for as long as I can remember; an avid reader my whole life, I feel so connected to the power of language. It has just always felt like a part of the art I want to make.



**OD:** So many of your works embody “Affirmations”. Can you tell us why these positive themes are so central to your work?

**JL:** Affirmations were the thing that "clicked" for me when I finally started going to therapy after years of suffering through depression and trauma without understanding what was happening to me. I actually think of them as a shift away from "staying positive" and towards validating the real challenges we have, affirming our capacity for healing, brilliance, power, and peace.

**OD:** I’ve noticed your doodles utilize few words, but have a Big impact... for example, “Hope is a discipline”. Where do you draw inspiration from?



[Survivor Love Letter →](#)

[Music is Love in search of a Word ↓](#)





**JL:** That's one of my favorite recent designs! That one is a quote from Mariame Kaba, who is a brilliant abolitionist and transformative justice thinker, leader, creator, writer. My life is so steeped in social justice work; nothing I do is apart from the values and visioning I hold for a better world. Naturally, so much of my inspiration comes from things I read, art and music I surround myself with, and my own continuing journey of healing and self-discovery.

**OD:** Art may deliver a political statement, entertainment, education; it may shock, inspire, anger, fill with love or cause any other emotion. What effect do you want your artworks to have in the world?

**JL:** I want my art to pull stories, memories, connections, and all the emotions that come along with it, out of people. I absolutely relish the moments where someone tells me a funny, awkward, or touching story. Maybe they brought a sticker of mine with a queer reference to put on their water bottle, and a coworker recognized it, so they



↑ Happiness is not a station you arrive at, but a manner of traveling



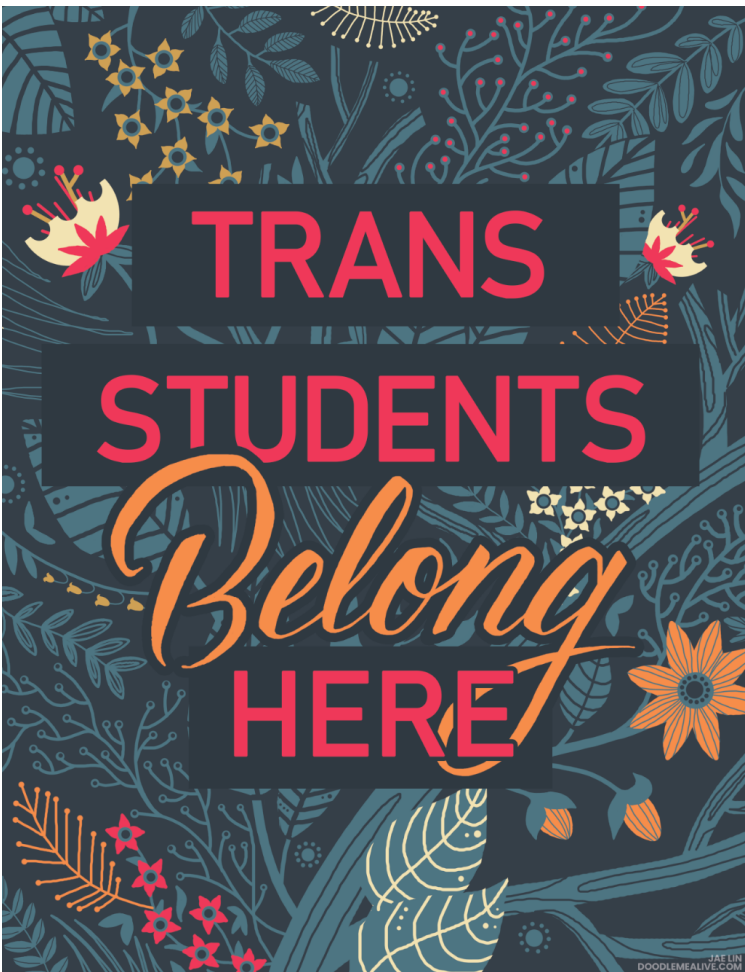
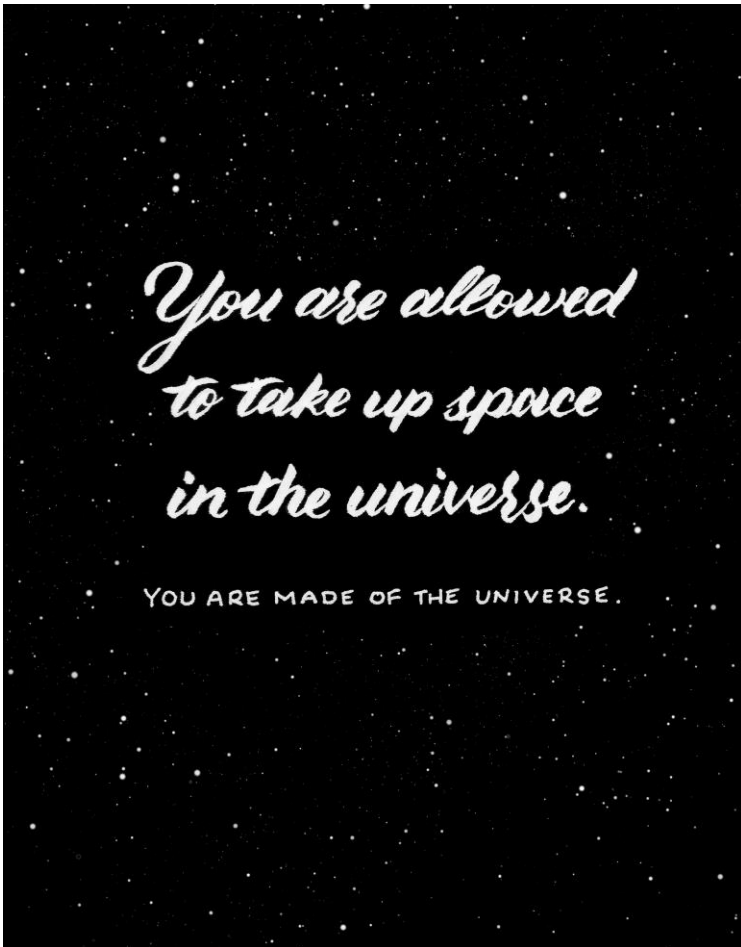
↑ Cultivate Kindness (color poster)

← If your compassion does not include yourself, it is incomplete



Hugs not Hate ↑

You are allowed to take up space in the universe ↓



Trans students belong here ↑

were able to find a queer friend in the workplace. Or maybe my graphite drawing reminded them of their father, who used to love piano. Or maybe they used some of my stickers to drop hints as they were coming out. Or maybe someone is putting together a care package for a loved one's transition. That's the spark that sets me alight.

**OD:** Does Austin provide a good environment for a creative LGBTQ+ person?

**JL:** Yes! Something I love about being Queer and Texan is just how vibrant our communities are in the South. In 2016, I helped start Gender Unbound, a trans and intersex art festival, that featured local artists; by 2019, we had international headliners, talent, and artists from all over the world in our gallery and on our stage. I've also hosted biweekly Queer Art Nights since 2016, and in the past few years so many more craft, writing, music, and other creative meet ups and groups have started up and meet



regularly with lots of attendance and enthusiasm. There's something to do, somewhere to be, every week to meet other queer creatives in Austin, peruse art markets, and attend lively performances.

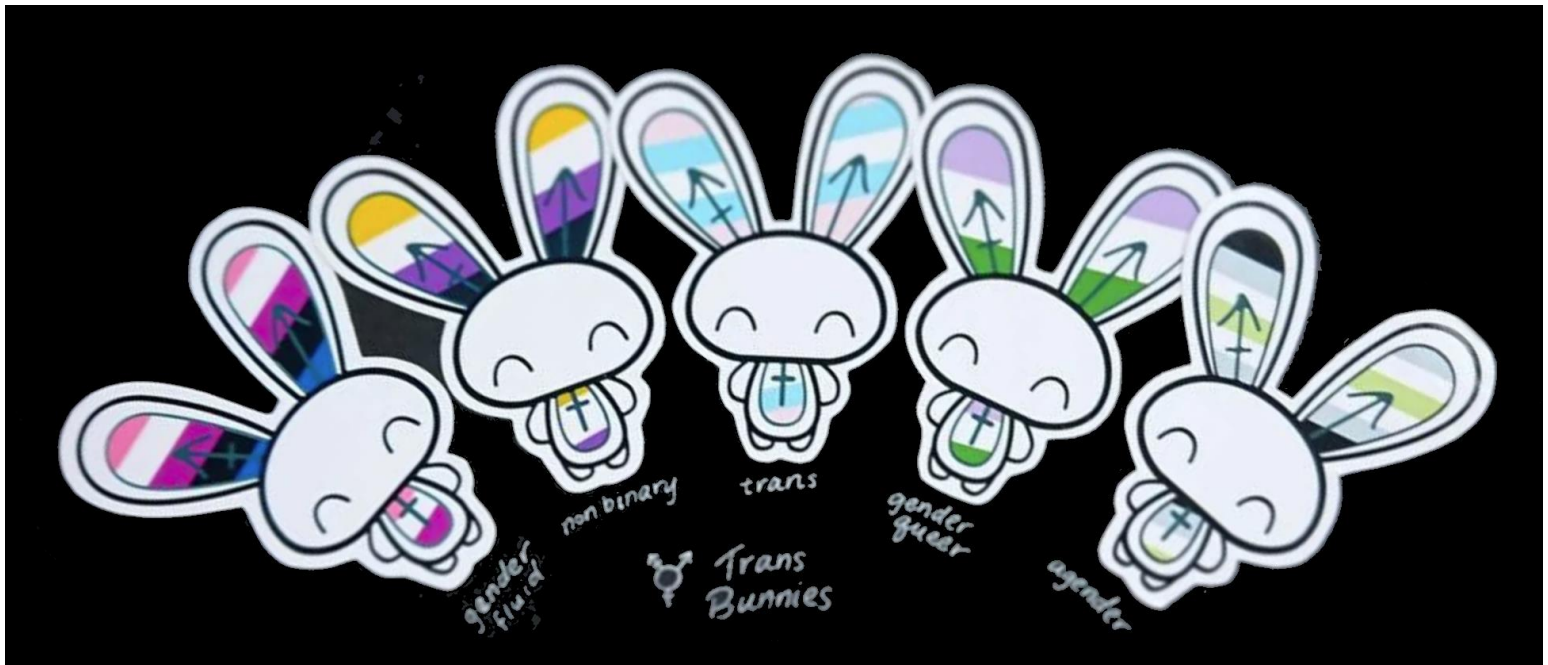
The legislature and political climate of Texas has become notoriously toxic towards transgender people, which directly contributes to hostile environments and restriction of access to life-affirming care for so many trans folks, especially students. However, there are so many incredible advocates fighting for us, not only in the legislative realm, but also in organizing the community to try and make sure that LGBTQ+ people in Austin are safe, celebrated, and connected. While the political spectacle in Texas is a reflection of the country's cultural trend towards fascism, it's not reflective of the magnificent queer and trans people who live and thrive here, or the spaces, art, and joy we create.

**OD:** How do you nurture your soul in challenging times?

**JL:** I snuggle my cats. I go somewhere in nature that makes me feel small and makes my problems feel small. I laugh with my friends. I marvel at the big Texas sky. I go to therapy. I play on my piano. I kiss my partners. I let my tears flow. I make art. I thank the beautiful things in the world. ♥



↑ Bunnies against Biphobia ↓





# LGBTQ+ in the Police Force

**Interview with Angie Pogue (she/her)  
by Maddie Barrett (she/her)**

**Tell me about your family.**

I have a family of four. My wife Jamie and I have seven-year-old twins, Francesca and Isaiah. Francesca loves doing pageants, and currently holds the title of Personality Supreme in the National Star-Jewel Pageants. Isaiah loves to do hair and has been doing hair styles since he was 2 years old. His Momma Jamie is a stylist and is currently teaching him how to style and cut hair.

**What do you do for a living and how long have you been working in the field?**

I am the N1 shift Commander for the Waukegan Police Department. I have been employed by the City of Waukegan, as a police officer for 17.5 years. I have been a Commander since July 2022. Prior to becoming a Commander, I worked in several different capacities. I was in the S.I.G Unit (Significant Incident Group), which was a plain-clothes street crimes unit. I spent several years in the Neighborhood Policing Unit, and on patrol. I have been a Field training Officer for 15 years and have trained several new police officers over my career.

**Why did you decide to become a police officer?**

Growing up, I watched many detective/cop shows with my dad. I always loved the fast pace of the shows and was always excited to see the characters catch the “bad guys”. Police work seemed natural to me, and I made my decision when I was 20 years old. At 20 years old, I became a Community Service Officer for the Waukegan Police Department. CSOs, are non-sworn personnel, whose jobs, consist of taking non felony police reports, assisting in the jail, and responding on the road to non-emergency situations, such as parking complaints, and disabled vehicles.

**How do you live your authentic self?**

How do I live my authentic self? That is a good, but tough question. I guess I would say, I always live my truth, and the truth of my family. I never hide who I am for anybody. I am proud to be a wife to Jamie, a mom to my kids, and parishioner at my church. I do not sacrifice my identity to get ahead or to please others. I know that living free and proud, gives me peace.



**What sort of resources are available from the Waukegan Police Departments to support the LGBTQ+ community?**

The Waukegan Police Department has a Peer Support Program, that allows officers to reach out to select peers, who are trained in offering support and guidance. This is a confidential program, that often times officers use, because they do not feel comfortable to seek help from medical professionals, such as therapists or psychologists. There is also a program that offers free assistance from mental health specialists. I have never felt discriminated against, but only

supported in my career. The City of Waukegan celebrates Pride month, by posting flags all around the downtown area, and also has a parade every year.

### Do you have any artistic talents or athletic abilities?

As far as artistic talents, my kids would say I could be a cartoonist. I love that they love my drawings, but I would equate my artistic abilities, to those of a 5th grader. I love to sing, but I do not play any instruments. I have been playing sports since I could walk. I started playing basketball with my day, when I was barely big enough to hold the ball. I played basketball, soccer, and golf in high school. I continue to play golf now, but gave up soccer a few years ago, because of the high risk of injury. With my job, I can't afford to have a physical injury.

### What advice would you give to a parent to help them be a supportive Ally?

I would tell parents, to always support your children. When it comes to the LGTBQ youth, they have a far greater risk to attempt or complete suicide, than any other group. Most kids who struggle, go unseen, they hide it from their friends and loved ones. Make sure you talk to your kids; make sure they feel your unconditional love. A hug goes a long way.

## FUTURE OUTLOOK: Providing Affirming & Inclusive Space for LGBTQ+ Youth



April 14, 2023  
8:00 AM to 3:30PM  
Northern Illinois University, DeKalb

Join us for an interactive conference designed to enhance and expand your skillset for engaging LGBTQ+ young people.

Perfect for Educators, Mental and Physical Health Professionals, and anyone working with LGBTQ+ youth. CEUs and CDPUs are available.

### CONFERENCE TOPICS INCLUDE

- Gender Identity & Affirming Care for LGBTQ+ Youth
- A Neurodiversity Diagnosis in LGBTQ+ Youth
- BIPOC LGBTQ+ Youth & Families
- LGBTQ+ Trauma and Self-care
- Eating Disorders in the LGBTQ+ Community
- Grief Within the LGBTQ+ Community

### NETWORKING & RESOURCE FAIR

Network with other professionals and discover helpful local resources. Affirming and inclusive organizations can discover resource fair and sponsorship opportunities here.

### REGISTRATION & FEES

Register today for special early-bird pricing!

- Professionals: \$150 \$125 until March 17
- Students and interns: \$100 \$75 until March 17  
must have a .edu email address



PROVIDED BY A GENEROUS COMMUNITY EDUCATION GRANT FROM  
THE DEKALB COUNTY MENTAL HEALTH BOARD

# PFLAG ACADEMY ONLINE



PFLAG Academy Online is a benefit of PFLAG National membership, so visit [pflag.org/pflag-academy-online](https://pflag.org/pflag-academy-online) and check out all of the great learning offerings!



Registration is NOW OPEN  
Register by May 1<sup>st</sup> for Early Bird Pricing!

The Professionals' Symposium is designed for individuals who serve transgender, non-binary, and otherwise gender-expansive youth and/or their families. Participants engage in programming and acquire resources designed to build their capacity to support families and young people around issues of gender.

**BUY TICKETS NOW**

# James Klise and Kim Oclon at the Gerber/Hart Library

Local young adult authors James Klise and Kim Oclon will discuss their queer historical fiction novels at the Gerber/Hart Library. Hear how their various research methods played a part in shaping their stories, their characters, and making the past come alive.

Date: **Saturday, May 6th**

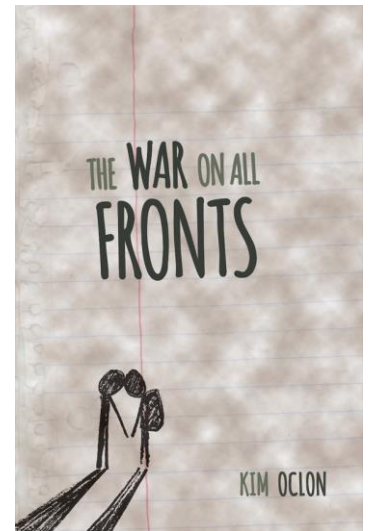
Time: **1:00 pm**

Address: **6500 N Clark Street, 2nd Floor  
Chicago, IL 60626**

James' novel: **I'LL TAKE EVERYTHING YOU HAVE** is a vivid portrayal of queer coming of age in Depression-era Chicago, and a timeless story of trying to make your future bright when the rest of the world is dead set on keeping it in the dark.

Kim's novel: **THE WAR ON ALL FRONTS** focuses on how the relationship between two young men is further tested when one enlists in the Army to fight in the Vietnam War and the other gets an education in the antiwar movement at the University of Wisconsin.

Open Doors published an excerpt from THE WAR ON ALL FRONTS in the [April 2022 issue](#) on pages 10-11.



## THE LIST



**a resource website for trans+ folk  
and the people who support them:**

**[www.thelistforus.com](http://www.thelistforus.com)**

## RESEARCH STUDY

**Families, Adoption, and Diversity Lab** at the University of Kentucky is recruiting volunteers for a study titled the **Q-PAL Project** (Queer Parent and Adolescent Lives).

Looking for adolescents ages 12 to 18 years old with an LGBTQ+ parent as well as LGBTQ+ parents with an adolescent age 12 to 18 years old to participate.

Participants will be compensated with \$100 (adolescents) and \$65 (parents) digital Amazon gift cards.

**[Q-PAL Study Invitation and Information](#)**



# RELIGION & LGBTQ+

## 2023 PARENT & FAMILY SUMMIT

Parents, pastors, and LGBTQ+ people pour their wisdom and experience into the lives of Summit attendees. These teachers, ministers, and leaders will help facilitate the weekend together on May 5-7 at Fourth Presbyterian Church in Chicago, IL.



<https://www.qchristian.org/parents Summit>

Also see [Affirmation Guide for Trans & Gender-Expansive Identities](#), featuring Taj Smith. This Guide is designed to counter the idea that transgender and gender-expansive people cannot be Christians. It is also meant to support anyone who is and/or loves someone who is transgender.

Whether you are trans, gender-expansive, or aspiring toward allyship, this Affirmation Guide aims to help you find resources for spiritual comfort and affirmation.

# PFLAG CONNECTS: COMMUNITIES



<https://pflag.org/connects-communities/>

# STRAIGHT FOR EQUALITY



straight  
FOR  
equality

Inclusion. Education.  
Allyship.

We provide interactive and engaging learning sessions, resources, programs, and more for allies committed to creating diverse, equitable, inclusive, and accessible workplaces and communities.



<https://straightforequality.org/>




# CENTER ON 3656 N. HALSTED

**art GALLERY OPENING**

**CENTER ON 3656 N. HALSTED**

Friday, April 7th 6:30PM TO 8:30PM



**Ros a Crean** **Jim McNamee**

3656 N HALSTED \$5 SUGGESTED DONATION • CASH BAR [centeronhalsted.com/art-gallery.html](http://centeronhalsted.com/art-gallery.html)

**CAMPSONGS PRODUCTIONS** In Partnership With **CENTER ON 3656 N. HALSTED**

**HOUSE MUSICAL**

SIDE A 33.3 RPM

COMING OF AGE IN THE AGE OF HOUSE

BOOK BY **MARCUS WALLER** MUSIC BY **SCOTT FREE** WITH **MICHAEL FOLEY** LYRICS BY **SCOTT FREE & MARCUS WALLER**

Book by **MARCUS WALLER**  
Music by **SCOTT FREE** with **MICHAEL FOLEY**  
Lyrics by **SCOTT FREE** and **MARCUS WALLER**  
Directed by **DION WALTON**

**APRIL 20-30**

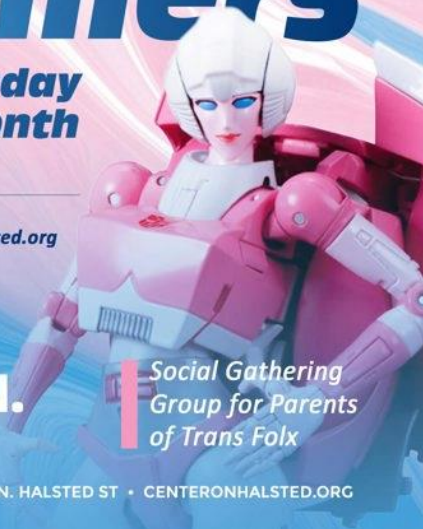
**HOOVER-LEPPEN THEATRE**  
3656 N HALSTED CHICAGO, IL  
THURSDAYS THRU SUNDAYS 7:30PM

BUY TICKETS AT [CENTERONHALSTED.ORG/HOUSEMUSICAL.HTML](http://CENTERONHALSTED.ORG/HOUSEMUSICAL.HTML)

**TRANS Formers**

**Third Thursday of Every Month 6:30pm**

RSVP to Luke Romesberg  
[LRomesberg@centeronhalsted.org](mailto:LRomesberg@centeronhalsted.org)



**CENTER ON 3656 N. HALSTED**


Social Gathering Group for Parents of Trans Folk

CENTER ON HALSTED • 3656 N. HALSTED ST • [CENTERONHALSTED.ORG](http://CENTERONHALSTED.ORG)

**CENTER ON 3656 N. HALSTED**

**CLINICAL WORK**

with **LGBTQ+** clients



VARIOUS DATES • 10AM – 12PM  
[CENTERONHALSTED.ORG/CLINICIAN-TRAINING.HTML](http://CENTERONHALSTED.ORG/CLINICIAN-TRAINING.HTML)

BEHAVIORAL HEALTH VIRTUAL PROVIDED TRAINING

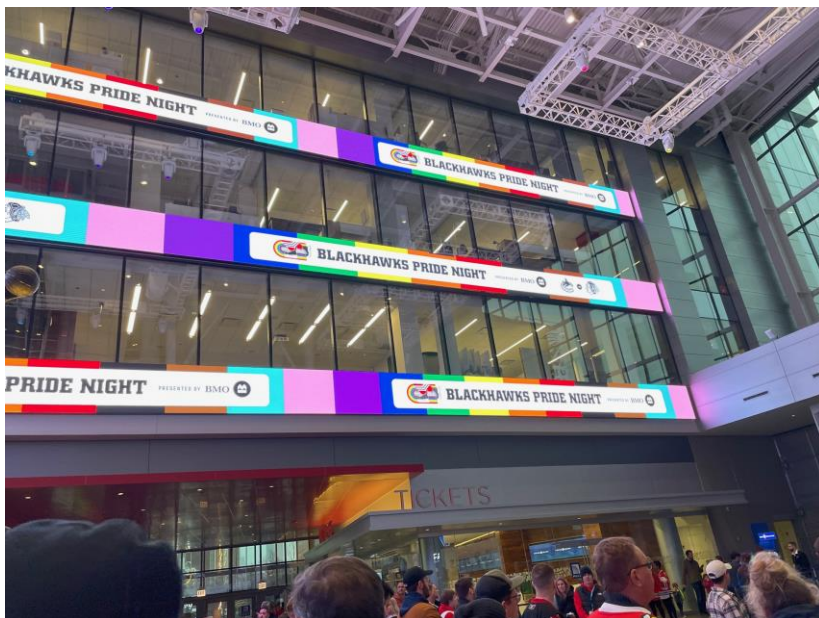


# Pride Night at Chicago Blackhawks

reported by Jodi Zavos



Chicago Gay Men's Chorus







**Pride Film Fest streams new LGBTQ films year-round. Discounts for members!**

<https://pridefilm.org/>



**THE BLESSED BOYS from Italy streams March 29 to April 9**



**BEST OF THE FESTS - April 5 to 16**

Films include UNTIL THEN, BREATHE, LEO AT NIGHT, CHRISTOPHER AT SEA, MOTTA, PRAYERS FOR SWEET WATER, TANK FAIR, and DAS DING

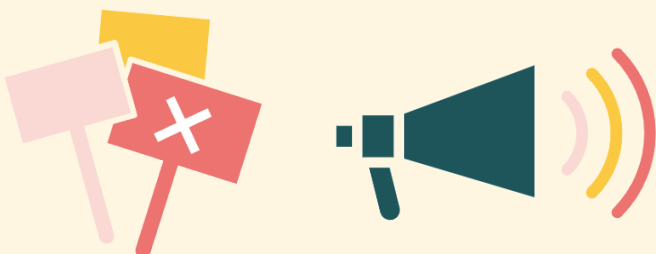


**BEST OF PRIDE FILM FEST SHORTS - April 26 to May 7**

Five short films, including Peer, Rearview, Virgin My Ass, Face Time, and The World is Lit By Lightning

# TAKE ACTION:

[CLICK HERE](#)



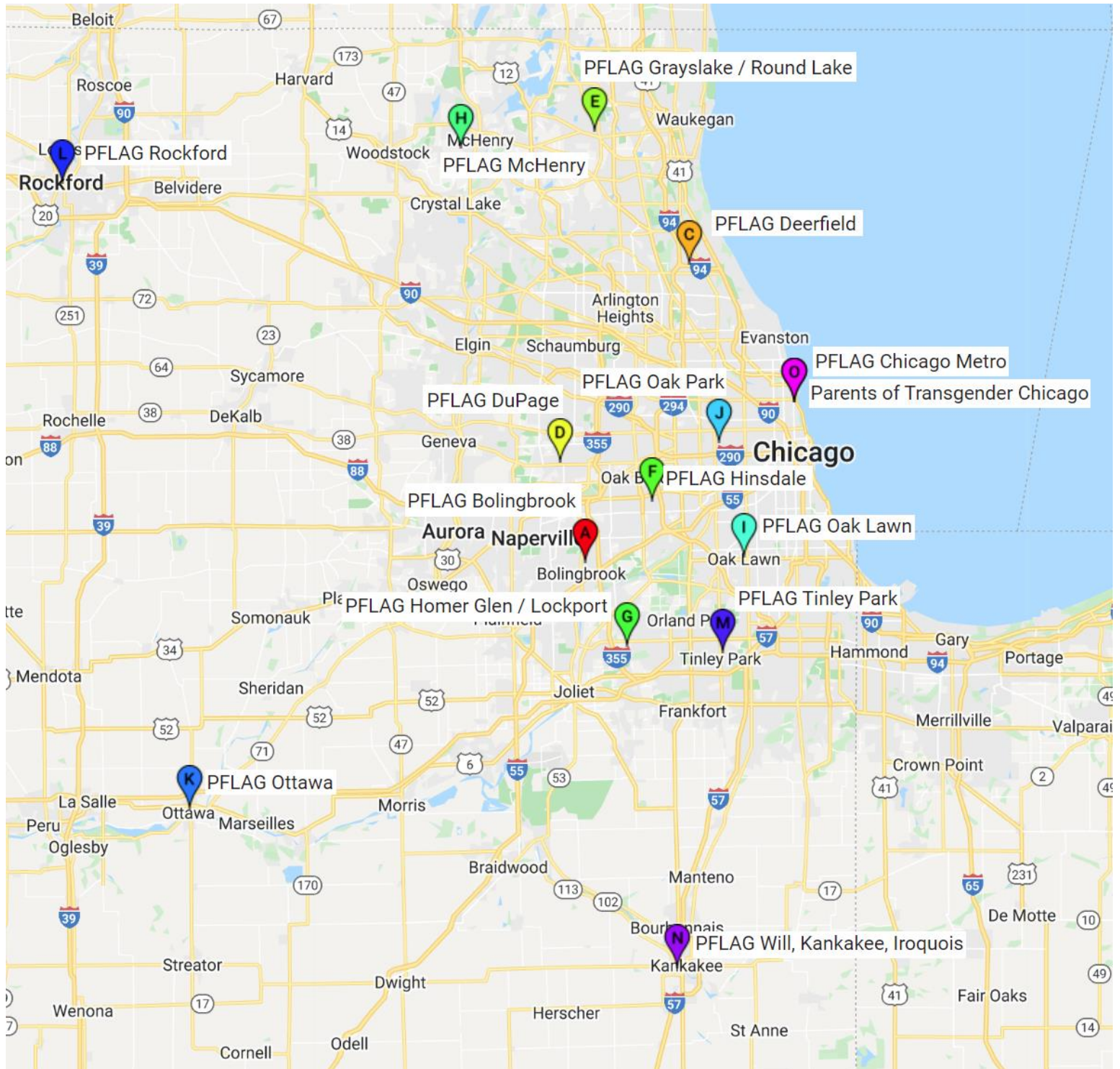
**SHOW UP. SPEAK UP!**

## TAKE ACTION

**DEMAND CULTURAL COMPETENCY TRAINING FOR ALL HEALTHCARE PROFESSIONALS**

Take action with us! Contact your member of the Illinois General Assembly and urge them to support HB 2280 and SB 2427, a bill that requires consistent cultural competency training for all healthcare professionals.

# 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.**