

PFLAG

COUNCIL OF
NORTHERN ILLINOIS

*Amari, PCNI virtual spokesperson
generated by Midjourney AI*
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Open Doors

June 2023

opendoors@pflagillinois.org

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WELCOME TO THE FUTURE!

PFLAG work and advocacy have long-term goals – years or decades in the future. We make a big difference today by helping families, supporting human rights, sharing our experiences with others, and showing that Love is the most potent force of change. Our efforts today lay the foundation for a better future for all people.

Can you imagine what this future will look like? I've asked several publicly accessible AI systems to generate images of the future state of LGBTQ+ rights, portraits of LGBTQ+ people and their allies, images for a picnic that we are organizing on July 22nd, the Chicago Pride Parade of the future, and other articles in this issue including pictures of very cool sharply dressed LGBTQ animals on this and next page 😊 Besides artworks in this issue, AI has generated the article about the Chicago Pride Parade of 2050 and edited some of my other writing for grammar and style. The cover page shows our new virtual spokesperson, Amari, who supports LGBTQ equality, diversity, and human rights. She says that she's from the future. (This is not your grandmother's Terminator!) You may watch an [AI-generated video of Amari announcing this issue of Open Doors on our website](#) or on [our Facebook page](#).

I've used Midjourney and DALL-E 2 for creating images, Jasper AI and Grammarly for writing and editing articles, and D-ID for making a video of Amari.

What does AI have to do with PFLAG? The new generation of AI systems has been in the news lately. Despite present imperfections and the risk of misuse (as with almost any technology), the role of AI in our life will inevitably grow. So, it's essential to ensure that these systems are LGBTQ-supportive and value human rights from the start. I think that we should embrace and learn this new technology to help us build the future we envision. Let's put it to good use instead of being afraid that someone will use it for nefarious purposes. With these thoughts and an optimistic outlook on the cooperation of human and artificial intellects, I present this Pride Month issue of Open Doors. Welcome to the Future!

Andrew Zanevsky (he/him/his)

President
PFLAG Council of Northern Illinois



Animals celebrating Pride Month, generated by Midjourney (continued on the next page)



CHICAGO PRIDE PARADE

The Chicago PRIDE Parade starts on **Sunday, June 25th, at noon!** We plan to gather at our Parade lineup spot on the east side of Broadway between Montrose and Sunnyside by 11 AM to take photos. Members of all chapters are welcome to march together. Parking around the Parade is always tricky due to road closures and many people attending, so please allocate ample time to get there. Public transportation is recommended.

PFLAG's new branding and LEADING WITH LOVE message will debut at this year's parade! We will have unique trolley decorations and handheld fans for all! Please consider wearing a PRIDE shirt from the Tony Long Collection for PCNI, available in [our Online Store](#). Or show off your creativity and wear your own best PRIDE outfit! We will proudly lead with our PFLAG Council banner and hope to see various Chapter banners or flags! Of course, don't forget your consistently excellent, personalized signs of love, advocacy, education, and support!

Everyone marching in the PFLAG group is expected to follow the rules imposed by the city of Chicago, the Parade organizers, and PCNI. You are welcome to bring guests if you take responsibility for their conduct at the Parade. Please wear PFLAG-branded attire, general pridewear, or regular clothes. Brands and logos of other organizations are not allowed. Signs and posters about specific political parties or candidates are not allowed to keep PFLAG's tax-exempt status. Signs and posters about particular issues are okay.

PFLAG's signature open trolley is an excellent option for those who cannot walk the parade route. Please email info@pflagillinois.org if you'd like to reserve a seat as soon as possible. Be sure to include the names of all those requesting seats and whether walking is an option. Priority will be given to those with paid PFLAG memberships and those with physical restrictions on walking the route. **Also, please reach out if you want to volunteer your time and talent to decorate the trolley!**

More information will be posted on our Facebook page and emailed to chapter leaders closer to the Parade date. We'll see you there!



PCNIC'23 - PCNI Family Picnic 2023

Join us for the 2023 PCNI Family Picnic on the 22nd of July. We're meeting from 11 AM to 3 PM at the East Shelter, Herrick Lake Forest Preserve in Wheaton. All PFLAG families and friends are welcome!

We are planning family games, a potluck lunch, a raffle, a lot of socializing, and a lot of fun for everyone! There are hiking paths and a lake where you may individually arrange boat rentals. A large shelter is available in case of bad weather.

Sign up today here: forms.gle/uVA12HforgsU8jM1A We'll send a separate potluck food signup form closer to the event.

LEARNING WITH LOVE - THE 2023 PFLAG NATIONAL CONVENTION

Register Today! Learning With Love: The 2023 PFLAG National Convention

Join us in Washington, DC for Learning With Love: The 2023 PFLAG National Convention for workshops, panels, and presentations from community leaders and experts who will provide insight, expertise, training, strategies, and best practices so that PFLAG friends, families, members, supporters, and leaders can work together to fulfill our organizational mission to create a caring, just, and affirming world for LGBTQ+ people and those who love them.

Whether you're a longtime PFLAGer or new to the PFLAG family, join us for what promises to be an incredible four days!

Register now: pflag.org/events/learningwithlove2023



CONVENTION SCHOLARSHIPS

PCNI is offering **scholarships of \$225** each to up to 5 paid PFLAG members of PCNI chapters who will attend the 2023 PFLAG National Convention in October 2023.

Recipients must register for the conference by July 1st and commit to writing about their Convention experience for Open Doors.

Email to info@pflagillinois.org to apply for the scholarship.

Scholarships are limited to one per PFLAG family membership. Registration costs \$199 for paid PFLAG members and \$290 for non-members.

If you need financial assistance to pay for PFLAG membership, email to info@pflagillinois.org – PCNI has funds to sponsor PFLAG memberships based on need.



Greetings, PFLAG members and friends! Pride Month is here, and PFLAG continues to work tirelessly on advocacy and support for LGBTQ+ individuals and their families. Many of our projects started earlier this year are coming to fruition thanks to the dedication of our remarkable volunteers. We need your help accomplishing our goals: funding new branding materials, the Chicago Pride Parade trolley decorations, and next year's conference. Would you consider donating to help out? No matter how small, any amount would be tremendously impactful and deeply appreciated. Thank you for taking the time to read and consider this request!

Please [CLICK HERE](#) to make an online donation to the Council, which will fund joint projects for all PCNI chapters:

THANK YOU FOR YOUR GENEROSITY! ♥ ♥ ♥

Warning: While some of the following stories describe legislative actions to celebrate and affirm LGBTQ+ people, many cover legislation targeting the LGBTQ+ community, particularly trans and non-binary youth. Please be kind to yourself and use your discretion while reading this section.

FEDERAL MATTERS

DHS warns of danger to LGBTQ+ community. The Department of Homeland Security released a document to government agencies and law enforcement stating that extremists have increased the level of threats and violence towards the LGBTQ+ community in the last year.

STATE MATTERS

Florida - Teacher under investigation after showing movie with openly LGBTQ+ character. Jenna Barbee showed her fifth graders “Strange World,” a PG-rated Disney film and was accused of indoctrinating and “stripping the innocence” of students.

Florida - Gov. DeSantis signs slate of anti-LGBTQ+ bills on May 17th. On the International Day against Homophobia, Biphobia, and Transphobia, the Governor signed bills into law affecting medically necessary care, classroom censorship, bathroom access, and drag performances. That followed the **right to discriminate bill** he signed on May 11th.

Illinois - Bills to protect LGBTQ+ rights sent to Governor. The legislation changes the language in state child-care law to be more inclusive, mandates tracking non-binary and gender non-conforming employees in state agencies to improve employee diversity, and makes it easier for LGBTQ+ couples from other states to marry in Illinois.

Montana - State becomes first to ban drag performers from reading to children in schools and libraries. HB 359 bars any event “hosted by a drag queen or drag king who reads children’s books and engages in other learning activities with minor children present.”

Massachusetts - LGBTQ+ youth program helps teens from unaccepting environments. The program is called Summer of Sass and seeks to help LGBTQ+ 18- to 20-year-olds get space from the harassment they may face back home in less accepting areas of the country.

Nebraska - Governor signs abortion restriction, gender-affirming care ban. On May 22nd, Governor Jim Pillen signed Legislative Bill 574 which limits abortion access to the first 12 weeks of pregnancy and bars trans people under 19 from accessing medically necessary care.

Indiana - Forced outing legislation approved. Signed by Governor Eric Holcomb on May 4th, House Bill 1608 mandates schools to inform a student’s parents if they request a name or pronoun change. The bill also prohibits sex education from pre-K through third grade.

Pennsylvania - State House of Reps. passes non-discrimination bill. House Bill 300, which was approved by the House on May 2nd would make it illegal to discriminate against LGBTQ+ people in areas such as public services, housing, and employment. The law also adds sexual orientation and gender identity as categories under the purview of the state Human Rights Commission which investigates discrimination claims.

Oklahoma - Governor signs bill banning gender-affirming care for youth. Senate Bill 613, which prohibits best practice medically necessary care for Oklahomans until the age of 18 was signed by Governor Stitt on May 1st.

Montana - Governor signs youth gender affirming care ban. Signed on April 28th, Senate Bill 99 blocks transgender and nonbinary minors from receiving medically necessary care including hormone replacement therapy and puberty blockers.

GLOBAL MATTERS

Cuba - Cubans celebrate legalization of same-sex marriage. Hundreds of LGBTQ+ Cubans and their allies marched through Havana on May 13th to mark the adoption of same-sex marriage.

MEDIA MATTERS

Trans youth prom held in nation’s capital. The event on May 22nd, conceived by the youth, was a celebration of the community’s strength and love in the face of increasing adversity.

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/**

PFLAG

MCHENRY

by **Chris Kocol**

WOW! What a fantastic "first meeting back" for the PFLAG McHenry (County) Chapter we had in May. It felt great to be back together and our venue host (Tree of Life Unitarian Church) even set up a special "WELCOME" sign for our meeting! There were some of our old, familiar friends in attendance, and we welcomed some new attendees or welcomed back former attendees. It was an eclectic group of men and women, moms, dads, and individuals, sharing their stories and experiences, asking, and answering questions.

One of our shares was about the new group, "Out of the Closet Charity", that was recently started by Vikai Hedrick in the Northwest suburbs of Chicago. Out of the Closet Charities collects donations of new & gently used clothing, shoes, accessories, etc. for transgender, non-binary, and gender non-conforming individuals from 8 to 80+, and then hosts monthly "Pop-up" closet sales where everything is FREE! Having heard about them from a fellow member, I messaged Vikai about making a clothing donation and she quickly responded in the affirmative. She drove over to my house a few days later to pick it up and, after filling up the back of her car, we had a wonderful talk. The group also has a few drop off boxes located around the suburbs for smaller (not car-full) donations. Follow them on Facebook ([Out of the Closet Charity](#)) for drop box locations and to get notices about, and the locations of, their latest pop-up sale events.

There was so much lively, active discussions and dialogue flowing throughout the evening, we hated to have to call it a night. As a Board, we left that evening with a feeling of excitement & hope for the future with our group. And the next morning, still on that high, board member cell phones were lighting up with "wasn't that a great meeting last night" messages. We are hopeful that future meetings will continue to be as interactive, helpful, and entertaining.

Knowing that not all interested parties can regularly attend face to face meetings, we are going to try alternating in person meetings with virtual meetings, so our June meeting will be via Zoom. We're hoping to welcome some more new faces, welcome back friends, and continue our dialogues and support, always Leading with Love.

PFLAG

HINSDALE

by **Barb Medley**

Our PFLAG speaker for Sunday, May 7 was Jeff Wood, a retired educator and a member of Equality Downers Grove. He presented his Emotional Management workshop. Jeff's background in education was in guidance and counseling. His workshop is an interactive experience that includes exercises related to our feelings and interacting with others.

We completed a brief group exercise where Jeff gave us parameters on how to interact; for example, some moved around while we talked while others remained seated, and some offered a handshake during introductions while others did not. Once we finished, we examined our emotions. Jeff asked us, is the event responsible for how we are feeling? You need to factor in what people say to you, and your own feelings, backgrounds, and beliefs. Negative actions or words by others can make you a victim. Thinking rationally puts you in control. How does this relate to PFLAG? You may ask yourself, Why me? Why am I facing this challenge (of having a LGBTQ child, for example.) By performing these self-help exercises, or meditations if you wish, you can begin to move away from irrational emotions for your peace of mind. You can have a better, richer life by remembering that everyone has gifts to give. You may not be able to control the adversities in life, but you can control your beliefs and the behavioral choices you make because of them.

Our next meeting is Sunday, June 4, 2023. Our guest speaker will be Calla Roulds, a Chicago police officer and a member of the LGBTQIA+ community.

a fantastic "first meeting back" for the PFLAG McHenry

PFLAG

OAK PARK

by **Tara Chavez**

Hello from PFLAG Oak Park Area! 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.

Looking to the future, the next month is jam-packed with exciting opportunities for all members of the community. We hope you are able to join!

MAY 29th: PFLAG Oak Park Area and OPALGA+ will join forces and march in the **River Forest Memorial Day Parade**. The parade kicks off at 9:30 a.m. beginning at Augusta and Ashland, traveling south on Ashland to Lake Street, then west to Keystone Park. We will pass out pride bracelets along the 0.5 mile parade route. The parade will end at Keystone Park with a ceremony and FREE hot dog lunch. Everyone is welcome!

JUNE 4th: We will have a table at the **"A Day in Our Village"** Event in Scoville Park that runs from 11 AM to 4 PM. This community festival provides an opportunity for all residents to discover the diversity and variety of civic, cultural, social service, business, educational and religious organizations and groups in the Village.

JUNE 18th: Oak Park's **Juneteenth** b culminates with a parade and community cookout on Sunday, June 18. This event runs from 11:00AM to 5:00PM. The parade steps off at 11 a.m. from Longfellow Park near Jackson Boulevard and will march north on Ridgeland Avenue to Augusta Street. Community groups and organizations are invited to participate in the parade, which is being organized by members of the community. Following the parade, a community cookout sponsored by the Village will be held at Taylor Park, 400 Division St. The cookout will feature a DJ, live entertainment, games, free food and drinks and more.

VILLAGE OF FOREST PARK
BIG CITY ACCESS SMALL TOWN CHARM

HOSTED BY ANGEL LEBARE
WITH BEATS BY DRASTIK J

FRIDAY, JUNE 23RD
FOREST PARK PRIDE CELEBRATION

Angel LeBare, Britney Taylor, Fox E. Kim, Keri Traid, Akasha Voyer, Mariela Duarte, Moana Lotte, Dymond C. Calloway

Play It Again Sports, MacDaddy Salon, Team Blonde, Twisted Cookie, Brown Cow Ice Cream, Schauer's Hardware, NOLA Louisiana Kitchen, Kribi Coffee Air Roastery

Stop off on our PRIDE Stroll for Meet & Greets, Giveaways, and Photo Opportunities at our Sponsors between 5 and 6:30pm.

With a PRIDE Drag Performance at 7pm at Constitution Court in Downtown Forest Park. Free to All!

Support PRIDE and Diversify by joining us on the 2nd floor of Doc Ryan's immediately following the event for a PRIDE After Party with additional Drag Performances and Music! (\$10 Cover at the door)

JUNE 23rd: PFLAG Oak Park Area will be participating once again in the **Forest Park Pride Celebration**, located in Downtown Forest Park - Madison Street. The event includes a Pride Stroll, Meet and Greets, Giveaways, Photo Opportunities, a PRIDE Drag Performance! Eight local businesses will host a Drag Queen from 5:00 - 6:30PM and then there will be a Drag show at Constitution Court at 7PM. The list of businesses participating are the following: Team Blonde, Schauer's Hardware, Kribi Coffee, Twisted Cookie, Brown Cow, MacDaddy Salon, Angelo O'Leary's, and Play it Again Sports. The event runs from 5-8PM and is FREE TO ALL!



JUNE 25th: The **Chicago Pride Parade** kicks off at Noon. Mark your calendars!

Lastly, on Saturday, **MAY 6th**, friends and family members of the PFLAG Oak Park Area gathered to celebrate the incredible life and work of c. Sylvia co-founded and co-facilitated the Oak Park Chapter of PFLAG, as well as was a strong social advocate for progressive causes including prison reform, housing, hunger, racial and gender equity, and LGBTQ rights. Her legacy lives on through her loved ones, her work, and her everlasting impact on the lives of all who met Sylvia. She is greatly missed. ❤️



Sylvia G. (Nikkel) Menninga
November 11, 1934 - February 10, 2023

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.



***NOTE: There will NOT be a June Meeting due to the Chicago Pride Parade.**

Our next Hybrid (in person and via Zoom) meeting will be on July 23rd at 3PM. Mark your calendars!

PFLAG

DUPAGE

by **Bonnie Clemens**

May Chapter Meeting

For our May meeting we discussed a new project to reach out to PFLAG Chapters in other states where anti-trans bills are being passed. Our hearts are breaking for those being systematically and unfairly shut down and denied health care in the surrounding states. We intend to write letters to other chapters letting them know that we're thinking of them and that we stand with them. Think of it like a virtual hug. Before we can begin, we need to pass this by National, identify the chapters we wish to reach as well as their contact addresses. Once this is done we can begin the letter writing.

Name Change Fund

We continue to administer our Name Change Fund, money set aside to assist transgender individuals in need of a name change who need help funding this endeavor. This year we've been able to grant funds to two individuals. As you recall this fund was originally created with memorial gifts from Paul Hanson's passing. It is a pleasure to be to continue this effort!

PRIDE Month

Happy Pride Month! PFLAG DuPage is stoked to have lots of activities booked for Pride month. During May in preparation for Pride month, Kelly Hemmer, our chapter president, hosted a sign making event. We have several colorful new signs and have updated some of our old favorites as well. During Pride month, we plan to host a booth at three Pride events in the western suburbs, and to march in two Pride Parades, the Aurora Pride Parade, and the Chicago Pride Parade. We will be busy! Let the celebrations begin!

We will also be marching in the Wheaton 4th of July Parade. If there are any folks from other chapters who would like to join us **on Sunday June 11th for the Aurora Pride Parade** or on **Tuesday July 4th for the Wheaton Parade**, please reach out to Kelly. The more the merrier!

PFLAG

DEERFIELD

by Sue Ginsburg

We are loving meeting back in person now, although we still offer a zoom alternative. This month, our very own Jackie Perry offered A.L.I.C.E. training to our group, active shooter preparedness. She had taken PFLAG National's four-hour course and condensed it for our meeting. We thought it would be apropos as we do meet in a synagogue and we are PFLAG: two good reasons. Needless to say, our eyes were opened with the wealth of knowledge that Jackie brought. For those of you who don't know, this training is in case we are met with an active shooter, wherever we are. A.L.I.C.E. is an acronym for Alert, Lockdown, Inform, Counter, Evacuate. These are not linear directions, but ones we can adapt to the situation, our own personal choice, when the situation arises.

While businesses are the #1 choice of shooters due to their accessibility, government offices, Houses of worship, are also of choice. Schools, of course, much more emotional are about 24% of choice. We must participate in our own survival; we are our own first responders!

The DOJ, FBI, DHHS, FEMA and the Dept. of Education all got together to outline what is best for people in this situation: Evacuate, Barricade, Incapacitate (last resort).

ALERT: We must maintain our situational awareness, know where we are; what do we hear, see, smell? Recognize the situation and do something! (don't be on your cell phone). Accept what's going on and respond; create a distraction, which will confuse shooter.

LOCKDOWN: Barricade; protect self and environment around us; windows-cover them if possible; know if doors open in or out; furniture, move...delay or deny shooter access to change their thought process.

INFORM: Call 911: give as much information to dispatcher as you can. If you know what shooter is wearing, describe it. Tell where you are, what floor you're on. NOT a good idea to pull Fire Alarm or announce on PA system. Do not use codes, as most people won't know what they are.

COUNTER: Shooters advantage is his tunnel vision. If we can disrupt his thought process..throw something at him, swarm him, grab arm or leg; spread out, take him down.

EVACUATE: Know the exit points; where are all the exit doors; do the windows open?; how to get out.

This also goes for outdoor events; situational awareness is key! We all need to participate in our own survival.

Just as a reminder: **our June meeting will be the celebration of the awarding of the Jean Paul Ohadi Scholarships given by Cynthia Drey, mother of Jean Paul.** While it won't be a "regular" meeting, we will have time for conversation and celebration.



Buffalo Grove Pride Parade 2023

Sunday, June 4th at 11 AM

PFLAG

PTI CHICAGO

by **Francey Oscherwitz**

Sixteen moms, dads, and grandparents showed up in our Zoom room for our May 11th meeting. As he does every month, our president, Bill Guilfoile, began by solemnly reciting the ground rules on which support groups like ours depend: Be respectful. Listen and take turns. All feelings are valid. And, “What is said in this room STAYS in this room.”

These assurances are more than boilerplate, and they’re more important than ever because what’s at stake is the safety and wellbeing of our trans kids— whether they’re 4 or 40 years old.

We parents are hungry to learn, and who better to guide us than Ben Greene, a charismatic trans person enthused about sharing his wisdom? Piggybacking on PFLAG Oak Park (which hosted the speaker “live” in April & reported about it here), our group watched Greene’s info-packed and entertaining Ted Talk, “Where Are You Sitting?”

(<https://youtu.be/u9F8WvUSgr4>), with screensharing and discussion led by board member Terry Brugger.

Greene spent his first 16 years “as an ugly and uncomfortable girl,” and came out to a secret online support group years before daring to open up to friends and family. Now he “walks in the light” and hopes to inspire others to do the same.

His key tips for allies:

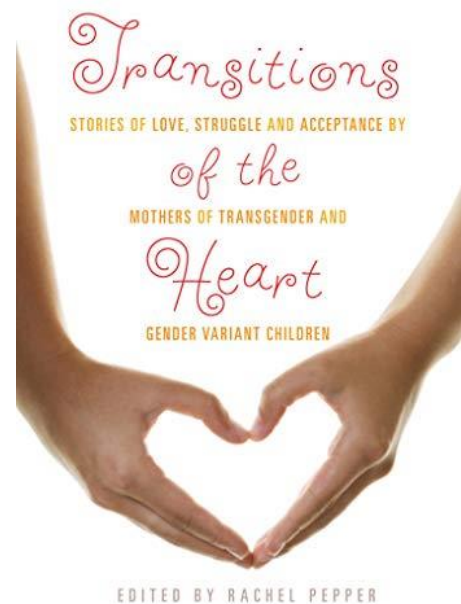
- There are many ways to be trans (whichever “chair” on the spectrum feels right)
- Think before you ask an intimate question. (“Could someone ask you about your genitals? If you’ve had any surgeries recently?”)
- Listen to trans people.
- It’s okay to admit you don’t know something.
- If you’re wondering how best to support someone, ask them.
- Don’t stop learning.

Greene closed with striking observation: “When I first came out, I was a trans person who happened to be Ben. As I grew to be more comfortable in myself, I became Ben who

happens to be a trans person. I am a million things before I am trans, and that’s okay.” Amen.

On June 8th, in honor of Pride Month, we look forward to meeting in person at the Center on Halsted—and online, via Zoom+Owl—from 7 to 9pm. In addition to sharing, we will set aside time to hand out swag and arrange logistics for those hoping to join our joyfully proud Chicago Pride Parade contingent on June 25.

At our July meeting, we will read and discuss our next Book Club selection, **Transitions of the Heart: Stories of Love, Struggle and Acceptance by Mothers of Transgender and Gender Variant Children**. This classic compilation of voices has helped demystify the trans-parenthood journey for many newly “out” parents and their families. It’s like reading a support group.



(For a list of past Book Club selections and recommendations, contact Francey at Franceyo101@gmail.com.)

PTI Chicago meets on the second Thursday of each month.

Parent/s, guardians, or family members of transgender, nonbinary, or genderdiverse individuals who would like to join us for the first time should e-mail PTI Chicago President Bill Guilfoile at bill.guilfoile@gmail.com.

Participants will receive an email with the link and password to enter the meeting.

**“I am a million things
before I am trans”**

PFLAG

OTTAWA

by Rev. Jennifer Amy-Dressler

The Ottawa chapter of PFLAG has, like many chapters, has focused more heavily on understanding transgender identity and issues recently. After several sessions with excellent video presentations, we had the great privilege of having several trans individuals come to present a live panel at our March meeting. Each of the three were known to us through our personal, local connections, which tells us both that more rural communities like ours do have a rainbow population, and that we are blessed to be a safe enough community and chapter for transgender individuals to share their stories with us, in person.

The panel included one trans man, one trans woman, and one nonbinary individual. We heard how each became aware of their gender identity at different times of life and in different ways. Some individuals knew they were transgender from the start; others had to wrestle through various issues of identity and orientation before discovering their truest identity. One point of commonality was that it took the discovery of trans language and role models for each of them to find their own way forward. In return, each of our guests has, in their own various ways, been intentional to be role models and supporters of younger transgender people, as none of them ever had a safe space or safe individuals with whom to share their struggles and identity until much, much later in their lives.

The stories our panelists told about first coming out, and about experiences that were impactful in that process or in their transition journeys, were powerful! One moment we were laughing with them, the next hurting with them, then deeply moved by their courage and the power of affirmation from loved ones and allies. We began to know at a gut level just how important our words, tone, and actions are as allies.

In these times of aggressive anti-trans activism, we need to be not only better informed but also personally transformed, so we can be bold, humble ally-activists. We work for the day that stories like those we heard, of struggle and fear and loss, no longer repeat for the next generation of our beautiful transgender siblings and children. Next step: our presence at the **second annual Ottawa Family Pride Fest, June 10!**

Out of the Closet Charity



“Out of the Closet Charity” collects donations of clothing, accessories, and beauty products for individuals from ages 8-80. It hosts monthly pop-up closets throughout the suburbs and the city of Chicago for transgender/non-binary/gender nonconforming individuals to **shop for free**.

They’re looking for donations of men’s, women’s, and teen’s clothing, wigs, shoes, bags, wallets, and backpacks, jewelry, binders, hair accessories and styling equipment, undergarments, packers, new make-up and make-up brushes, new beauty, and hygiene products.

They may be contacted by email

info@outoftheclosetcharity.org

or on Facebook:

facebook.com/profile.php?id=100089762531282

Mother's Day Fundraiser

“Unconditional Love from PFLAG Parents”

by **Deb Smollen**

There are so many people I need to thank in helping me run our 1st Mother's Day fundraiser since 2019.

Thank you to PFLAG council members Andrew Zanevsky, Ann Mc Auliffe and Jim Levie for all your help and guidance. It would have been difficult to restart the Mother's Day fundraiser without your support.

I want to thank my mentors Marcia Prichason and Bob Cammarata for your previous notes, input, and direction. Your encouragement, support and kind words meant so much to me.

To all the volunteers, this Mother's Day event would not have been the success that it was without you showing your love to the people at Sidetrack and raising PFLAG's visibility. I had forgotten how uplifting this event is, and how grateful the community was to see us again.

Everyone loved the PFLAG buttons, we gave out 220 buttons throughout the day. Thank you to Kelly Hemmer (DuPage), Kathy King (Tinley Park) and Andrew Zanevsky (PFLAG President) for designing the new buttons. The “Drag” buttons were a big success.

In addition to all the hugs given out we raised \$1,794.25 for PFLAG.

The volunteers from DuPage were: Kelly Hemmer, Ray Hemmer, Julie

Perenchio, Peter Kroll, Ruth Hoefnagel, Jake Hoefnagel, Maria Prekop and Alicia, and Kimberly Phillips.

The volunteers from Metro Chicago were: Meg Valentini, LaVita East, Kathleen Weinberg, Marcy Fortnow.

The volunteers from Deefield were: Ann Mc Auliffe, Anita Vaughn and Steve Vaughn

The volunteer from Oak Park was: Jane Zawadowski.

The volunteers from Hinsdale were: Bob Cammarata, Jerry Smollen, Susan Rusk, Francis Tuminello, Suellen Cook, and Bill Cook.

The volunteers from Tinley Park were: Kathy King, Diane Kaffka, and Ray King.

See more photos from the event on the following pages









BUTTON MAKING AT CITI

On May 2nd, our volunteers Kelly Hemmer, Ann McAuliffe, and Phil Kroker came to Citibank at their invitation to organize a PFLAG event that would engage volunteers from Citi. They brought 5 button makers and supplies and organized a button-making session. Citi provided office space and about 13 volunteers who helped make buttons. Ann presented about PFLAG for Citi staff attending in person and remotely. Kelly trained everyone in using button makers and employed her organizational superpowers to run the operation. We made new friends and created enough buttons for the Unconditional Love fundraiser (see previous pages).



Kelly Hemmer, Phil Kroker, Ann McAuliffe

Chad Petrillo, Co-Chair of the Chicago Pride Network at Citi, wrote after the event: *“On behalf of the Chicago Pride Network, we wanted to send a HUGE thank you for coming to our Elk Grove Village office to speak with us and our remote employees yesterday. We received many positive compliments from those that attended virtually and in person. We hope that we were able to support Pflag button-making efforts for Mother’s Day.”*

We wholeheartedly thank Citi for their support of PFLAG!

Ann McAuliffe will also attend Citi’s June Pride Month Kick-Off Event / Flag Raising Ceremony on June 6th, and a few Citi employees will be our guests at the Chicago Pride Parade.

SAVE THE DATE



The **GenderCool Annual Celebration** is a reception-style event with an impactful program devoted to building community and sharing the organization’s mission. Four hundred attendees are anticipated, including the GenderCool Board of Directors, individual and institutional supporters, and families with transgender and nonbinary youth.

During this year’s program, GenderCool Champions will highlight the organization’s 5-year impact.

Before and after the program, event attendees will enjoy food, beverages, and meaningful connection. Last year, 25 percent of attendees were under 21, with the majority of those youth identifying as transgender or nonbinary. The Annual Celebration creates a unique atmosphere where transgender and nonbinary young people can be in community together, often with more youth like themselves than they’ve ever been with simultaneously, while knowing that everyone in that room supports their authentic selves. It is an unforgettable night of community building and empowerment.

CHICAGO PRIDE PARADE 2050

by Jasper AI, edited by Grammarly, illustrated by DALL-E 2

It was a beautiful summer day in 2050 when PFLAG marched in the Pride Parade of Chicago. After decades of fighting for equality and setbacks, it finally felt like society fully recognized LGBTQ+ rights. The city of Chicago held a grand parade that started from Grant Park and wound its way through the streets to Wrigley Field to celebrate this momentous occasion.

The sun shone brightly on dozens upon dozens of proud PFLAG marchers - parents, friends, allies, and family members taking part in this momentous occasion together to support everyone there regardless of sexual orientation or gender identity. They laughed and cried tears of joy while embracing one another as they marched through downtown Chicago streets adorned with digital video banners displaying messages such as "Love Is Love" and "We Are Family." PFLAG's self-driving parade float cruised down the street, holograms danced around in weirdly beautiful patterns, and robots handed out rainbow flags to everyone who passed. Drones flew high



into the sky, creating a colorful canopy above the marchers' heads, while confetti rained down around them – covering everyone in glittery joy! Music filled the air as people sang along to Rhianna's new hit song "L-O-V-E," which echoed through downtown Chicago like a hymn of solidarity and hope.

Everyone was wearing light-up armbands, which allowed you to control what color your clothes displayed throughout the parade – they lit up in rainbow hues; golds and silvers; purples and blues; reds, oranges, greens – every color imaginable! It created an incredibly vibrant atmosphere as people proudly flaunted their true colors during the march down Halsted Street.

At some point during this celebration, everyone paused to remember those throughout history who had worked so hard for these rights: activists who organized protests; lawyers who fought in courtrooms; celebrities that used their platform to make a difference; politicians that passed new laws – those brave individuals made today's celebration possible. There was now an unmistakable hope – optimism that things would continue moving toward greater inclusion and understanding among all people.

It may have been different from years gone by. However, it certainly felt like something worth celebrating nonetheless - proof positive that even through tough times, we could still find moments of joyousness within



our lives, embracing who we are without fear or judgment from anyone else. That's why Pride Parades will forever remain an important event across our communities worldwide, as a celebration of freedom regardless of gender identity or sexual orientation! ❤️





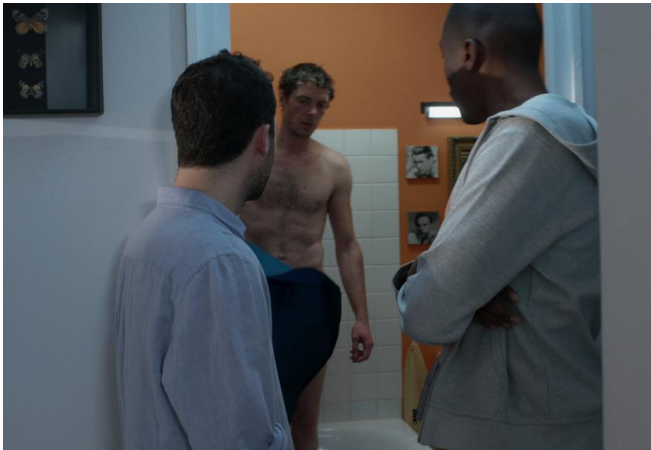
PRIDE FILM FEST

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

<https://pridefilm.org/>




HORSEPLAY - June 22 at Facets. In the hot Argentine Summer, a group of mates gets together to enjoy the holidays, drink, party, and make provocative videos of their mates. A rare mix of homophobia and horseplay come together; however, jealousy and violence begin to emerge under the surface.



BEST OF THE FESTS 1 will stream from **June 14-25** and will include two films from France, a comedy from Ireland about coming out and family secrets, a family drama set in China by an American filmmaker, a political drama from Colombia, a comedy from the UK, and a story from Slovakia about found gay families.



BEST OF THE FESTS 2 will stream from **June 21 to July 2** and will feature four films from the US and the UK, and an Australian drama of a group of gay men and the struggle for societal acceptance play out in post-gay marriage Australia.

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ON TRANSFORMATION


8 LGBTQIA+ Leaders share their histories and stories of transformation

The **PATHFINDERS** Project 

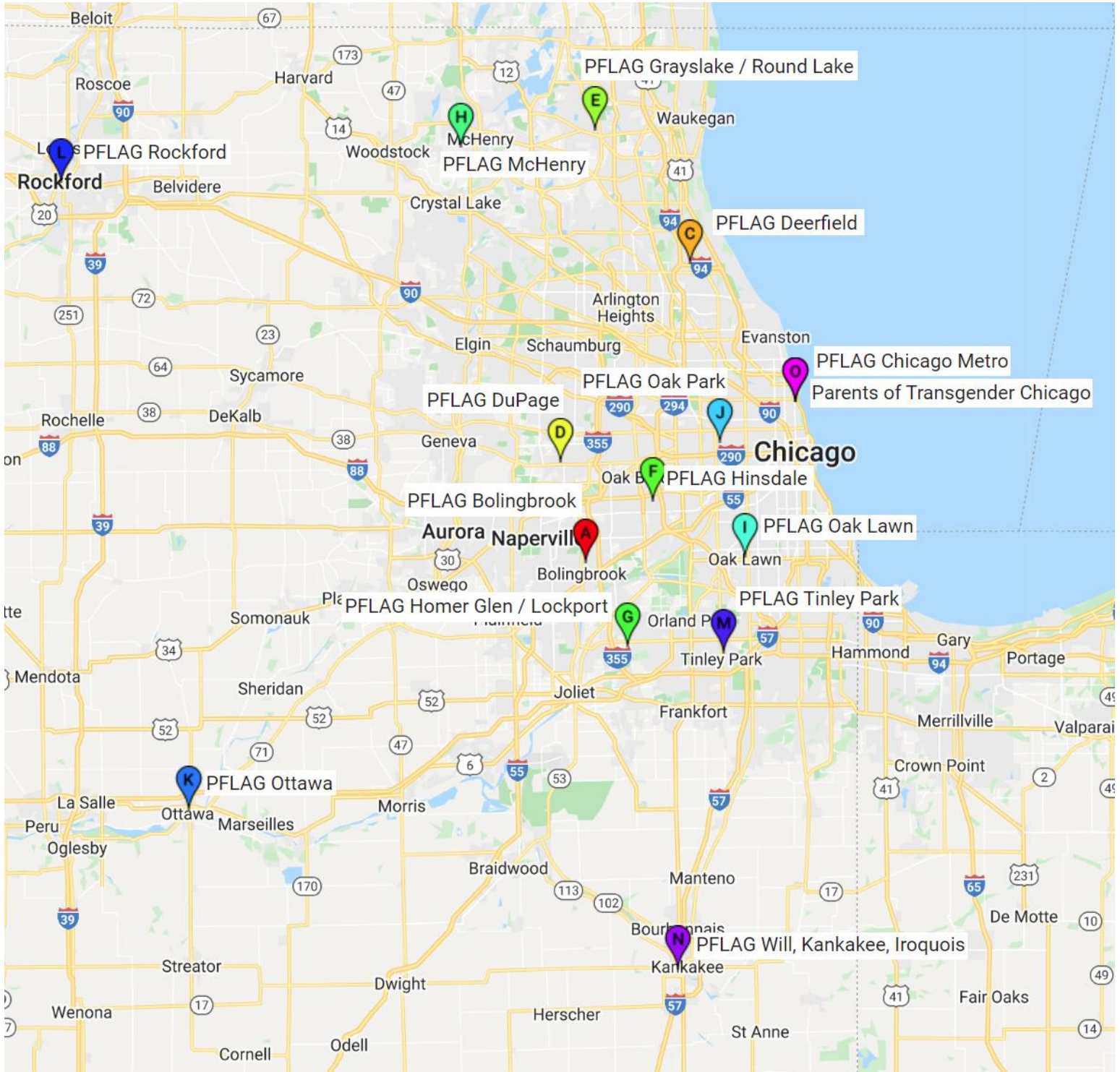
JUNE 11, 2023 @ 2PM

THE GOODMAN THEATRE | FREE ENTRY

REGISTER AT [PRIDEARTS.ORG](https://pridearts.org)



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.