

Open Doors

September 2023

opendoors@pflagillinois.org

THE POWER OF LOVE AND JOY

When our community is threatened, when innocent lives are lost, our survival instincts trigger, prioritizing self-preservation. This fear may lead allies to hide their support, curtailing public displays and open conversations about LGBTQ+ rights. Yielding to fear jeopardizes the future of human rights. If we shy away from Pride Parades, conceal our pride symbols, and avoid advocacy, the LGBTQ+ cause will suffer.

Since its inception, PFLAG has been an organization led by vocal allies openly supporting the LGBTQ+ community. Love grants us the strength and courage to stand against intimidation and discriminatory laws, educate the community, advocate with legislators, and change people's minds. PFLAG adds allies' voices, votes, and passion to LGBTQ+ voices, amplifying the community's impact. When I reflect on Jeanne Manford and other early PFLAG parents' courage, I recognize our moral obligation to continue their legacy – being at the forefront of public discourse even when it's toxic, uncomfortable, and scary.

PFLAG isn't a covert underground movement holding secret monthly meetings. We welcome strangers to join. We march in the streets with posters beaming our love and pride for our LGBTQ+ children, family, and friends. We give public interviews. We staff tables at open public events passing brochures and pin buttons. We put our names on public-facing web pages, identifying ourselves as allies. We don't hide! We don't close the doors – even the name of this newsletter underscores that. Violence and intimidation against our community should only strengthen our resolve to be seen and heard.

You are admirable people, PFLAG volunteers! I constantly learn something new from you. You are my role models and a huge source of optimism for the path ahead. We are together on that road, and we should not be afraid. The future we are helping to build is beautiful!



A future monument to LGBTQ+ rights I imagine

September 15th through October 15th is *Hispanic Heritage Month*. This issue features an interview and artworks by David Gauna (pp 16-23) and an article about the history of Hispanic Heritage celebration in the US (pp 14-15).

Don't miss the interview with Carolyn Hays, the author of *Letter to My Transgender Daughter: A Girlhood* (pp 24-25). In the book, Carolyn writes to her daughter: "*I am joyful. You are joy. You are living, breathing joy. I am so driven by my steam of pride for you. I'm a ship. Maybe a battleship.*" This resonated with me. This is how I feel. This is why I'm not afraid to be open in my support of the LGBTQ+ community despite any threats.

Let love and joy be your power!

Andrew Zanevsky (he/him)

President, PFLAG Council of Northern Illinois

LEARNING WITH LOVE

THE 2023 PFLAG NATIONAL CONVENTION

REGISTER TODAY!

Come to 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 commit to writing about their Convention experience for Open Doors.

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

Scholarships are limited to one per PFLAG family membership.

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



TENTATIVE AGENDA

Thursday Oct 19		Lobby Day
Friday Oct 20	2:00–3:00pm 3:30–5:00	Regional Meetings Annual Meeting and Plenary
Saturday Oct 21	9:00–10:15am 10:30–11:45 12:00–2:00 2:30–3:45 4:00–5:00	Workshop Block 1 Workshop Block 2 Lunch and Plenary Workshop Block 3 Community Building
Sunday Oct 22	10:00–11:15am 11:45–1:30	Workshop Block 4 Closing and Awards Lunch

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.

COURT MATTERS

Booksellers, publishers sue Texas over book ban. The American Booksellers Association and the Association of American Publishers filed a lawsuit challenging the READER Act in the U.S. District Court of Western Texas on July 25th. The suit argues that the READER Act violates the 1st and 14th amendments by regulating speech with “vague and overbroad” terms and targeting protected speech.

Alabama can enforce ban on puberty blockers and hormones for transgender children, court says. While not yet in effect, meaning gender-affirming care for minors can still continue, on Aug. 21st a three-judge panel of the 11th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals lifted a preliminary injunction on Alabama's cruel anti-transgender law, SB 184. The law prohibits medically necessary treatment such as puberty blockers and hormone treatments for transgender and nonbinary youth under the age of 19.

STATE MATTERS

Wisconsin - Gov. Tony Evers condemns hate group protest at Pride event. Gov. Evers expressed his disapproval of a hate group's use of Nazi propaganda and intimidation in an effort to suppress a peaceful LGBTQ+ Pride event in Watertown.

Florida - School district releases memo on pronouns and bathroom policies. A memo released by Orange County Public Schools will not require employees and contractors to use students' preferred pronouns and will not ask students to identify their used pronouns. Also, due to HB 1521, transgender and nonbinary students will be told to use a bathroom corresponding to their sex assigned at birth in the upcoming school year.

Florida - Parents, Equality Florida, PFLAG National, The Trevor Project and HRC launch "Parenting with Pride" program. Over 1,000 families joined before the August 15th launch to mobilize against anti-LGBTQ+ legislation and to connect Florida families with supportive resources and services, along with providing guidance on new laws.

Oklahoma - Governor Kevin Stitt signs Executive Order defining the words “male” and “female”. Gov. Stitt signed an executive order requiring state agencies to define “male” and “female” based on biological sex.

GLOBAL MATTERS

Iraq - Government bans the term 'homosexuality' and 'gender' for all media and social media companies in the country. Iraq's media regulator has banned the use of the term “homosexuality” and replaced it with “sexual deviance”. Moreover, the use of the word “gender” has been prohibited across licensed media outlets and internet companies.

Vatican City - Pope Francis restates Catholic Church is for everyone, including LGBTQ+ people. During an interview after attending World Youth Day in Lisbon, Portugal, Pope Francis was asked about the LGBTQ+ exclusion in the Roman Catholic Church and how it relates to his message of “todos,” meaning “all.” He responded by explaining that while the church has laws, it is still a place for everyone.

MEDIA MATTERS

Gender-affirming care bans have ‘striking’ affects on LGBTQ+ adults, according to a new report by HRC. The 17th Annual LGBTQ+ Community Survey by HRC found that gender-affirming care bans have negative effects on the physical and mental health of LGBTQ+ adults. The survey reports that “42.9% of LGBTQ+ adults state that gender-affirming care bans impact their physical and/or mental health, or that of their loved ones.”

The American Academy of Pediatrics reaffirms its support for gender-affirming care. The American Academy of Pediatrics' board of directors voted unanimously in support of gender-affirming care and pledged to provide additional resources for pediatricians who provide such care.

United Kingdom - Thousands march in Ukraine Pride in Liverpool. Many LGBTQ+ Ukrainians joined the Liverpool Pride attendees in a Pride march. The Pride Foundation of Liverpool promised to hold the pride celebrations of Kyiv, which were temporarily stopped in Ukraine due to the Russian invasion.

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/**

by **Jodi Zavos (she/her)**

We welcomed James Klise (he/him/his), an accomplished young adult author to our August meeting. Jim wrote **The Art of Secrets**, which won an Edgar Award, the Nevada Young Readers Award, a Booklist Editor’s Choice Award, and other honors. His first book, **Love Drugged**, was an ALA Stonewall Honor Award winner and Lambda Literary Award finalist. Jim’s short fiction and non-fiction have appeared in the New Orleans Review, StoryQuarterly, Southern Humanities Review, Chicago Tribune, and elsewhere. His newest novel, **I’ll Take Everything You Have**, published in 2023, is a queer coming of age crime novel set in 1934 Chicago.

In addition to being an award-winning author, Jim has also been a Chicago charter high school librarian in West Rogers Park for 21 years. He leads the school literary journal, the student book club, and the GSA. The book club is so popular that it has a wait list, which is quite an achievement in the digital age!

Jim and his students often discuss current events, the importance of voting, coming out and coming in. (He informed us that students who identify as trans speak of “coming in” to their identity). He frequently hears “I can’t tell my parents”; “It’s not fair that I have to talk about my sexuality and identity when others don’t”; “My family is religious”. He suggests to his students that although it is “the big headline in their life, it is just the headline for now”. He tells them parents can be amazing and can

learn and grow. But Jim also recognizes and respects the reality that some students truly cannot come out or in; at least not while still living with their parents. He tries to empower all his students with the resources they need, and notes that UIC is an important local resource.

Jim reminded us that no one wants to talk about sexuality and identity with their parents. His own coming out story highlights how impactful it can be when families seek out their own information. Jim was born in Peoria IL to a large Catholic family that valued books and reading. When Jim came out, his mother didn’t talk about it much, but his sisters began reading books about gay life, by gay authors. They would share what they read, which prompted conversations that didn’t feel like an invasion of Jim’s privacy. Jim found this very helpful, stating his “mother and sisters expressed interest through books. It was a gift”.

Jim discussed the seriousness of recent book challenges noting that in many parts of the country LGBTQ+ books on a shelf can get a librarian fired. But he also noted that when he first started working as a librarian, there were not nearly enough queer books on the shelves to satisfy student interest. Today, nearly 30 queer books are published a month! Today’s book challenges are a result of the great success in getting more queer books on the shelves; a last-gasp effort. Book challenges are “alarming and annoying” but ultimately LGBTQ+ books are too mainstream for these challenges to be successful. “You can’t put the genie back in the bottle.”

Jim shared other positive news. He reported that today’s students are aware and empowered by current events. They are getting involved. Whereas participation in GSAs had decreased after passage of The Marriage Equality Act, GSAs are growing again due to anti-trans legislation. Today’s queer student is passionate and informed. They have many sources of information. They have support in place. They do their research. They know the resources

Book challenges are “alarming and annoying” but ultimately LGBTQ+ books are too mainstream for these challenges to be successful.

available. According to Jim, “there has never been a better time to be LGBTQ+!”

At the beginning of his talk, Jim shared that his mom was not much for talking about her feelings. He thought attending a PFLAG meeting might be a window into how she may have felt about his coming out. But Jim also provided us with a window into young people navigating today’s world. It was a gratifying experience.

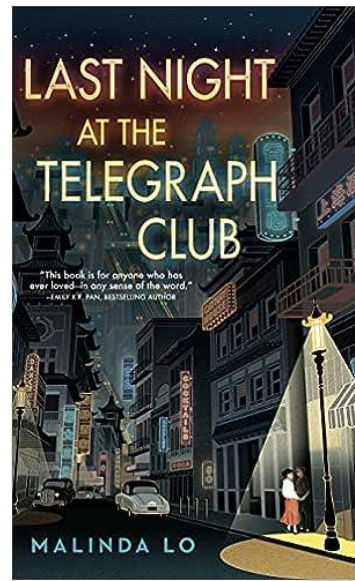
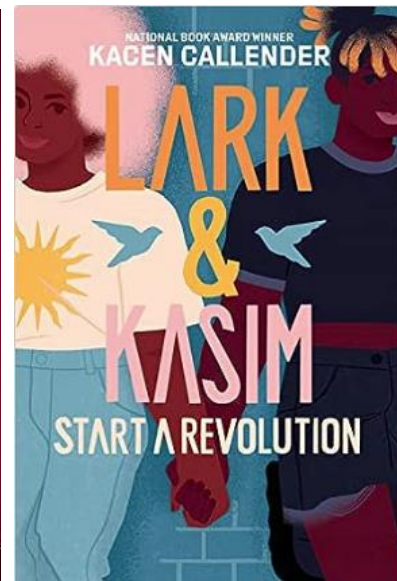
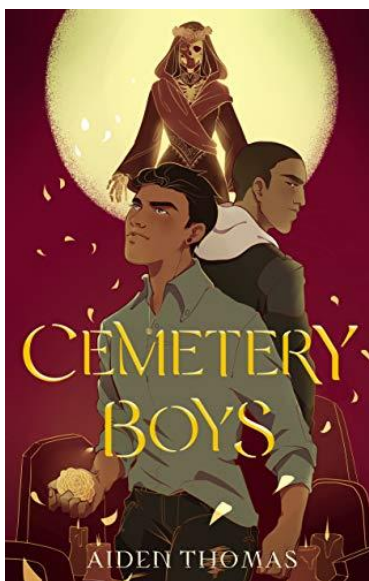
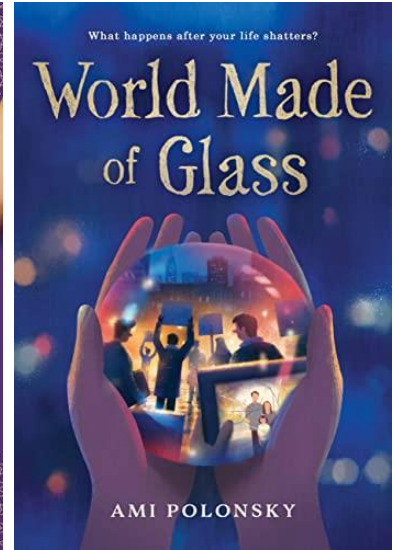
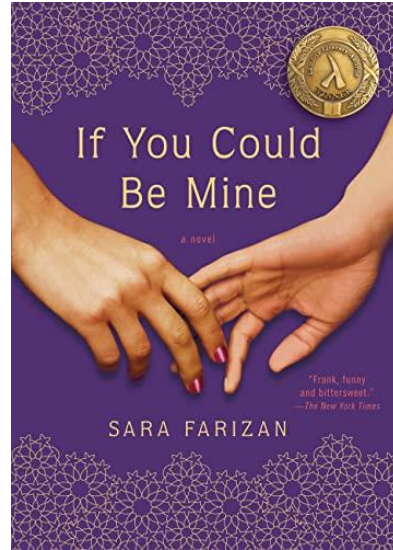
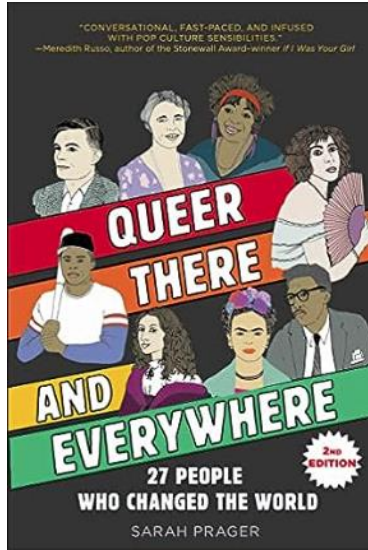
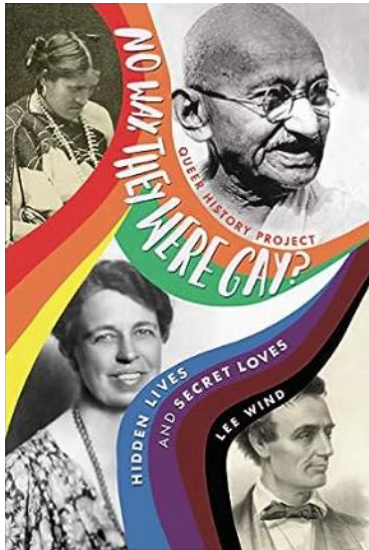
Of course, Jim brought a bag of recommended books to the meeting! He is a librarian after all!

1. [No Way, They Were Gay? Hidden Lives and Secret Loves \(Queer History Project\)](#) by Lee Wind
2. [Queer There and Everywhere](#) by Sarah Prager
3. [If You Could Be Mine: A Novel](#) by Sara Farizan

4. [World Made of Glass](#) by Ami Polonsky
5. [Cemetery Boys](#) by Aiden Thomas
6. [Lark & Kasim Start a Revolution](#) by Kacen Callender
7. [Last Night at the Telegraph Club](#) by Malinda Lo
8. [I’ll Take Everything You Have](#) by Jim Klise

It is worth noting that Jim did not bring any of his books to sell. Instead, he asked us to regularly check out his and/or other queer books for various ages from our public library. This would be a great show of support for queer books and the libraries that stock them.

Following Jim’s presentation, we decided to bring back our chapter’s book club. Our first book will be Jim’s book, [I’ll Take Everything You Have](#). Unsolicited, Jim generously offered to come back and lead our discussion. We’re looking forward to having him back!



PFLAG EVANSTON

by **Jenny Heckathorne (she/her)**

HELLO, from PFLAG Evanston/Northshore

August has been a pretty quiet month after all our summer events.

We participated in the LGBTQ+ Community Picnic sponsored by Evanston Pride.

We connected with some new and old friends there. We talked with Free Mom Hugs about ways to collaborate. To start, just exchanging information will help us to better direct folks to resources they might be looking for.

Roycemore School in Evanston has had a strong and up-lifting presence at many LGBTQ+ community events. They have a very strong connection with and commitment to the community.

We also met several neighbors and new-comers to town who did not yet know about our chapter and are excited to join us.

Early this month, Evanston experienced a hate crime against the LGBTQ+ community. Several pride flags were vandalized. PFLAG joined Evanston Pride and other neighbors to stand in support with flags, posters and encouraging messages to let our LGBTQ+ friends know we are here.

With the tragic and horrendous shooting that just happened in Los Angeles over a pride flag, we all need to remain vigilant and aware of our community's safety. Our hearts are with the victim's family.

We have received some responses from our survey and hope to get more.

Several members expressed an interest in learning more about legal issues (e.g. name and gender changes on documents) and health care concerns. We are investigating having presentations by guest speakers.

The topic for our next members' meeting is **Going Back to School**. We look forward to hearing positive stories about kids starting school authentically! We also anticipate hearing about some tough times. We will be ready to provide information and support from the board as well as from other members.

We hope everyone has had a good summer and that the new school year starts off in a positive way.

We wish you all well.



We look forward to hearing positive stories about kids starting school authentically!

PFLAG

HINSDALE

by Barb Medley (she/her)

We were excited to welcome our August speaker, PFLAG Council president Andrew Zanevsky. Andrew also edits and publishes Open Doors and showcases its wonderful artwork. *[Editor: I want to share this credit with Ann McAuliffe who has found artists, conducted interviews with them, and selected artworks for publication in the last several issues.]*

Andrew introduced himself and noted he grew up in Belarus before the dissolution of the Soviet Union, where homosexuality was a criminal offense. Six years ago, his youngest child came out as a transgender female. She was 21. Andrew and his wife knew they had to educate themselves but assured their daughter that first and foremost she had their love and support. They joined PFLAG. When his daughter was young, Andrew homeschooled her. She graduated college shortly before she turned 17! When she came out, Andrew and his wife wondered what her life would be like, and like all of us parents, wanted her to be happy and safe. Now, she is fine and happily married. Andrew is grateful that she lives in Illinois. He noted that her being trans is not who she is, but rather just one identifying characteristic of many.

When they decided to come out as parents, they wrote a letter and sent it to everyone in their social circle – family, friends and acquaintances. The responses were overwhelmingly kind and

supportive. Unfortunately, one of the closest family members didn't take it well. It was very troubling to Andrew, and after a time he chose to discontinue communication with that person. It remains painful.

PFLAG is now part of Andrew's life's mission. He made some important points about their lives and his journey:

- Acceptance is not a matter of age. Some of his daughter's biggest champions were older family members.
- Lack of information can be solved. Lack of empathy cannot.
- You learn who your true friends are.
- A loss of someone who is not kind is not much of a loss.
- People are afraid of what they don't understand.
- When you come out as parents, don't be afraid it will reflect badly on you if you are not accepted. Rather, it reflects badly on the other person, for being judgmental and lacking kindness and compassion.

We talked about the wonderful artwork that is part of Open Doors. Many of artist sources are through Howard Brown and the Center on Halsted. Andrew invited us to pass on recommendations of artists that might want to be included. Open Doors is a community resource, and we're lucky to have Andrew as its publisher!

Our September meeting falls on Labor Day weekend, and so we won't have a guest speaker but will gather for a picnic at our usual Unitarian Church meeting place. Our October 1st speaker is Sam Clubb from Howard Brown Health. Sam works with teens on hormone replacement treatment, and he'll explain possible side effects, risks, what to expect, myths, and more.

PFLAG

OAK PARK

by Tara Chavez (she/her)

Hello from PFLAG Oak Park Area! Our monthly meetings are still HYBRID so members have the choice to join remotely or in person.

While things have quieted down in Oak Park, we do have a couple of exciting opportunities ahead! PFLAG Oak Park will be participating in the annual **Farmer's Market Bake Sale** on Saturday, September 2nd, from 7 a.m. until we sell out (approximately 11 a.m.). The Market is located in the Pilgrim Church parking lot at 460 Lake St., one block west of Ridgeland Avenue. We'll have goods from award-winning bakers that will include treats sure to satisfy every sweet tooth at prices that can't be beat. **You'll want to get there early for the best baked goods before they're gone!**

It's **BarrieFest** time again! This exciting neighborhood celebration will feature live music, activities (including a climbing wall), community updates, and fabulous FOOD! This year, Takeout 25 is proud to launch our community as Illinois' first Green Dining Hub at BarrieFest. This launch is both the culmination of months of work and collaboration, and also the start of a journey as dining is differentiated in our community by greening it through collective action.

DATE: September 9, 2023

TIME: Noon - 5 p.m.

PLACE: Barrie Park, 1011 S Lombard Ave., Oak Park

Green Dining Hub details:

www.takeout25.org/green-dining-hub

There will be 8 amazing local food establishments that truly represent our community's diversity and taste. Our

partners Clean up Give Back and their OPRF High school volunteers will help manage the event sustainably. While BarrieFest is free to attend, food options will be available with tickets. For more information about this event, please visit:

www.givesignup.org/TicketEvent/BarrieFest2023

Be sure to stop by our PFLAG Oak Park table for free buttons and great conversation!

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 September 24th at 3PM. Mark your calendars!

PFLAG

HOMWOOD - FLOSSMOOR

by Andrew Zanevsky (he/him)

Please welcome a new chapter that has just formed in our neighborhood – PFLAG Homewood-Flossmoor! The Council has voted by email to admit it as a new member of PCNI.

The chapter's energetic board is planning to hold the first in-person meeting in Homewood on Sunday, September 10th. If you are interested in attending, please email the chapter at pflaghf@gmail.com to receive the details.

The chapter will meet on the 2nd Sunday of every month from 2 PM to 4 PM.

PFLAG MCHENRY

by **Chris Kocol (she/her)**

PFLAG McHenry had an active August. We started out the month by participating in a Behavioral Health Resource Fair for School Professionals hosted by the McHenry County Mental Health Board. We had a very busy morning as we met with & talked to many school professionals as well as fellow presenters at the fair. We provided printed materials as well as sharing web site & contact information.

During our August ZOOM meeting, we had a wonderful guest speaker, Aiden Vasquez. Thank you Andrew Zanevsky, for sharing his information with us; his presentation on the ups & downs of his transition journey was interesting, informative & very personal. Our attending members got to ask questions & we had several good discussions and commentaries. Aiden is very active providing support on social media via Face Book (Transgender Family Love and Support Group), Tic Tok (@aidenvasquez68), & Instagram (Breaking the Chains 2016). The Aiden J. Vasquez Foundation raises money to help people in the community, providing gaffs, shape wear, binders, trans tape, food, shelter, gas cards, car repairs, and assistance with name and gender marker change. One of my favorite reflections from that evening went something like this: Transitioning is a three-fold journey. Every [transgender] child is on their own journey. The parents are on their own journey. And then there's the journey they are on together. Aiden is interested in sharing his story/experiences & provide support to other families through PFLAG chapters across the nation. Contact him at: breakingthechains16@gmail.com.

The new school year has started and we were invited to participate in McHenry High School's Family Engagement Nights at both high schools. We joined a number of other

community resource groups in the school cafeteria where we again shared information & printed materials.

September will have us out & about as well. On September 8th, we'll be participating in The Suicide Prevention and Mental Health Recovery Conference at McHenry County College. Then we will have our monthly meeting as an in-person event on September 12th. On September 14th, we will be guest speakers at a gathering of District 300's LGBTQ+ Learning Space group.

Hope everyone has had a good start to the new school year that continues throughout the year. PFLAG McHenry appreciates having the opportunity to do outreach work in our schools and community, Leading With Love.

SAY HER NAME

by **Toni Weaver**

Laura Ann Carleton. Say her name.

Ms. Carleton, a shop owner in Cedar Glen, California and mother of nine, was shot dead after confronting a man who had ripped the Pride flag from in front of her store. According to the BBC World News, "The suspect made 'disparaging remarks' about the rainbow flag before shooting the victim, police said." He paid for his bigotry with his life. *[Editor: Confronted by the police, he started shooting and was killed when the police returned fire.]*

Laura Ann Carleton. Say her name.

An ally. A friend to the LGBTQ+ community. A woman unafraid to make her support known to all who walked down that street. A woman who stood up to a detractor.

Laura Ann Carleton. Say her name.

Will we now be afraid to fly the flags that represent whom we support, whom we love?

Fear can't be allowed to win. We stand on the side of love. We lead with love.

Laura Ann Carleton. Say her name.

PFLAG DUPAGE

by **Bonnie Clemens (she/her)**

This month Jeff Wood (Retired Educator and current Board Member for Equality Downers Grove) led us through his workshop "**Heady Stuff: Moving into a Healthier Emotional Existence.**" The workshop is based on Albert Ellis' Rational Emotive Behavioral Theory that emotional reactions are not caused directly by events, but by how those events are filtered through our beliefs. Through hands-on activities, we experienced common emotions that were then divided into three categories: Positive/Healthy, Negative/Healthy, and Negative/Unhealthy. We learned to identify irrational beliefs and thought patterns that lead towards Negative/Unhealthy emotions, and then discussed strategies to move towards more positive and healthy emotions. This was a very engaging workshop, and we highly recommend it! It was enjoyable, but more importantly, very constructive and we all came away with new knowledge and skills.



Jeff Wood is a retired educator with 34 years of experience: 13 years as a classroom teacher and then 21 years as a HS Guidance Counselor.

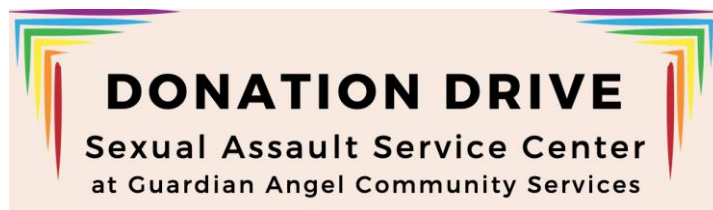
Jeff has presented at PFLAG chapters in Plainfield, Orland Park, & Hinsdale and at professional conferences, such as the annual Chicagoland Raising Student Achievement Conference, as well as other groups and agencies. Jeff has been a long-time enthusiast of Rational Emotive Behavioral Therapy (Albert Ellis) and challenging oneself to live a more rational and healthy emotional life.



On August 26th Youth Outlook and PFLAG DuPage are hosting the **6th Annual LGBTQ+ Youth and Family Picnic** in Naperville! This is fun-filled afternoon of connections and community for all ages complete with burgers, hot dogs, games and more.



We're excited to report that Kelly Hemmer (President, PFLAG DuPage) is collaborating with staff at the **Lombard Public Library** to create LGBTQ+ programs. The aim is to educate the public at large and to affirm the LGBTQ+ community. This project is early in the planning stage and there are several program options being discussed. We look forward to providing more details soon.



Kelly McElroy (Member, PFLAG DuPage) spoke briefly about the **Sexual Assault Service Center (SASC)** at **Guardian Angel Community Services**. The SASC is requesting donations to benefit LGBTQIA+ survivors who visit the emergency room for care following a sexual assault. They need gender affirming clothing and support items (especially underclothes) for victims. [CLICK HERE](#) for a detailed list. Another option is to donate Amazon gift cards for SASC to purchase needed items.

PFLAG

PTI CHICAGO

by **Francey Oscherwitz (she/her)**

With 21 attendees, our online-only August meeting was jampacked with conversation and information on a topic uppermost on many parents' and caregivers' minds—the mental health challenges faced by our trans and gender-variant kids—and how best to support them in their journeys of self-discovery. Such is the expertise of clinical psychologist **Mary Madrake** (they/them), who joined us as guest speaker and fielded questions on everything from trans-affirming in-patient psychiatric care to loneliness and worries about “unsafe” friends—all while recovering from Covid!

Dr. Madrake urged parents and families of recently “out” children—of whatever age and stage of development—to reframe narratives about having lost a “daughter” or a “brother” and focus instead on affirming—even celebrating—their child’s reveal—and the cherished bond of trust that enabled them to share their secret.

At a time when trans families (and their doctors) are under siege, and hate crimes shatter lovely, close-knit queer communities (the latest in South Minneapolis, in the backyard of Bryan May—my child’s buddy from grad school—whose best friend and bandmate, a passionate ally, was playing music when gunfire sprayed the party, killing him and maiming four others), embracing your child’s gender identity may feel especially scary.

But the alternative is scarier.

As norm-busting “outsiders,” our gender explorers need the protective bubble of community more than ever. When denied the support and belonging of family—original or chosen—trans people face a life of hopelessness and despair—what Madrake grimly called “the mental health challenges of not being wanted.”

Trans identity is not itself a mental illness, but many trans people are affected by anxiety, depression, eating disorders, manic depression, or “neurodivergent” conditions such as ASD and ADHD. Madrake characterizes these as “comorbidities”—factors that interact with and complicate the already daunting task of identity development—not least when it comes to finding gender-affirming care.

Here are Dr. Madrake’s suggestions for affirming and protecting your (or anyone’s) trans child, whether they’re 5 or 35.

- Ally is a VERB rather than a NOUN.
- We don’t decide who our kids are. They are who they are.
- Enlist therapists, support groups, and books to help you identify your own assumptions and biases—and where they come from.
- Encourage positive emotions. Don’t talk to your kids about your feelings of loss or grief.
- Advocate for your kids in schools and health care settings if they are under 18.
- After they turn 18, help kids advocate for themselves. This is part of the “letting go” process—yours and theirs—especially painful if your child is distressed or in crisis. Offer help by asking them, “Do you want to problem-solve together?” or “Do you want me to do some legwork?”
- Support kids however they want help—not by providing what you think they need.
- To help nudge older kids toward independence, call on other trustworthy “grownups”—uncles, therapists, friends, mentors—with whom they

have a good relationship, and whose guidance or encouragement they might accept.

- If your child can't find work with a trans-affirming employer, encourage them to find volunteer work to feed their basic need for a sense of purpose and belonging.
- Celebrate moments of joy, or gender "euphoria": nailing your child's pronouns; a new haircut or outfit; starting hormones; making a new friend.

"Joy is powerful," says Madrake. "Joy is resistance."

At our September 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.

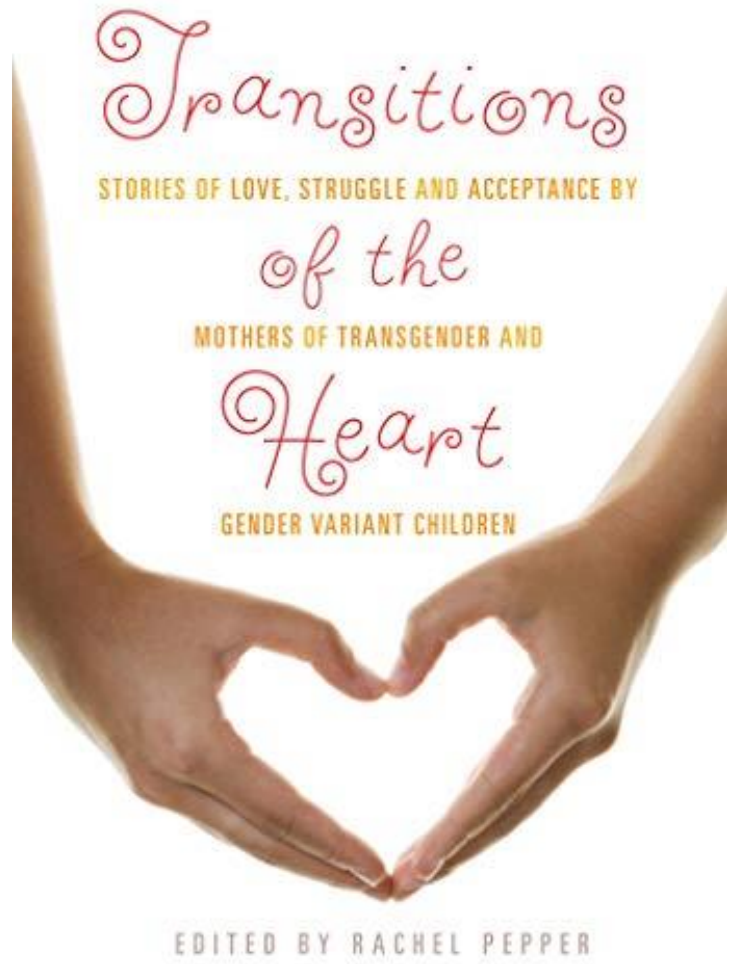
(For a list of past Book Club selections and recommendations, contact Francey at Franceyo101@gmail.com.)

PTI Chicago meets on the second Thursday of each month.

Parent/s, guardians, or family members of transgender, nonbinary, or 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.

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



**“JOY IS POWERFUL,
JOY IS RESISTANCE”**



Celebrating Hispanic Heritage Month

by **Ann McAuliffe (she/her) & Kathy King-Watters (she/ella)**

Hispanic Heritage Month is an annual celebration of the history and culture of the U.S. Latinx and Hispanic communities. The event, which spans from September 15 to October 15, commemorates how those communities have influenced and contributed to American society at large.

The term Hispanic or Latino (or the more recent term Latinx) refers to a person's culture or origin—regardless of race. The United States government considers it an ethnicity, so any race can also be Hispanic or Latino. This goes all the way back to the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo in 1848, after the Mexican American War. I'll intentioned Americans traveled to the newly acquired lands from Mexico and tried to claim that the people living on lands there were ineligible to hold property under American law since they weren't "White." Some of those landowners had royal charters that were originally issued generations before by the King of Spain. To prevent landowners from losing their land, the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo declared people of Mexican descent to be White and Hispanic to be an ethnicity.

On the 2020 Census form, people were counted as Hispanic or Latino or Spanish if they could identify as having Mexican, Mexican American, Chicano, Puerto Rican, Cuban, or "another Hispanic, Latino, or Spanish origin." There is some debate as to whether the term includes Brazilians and Portuguese since they do not speak Spanish, but since their origin is the Iberian peninsula, they technically are of Latin origin; it's open to interpretation.

Hispanic Heritage Month actually began as a commemorative week when it was first introduced in June of 1968 by California Congressman George E. Brown. The push to recognize the

contributions of the Latinx community had gained momentum throughout the 1960s when the civil rights movement was at its peak and there was a growing awareness of the United States' multicultural identities. Brown, who represented East Los Angeles and a large portion of the San Gabriel Valley—both heavily populated by members of the Hispanic and Latinx communities—wanted to recognize the role played by those communities throughout American history.

On September 17, 1968, Congress passed [Public Law 90-48](#), officially authorizing and requesting the president to issue annual proclamations declaring September 15 and 16 to mark the beginning of National Hispanic Heritage Week and called upon the "people of the United States, especially the educational community, to observe such week with appropriate ceremonies and activities." President Lyndon B. Johnson issued the first Hispanic Heritage Week presidential proclamation the same day.

Why the Date of Hispanic Heritage Month Is Important

The timing of Hispanic Heritage Month coincides with the Independence Day celebrations of several Latin American nations. September 15 was chosen as the kickoff because it coincides with the Independence Day celebrations of five "Central American neighbors," as Johnson called them—Costa Rica, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras and Nicaragua. Those five nations declared their independence from Spain on September 15, 1821.

In his proclamation, Johnson also acknowledged Mexico, which declared its independence from Spain on September 16, 1810. Although not mentioned specifically by Johnson, Chile also celebrates its independence during that week (September 18, 1810 from Spain) and Belize, which declared its independence from Great Britain on September 21, 1981, was subsequently added to the list of nations specifically celebrated during what is now Hispanic Heritage Month.

Hispanic Heritage Expands From a Week to a Month

From 1968 until 1988, Presidents Nixon, Ford, Carter and Reagan all issued the yearly proclamations, setting aside a week to honor Hispanic Americans. In 1987 U.S. Representative Esteban E. Torres of California proposed the expanding the observance to cover its current 31-day period. Torres wanted



more time so that the nation could “properly observe and coordinate events and activities to celebrate Hispanic culture and achievement.”

In 1988, Senator Paul Simon (D-Illinois), submitted a [similar bill](#) that successfully passed Congress and was signed into law by President Ronald Reagan on August 17, 1988. And on September 14, 1989, President George H.W. Bush (who had been a sponsor of the original Hispanic Heritage Week resolution while serving in the House in 1968) became the first president to declare the 31-day period from September 15 to October 15 as National Hispanic Heritage Month.

“Not all of the contributions made by Hispanic Americans to our society are so visible or so widely celebrated, however. Hispanic Americans have enriched our nation beyond measure with the quiet strength of closely knit families and proud communities,” [Bush said](#).

In the decades since, National Hispanic Heritage Month proclamations have been made by every sitting president of the United States. Hispanic Heritage Month 2023 will last from Friday, September 15, 2023 through Sunday, October 15, 2023.

The PFLAG Council of Northern Illinois does have members who speak Spanish and our helpline staff refers Spanish speakers to Spanish speaking volunteers. A few of our Spanish speaking members were even interviewed by Univision Chicago during Pride Month and shared their journeys as parents of LGBTQ+ children. While we do not have a Spanish speaking chapter, yet, we hope to bring in to fruition one day. In the meantime, our chapters have access to Spanish button designs in our button program, Spanish designs elements created by National in Canva, and PFLAG National has created literature and swag in Spanish the past several years as outreach to the Hispanic community grows.

Religion plays a huge role culturally for most Hispanics. Hispanics tend to be predominantly Catholic and the Catholic church has a history of condemning LGBTQ+ people, causing many parents to experience a great deal of struggle internally when their children come out. PFLAG can play a big role in the journey to acceptance and support for Hispanic parents, helping them by #LiderandoConAmor or #LeadingWithLove. Whether in person or virtually, PFLAG is there for ALL families and celebrates the diversity of our amazing LGBTQ+ families.

PFLAG Celebrates Communities

PFLAG Connects: Communities (PCC) provide a safe, virtual, moderated space where people with shared experiences can connect each month. PFLAG National’s current communities gather people of Latino, Black/African American, and Asian American and Pacific Islander backgrounds to gain support, ask questions, and learn from others who have been through similar experiences. These meetings are catered to those who are parents/family members of LGBTQ+ individuals, though we also welcome members of the LGBTQ+ community who are Latino, Black, or AAPI. Each meeting is facilitated by 3 members of the community who are either LGBTQ+ themselves or have a loved one who is LGBTQ+. The meetings are free to the public and do not require PFLAG National or chapter affiliation.

¡Bienvenidos a PFLAG Connects: Comunidad Latina!

Estas reuniones virtuales están abiertas a padres, familiares y miembros de la comunidad LGBTQ+ Latinos. Cada reunión será facilitada por miembros de la comunidad Latina quienes los guiarán para recibir apoyo, brindar apoyo y encontrar recursos para ayudarlo a usted, su familia y su comunidad. Si esto le parece algo que le interesaría asistir, busque el enlace de registro en esta página. También encontrará enlaces a recursos adicionales abajo.

Nuestras reuniones son cada primer jueves del mes a las 9pm tiempo este / 8pm tiempo central / 6pm tiempo del pacifico.

¿Preguntas? Conéctese con Laura Galeano:

lgaleano@pflag.org

Welcome to PFLAG Connects: Latino Community!

These virtual meetings are open to parents, family members, and members of the LGBTQ+ community who are Latino. Each meeting will be led by members of the Latino community who will guide you in receiving support, giving support, and finding resources to help you, your family, and your community. If this sounds like something you would be interested in attending, please click on the registration link. You will also find links to additional resources below.

Our meetings are held every first Thursday of the month at 9pm ET / 8pm CT / 6pm PT

Questions? Reach out to PFLAG Connects Manager, Laura Galeano: lgaleano@pflag.org

DAVID GAUNA

Interview by Ann McAuliffe (she/her)

BIO

Born and raised in Chicago, Illinois. David is a self-taught artist, identifying as a gay, cis-gender Latino male. David discovered his passion for youth development and community engagement right after high school when he worked as a student mentor and community coordinator, bringing resources and opportunities to high school for teens. David realized that art is a tool, not only for self-exploration, but to also nurture, engage, educate, and spread awareness too.

David developed his own programs, “BLOOM”, designing a curriculum that mentors high school teens within identity, community building, and exploring social issues. Funded by After School Matters, David ran BLOOM from 2016 to 2020, roughly serving over 100 Chicago teens per-year. David later transitioned, passing the program to his mentee instructors, youth who have graduated from high school and BLOOM, to continue leading the



program. While organizing art programs for teens, David has a background in advocacy work, advocating on the rights of equity and equality for the Latinx LGBTQIA+ community, serving as a Board member of the Association of Latinos,as,xs Motivating Action (ALMA), from 2016 to 2022.

David became the Professional Development specialist for After school Matters in 2020, creating workshops for professional adult youth educators across the city of Chicago by exploring best practices in engaging teens, and cultivating a safe, warm welcoming space for youth. He balances his career in the non-profit sector with freelancing as an artist and consultant. David works to continue expanding his artwork by collaborating with local community organizations. Additionally, David continues to challenge himself in developing artwork that can be used as platforms for dialogue, specifically within the Latinx LGBTQIA+ community. David sees his artwork as seeds, seeds for thoughts, conversations, ideas. Seeds for healing, and most importantly, seeds for visibility. *“To BLOOM, is to embrace all that you are”* - David Gauna.

Email: gaunablooms@gmail.com

Phone: 312-399-6143

Watch a 30-seconds video spotlighting David for Hispanic Heritage month:

[Stories of Hispanic Heritage Month: Muralist Spotlights Latinx LGBTQ+ Community - NBC Chicago](#)



Cesar Blooms Painting

INTERVIEW

Open Doors: When did you first start painting and when did you decide to be an artist?

David Gauna: I've always been connected to art. I identify as a multi-medium artist. My creative process has photography, adobe illustrations, doodling, collage making, acrylic painting and spray painting. I can remember playing with watercolors as a kid, and even learning how to paint with acrylic paint in middle school. However, it was high school where I really started to paint for myself and not because it was a school assignment. My high school at the time did not offer art classes to freshmen and



sophomores. I remember being very upset about this and trying to transfer schools due to this. I took a bunch of my drawings to my high school principal to make my case on why I want to take art. Luckily my principal was very understanding and what she did was unexpected. She had me put together a list of art supplies I wanted and purchased them for me to use after school. It was like I created my very open after school arts program. I would go to a classroom that had a teacher who was very supportive of my art, and would just paint and create. This meant a lot to me as a kid. High school was such an experimental time but I never identified as an artist but instead would communicate that this was something I wanted to be. I would dream of living in a loft in New York and just painting while having a city view (still goals). It was not until I was about 27 years old, I had left my job as a Case Manager for LGBTQIA+ youth experiencing homelessness, that I decided to pursue art officially. I had already intersected art with all of my community work, but at this point of my life I decided I was going to take it more seriously.

OD: Can you share with us how you developed BLOOM, the Art Program for Teens? How did you successfully navigate the Chicago Public School system and secure funding from After School Matters to offer your programs?

DG: I have been mentoring youth and working within youth development since I was 19 years old. I discovered that my art was a great tool to engage the young people I was mentoring, especially anything with spray paint. We would create art together and talk about life. At 23 years old I was invited to take over another artist youth art program in the back of the yards community. This inspired me to create my own program. My art program was named after my art name, “Bloom”, which I use like a street writer. Its mission was to mentor high school youth in identity exploration, community building, and becoming more socially aware of their surroundings through visual arts. All of this was funded by After School Matters, Chicago's leading afterschool and summer programming provider. ASM supported me with entering CPS schools. I ran this program and expanded it from



Unity Through Struggle Mural

2016 all the way to 2020. My programs were all over Chicago's North and Northwest side communities, from Belmont Cragin, Humboldt Park, Logan Square, and Lakeview (Boystown). I partnered with Chicago high schools for space and to recruit teens, but I also partnered with a lot of community agencies such as CALOR, La Casa Norte, Center on Halsted as host locations for my programs. I developed and fostered a safe space for teens to come together to explore who they are, and participate / lead conversation on what they cared about, then to bring those conversations to life by capturing it through their art. Some of my proudest moments within my programs is cultivating a safe space where youth were able to be their true selves. Goofy, energetic, opinionated, but also coming out as Gay, Bi, or Trans. When my youth graduated, I was proud at being able to hire some of them as co-instructors. Before transitioning to my new role as Professional Development specialist for ASM, I passed off the programs to several of my youth to continue to lead as they see best fit and supporting them along the way.

OD: How did you discover your passion for advocacy work with young people?

DG: My approach with mentoring is to be the person I wish I had. I was that young person confused about who I am, lost and unsure of myself. This had a huge impact on my mental health. I did not do well in school. I was always absent and was not connecting well with my peers. I did not have too many individuals I could really connect with. Someone to look up to and who identified similarly as I do. I sometimes wonder who I would be today if I had a mentor that was Latino, Queer, and an artist. I admire young people today because now more than ever they have so much knowledge and access to connect and find themselves. Social media, a wide range of TV shows and movies, cartoons, reading material, and even a lot of educational institutions that have LGBTQIA+ programs are becoming more queer friendly spaces. That being said, we still have a lot of work to do. I did not have this growing up, and if I did, it only catered to certain parts of my identity. At age 23, it was 2016, I was already

BLOOM Program Youth Painting Pride Flag ↓

Continued →





involved in a lot of community work. I had left my position as a Case Manager for a non-profit and began to enter the HIV prevention and education outreach field as a consultant for an agency called Rincon Family Services. I balanced this contract with also working with Chicago votes, mobilizing young people to vote, running a youth arts program on the southside and I had just won a scholarship that had a commitment to serve the board of the Association of Latinos,as,x Motivating Action (ALMA). At 23 I had so much going on, only having been out as Gay for two years (I came out at 21), but it was June 12, 2016 that really made my eyes open as to why advocacy, visibility, and community work is so important. This was the date of the Pulse NightClub (A Gay Club) shooting in Orlando, Florida that had taken place, killing 49 people (majority Latinx and Queer identifying), and wounding 53 others. This is when I realized Pride is not just all rainbows and celebrating, it's also honoring our history and remembering those that gave their lives fighting for our rights. This is when I learned the importance of visibility, as I witnessed my mentors and community leaders hold media, agencies, politicians, and community leaders accountable for doing better, and properly communicating that this was a direct attack on the Latinx LGBTQIA+ community. It was my mentors, Kenny Martin-Ocasio and Julio Rodriguez (who I found in ALMA) that grounded me as I navigated my emotions. The space they created both through verbal communication, and in silence, marching together during the Chicago pride parade, holding the signs of the victims, had a huge impact on me. I spent years after this moment intersecting my work in youth development, community engagement, and serving the Latinx LGBTQIA+ community through advocacy and activism because I saw how they all connect. Now, as an artist, I look to challenge myself by incorporating all of my passions through my art, where my artwork will be used to honor those within my community by sharing their stories and embracing their existence through paintings and murals.

OD: You are an artist, muralist, designer and you use different media and styles. What triggers changes in your creative approach? Do you work on a series of similar works before switching to something new or



Chulitos Bloom Painting

do you constantly alternate between different projects?

DG: I tell myself consistently across whatever I create, “create this for yourself.” No matter the commission, it has to be something I love for me first. I’ve been blessed with a lot of commissions. I think as an artist, the difficult part is having to get pulled away from what you want to create vs what you have to create due to needing the income. However, I have been blessed to be commissioned for projects I am really passionate about. Most of my commissions have come from organizations. These agencies hire me because I am not just an artist, I am a Creative Director who has a lot of Project Management skills, with a background in facilitation and youth development. When an agency hires me, it’s usually for me to create an experience for the

demographics they serve, and not just being told what to paint and painting it. Most organizations want me to be inclusive to staff and their demographics feedback and to guide them through that reflection. Each project requires a different personal touch. Some organizations / clients want to approve a draft, this would require me to continue to grow in my adobe Illustrator skills.

Sometimes the project allows a lot more creative freedom, and I will use a collage of images, or even a rough sketch drawing of what I am envisioning. In all of my work I am using multiple media and continue to grow in my creative formula of dialogue, research, photography, drawing, graphic art, and painting.

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?

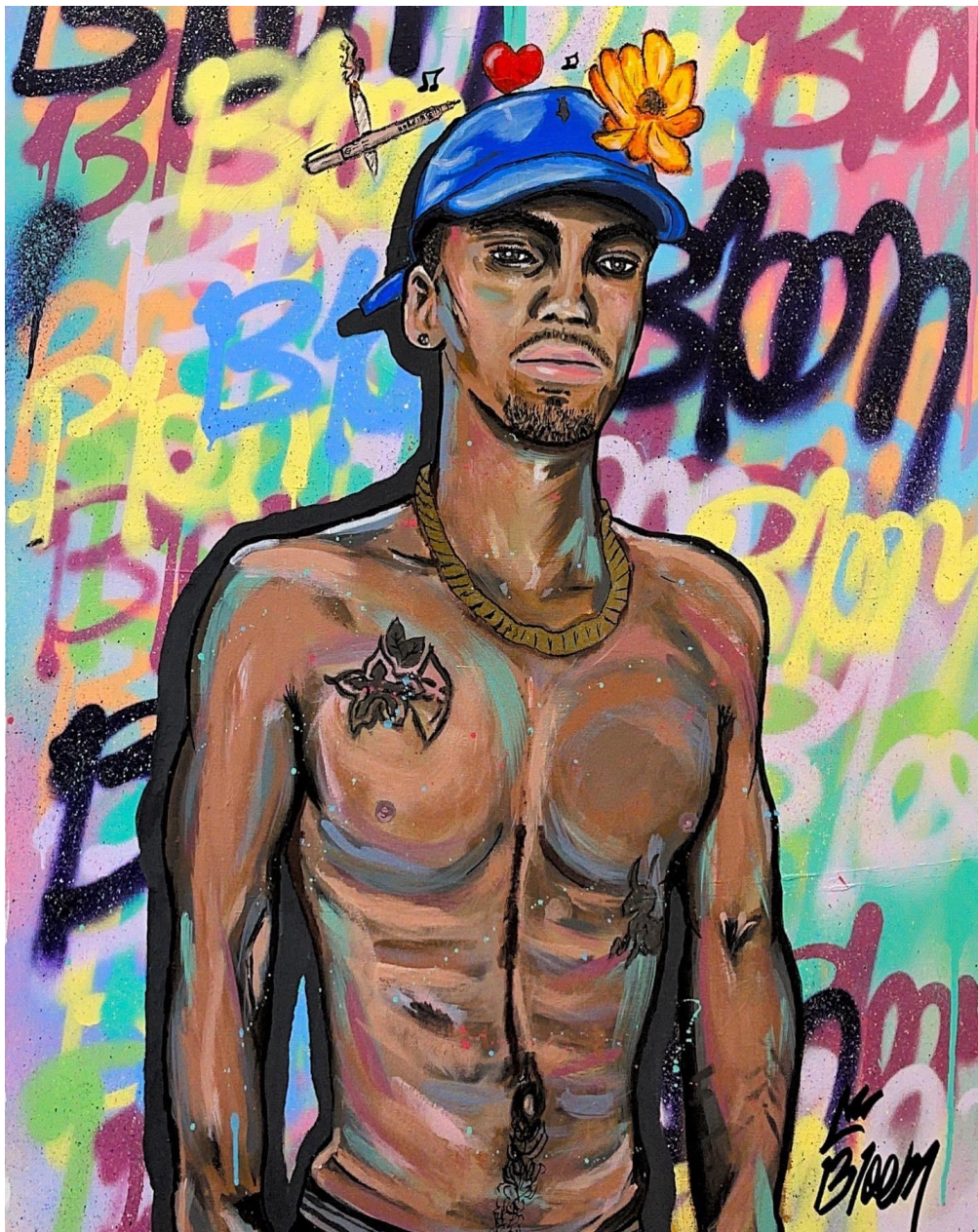


Chicanx Pride Part 2

DG: I want my artwork to honor my story tellers. I want to paint and create beautiful pieces based on real people, existing, being human, being their true selves. If you notice in some of my pieces, I add little touches (color, halo, glows) that gives my story tellers or images of individuals almost like a saint-like look. This is intentional. I want to create pieces that reflect those from marginalized communities, my priority is the Latinx LGBTQIA+ community. So many within this community grew up within religious settings, where the saints and people we pray to do not look like us. Even as a child, I can remember praying by lighting candles with a white Jesus. I think about how many Black and Latinx individuals grow up seeing themselves portrayed so negatively within the media. I want my artwork to paint everyday people in their clothes, outfits, tattoos, scars, hair styles, to be painted in a way that honors their existence because we do not have enough spaces and opportunities to do so. I hope my artwork brings joy to my story tellers. I hope my artwork brings pride to those within the Latinx LGBTQIA+ community. Everyone else, I hope it allows folks the opportunity to see someone in a way they would not normally see them, spreads awareness, and teaches compassion for those who are and live different from you.

OD: Does Chicago provide a vibrant environment for a creative LGBTQ+ person? Where do you draw inspiration from?

DG: This might sound biased, being a Chicago native, but this city truly is an incredible city to be an artist. There are a wide range of opportunities, especially if you are a muralist in Chicago. You can choose to vend and join the many festivals we have, or you can apply for grants to create murals. Chicago has a lot of opportunities for artists to teach their skill through youth programs. I think if you are truly passionate about your craft and get yourself out there you will definitely find your path. That being said, I do think it is important for artists to explore new worlds, which is why I travel a lot. Puerto Rico, New York City, Mexico, have all been huge sources of inspiration in my life. I think something I am working on now is creating art spaces in my life to connect with more artists, especially queer Latinx artists.



Still Standing Painting

OD: Advocacy, building Latinx LGBTQ+ community and celebrating Latino heritage are strong themes in your work. How do you plan to celebrate Hispanic Heritage Month? What new projects are you working on? Can we view any of your upcoming projects in Chicago?

DG: I think my mind, heart, and spirit are all in good places to finally launch my very first solo show. This art show has been painted, hung, and celebrated in the walls of my mind for several years now and it's time to bring it into reality. The closing of Hispanic Heritage month, I'll be inviting Chicago community leaders within the Latinx LGBTQIA+ community and individuals who have supported my artwork for some time now to come together for a

special preview of my upcoming art show, "Papi Blooms" (scheduled to be unveiled in June, 2024). "Papi Blooms", is an exhibit that features the portraits and stories of Latinx Gay, Bi, and Trans male identifying individuals from all over (Mexico, Chicago, Puerto Rico, New York City, LA) all reflecting and responding to the same two-part question, "How do you connect to your femininity through your passion, body, and/or desires; and by doing so, how is this a combat of toxic machismo (masculinity) within the Latinx culture?" Varied size pieces ranging from 1x1 ft to 5x5 ft, made with acrylic paint, spray paint, and paint markers. These pieces will have a creative process that consist of storytelling (captured with audio), recording, photography, vision boards, illustrations, all leading to the final piece. Within the exhibit, I intend to not only showcase the final piece but my creative process because I want this to be accessible for other artists to create in their own way that best fits serving their community. The art show will be followed with a week-long program where I facilitate a discussion, as each piece will act as a talking piece for those that most connect to how that storyteller identifies. My goal is to create a space where everyone feels they can contribute to the conversation and share their own story. People can stay connected for release dates by following my Instagram page, [@here.I.bloom](#) or checkout my webpage at [hereIBloom.com](#).

Interview with Carolyn Hays, the author of Letter to My Transgender Daughter: A Girlhood

**Questions by Sue Ginsburg (she/her),
Toni Weaver (she/her), and
Andrew Zanevsky (he/him)**

Open Doors: In the book, you wrote about “leading with love,” which is very meaningful to us because it’s PFLAG’s new tagline introduced this year. Have you been involved in PFLAG?

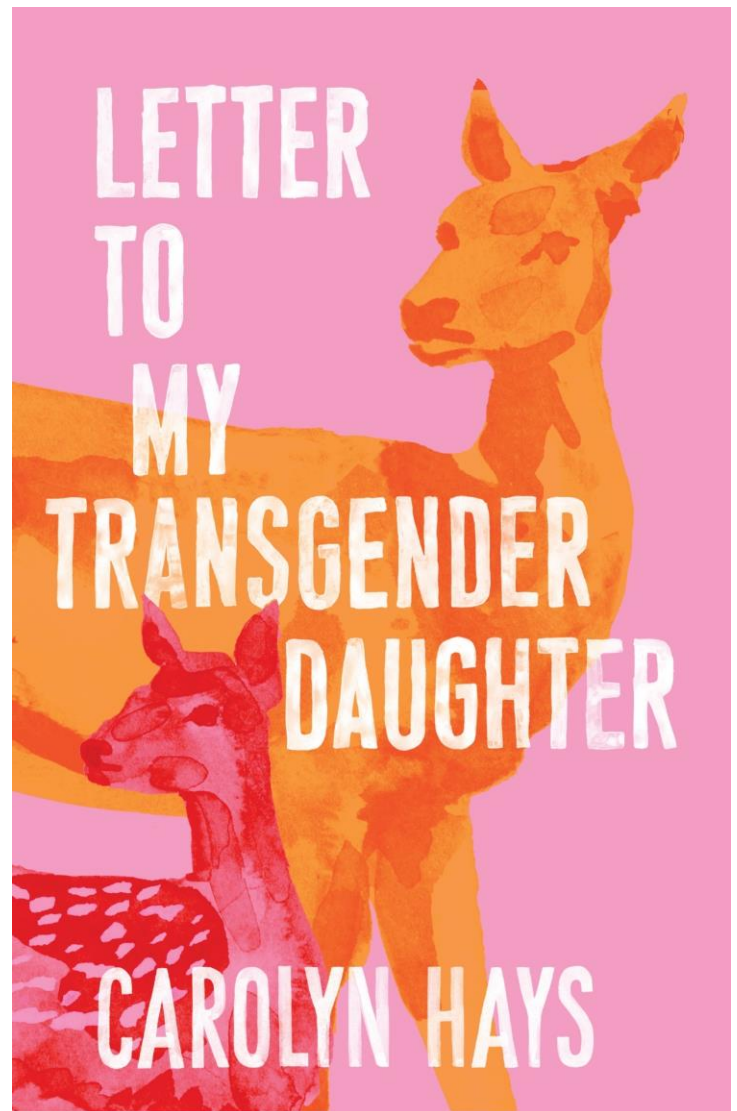
Carolyn Hays: I've been in touch with my local PFLAG, yes, and although most of my volunteer work has been with organizations that help families with transgender kids, specifically, I'm a devotee of Jeanne Manford, the founder of PFLAG, and I talk about her and her son, Morty, in my memoir. I'm so grateful for the work that she did and the foundation she built, her incredible living legacy.

OD: Many of the fears you expressed are shared by those of us who are the parents of gay kids. How can we use this common experience to support one another in this journey?

CH: The journey that my husband and I are on, because of our daughter, has been one of deepening empathy across the board. I think that once you have a child who is a minority, one who is at greater risk on many levels, it helps you to find commonality. Parenting opens us up, and the more we see ourselves in other parents—when we come at parents with love and understanding of each other's fears—we're all better off.

OD: How did you juggle the amount of time and care you gave to your trans daughter with the needs of your other children?

CH: Well, actually, in many ways, our youngest is our easiest. Aside from all of the pressure, noise, and constant navigation necessary to help her (and insulate her), she's very laid back, funny, and smart. She tends to



roll with things. Whereas my oldest two would readily admit they lean pretty anxious. Our third child is chill like the youngest. So, it's not the child but the world that takes shape around her that's so demanding of our time.

Continued →

** The first hardcover edition of the book was titled A Girlhood: Letter to My Transgender Daughter.*

The title and subtitle have been switched for the paperback edition. You may find references to both versions of the title in book stores and reviews.

OD: Did the book bring your family even closer? Did it foster family-sharing moments, i.e. have you grown as a family because of the book?

CH: The event itself--the terrifying knock at the door that upended our lives--was bonding. I think that each of our kids realized that we would do for them what we did for the youngest, that we will protect each other. We became a family that rallies around each other. It was no longer philosophical; it was put to the test. The book is more of a culmination. It's the map of the forest; we lived in the forest, forged the path out together, and everything else pales in comparison to that.

OD: You wrote that your daughter read the book before its publication. What was her reaction? Did she make any changes, revisions, restatements? Was she concerned for her privacy?

CH: She had no editorial suggestions. She feels lucky to have had her early years so well documented--the games she played, the things she said... She realizes it's such a rare thing to have. She wasn't concerned about her privacy. In fact, it's made her consider being more out. She's not there yet, but I think she's thought more about it than if the book hadn't existed.

OD: You used pseudonyms for yourself and your older children to protect the privacy of your family. Why did you not give a pseudonym to your trans daughter?

CH: The nickname she was given in the book was one we used only early in my pregnancy with her. It's a story she knows. It's not a name we ever use for her. But it was helpful to have that seeded in the book because, otherwise, she'd have no name for things like this. As the book is direct address, she's the gender-free pronoun, you, throughout. The nickname we do use for our daughter was given to her by her teachers and we went with it; it's not in the book.

OD: A few years ago, we saw progress in transgender rights and equality. People were becoming more aware

of the subject, better informed, and more supportive. But in the last two years, many states have passed transphobic legislation, and some politicians have made transgender people an open and high-priority target of their political campaigns. What is your prediction for the future? When will transgender people reasonably feel safe and equal in this country?

CH: The current count of anti-trans bills introduced in 2023 stands at 566. I'm very concerned about 2024, deeply worried that so many Republicans have found a winning strategy in targeting trans people. I think it's reckless and deadly, and that it is already seeding terror in the lives of so many families with trans children, families, like ours, who are moving to different states or who can't move or refuse to. The toll it's taking on this very small minority is hard to fathom. Even if it stopped today--and my fear is that they're just getting warmed up, especially in places like Florida and Texas--it would take a very long time to undo the damage. And, as we all know, some damage cannot be undone.

Diana Goetsch wrote a brilliant piece in the LA Times in reaction to the CPAC speaker who said: "transgenderism must be eradicated." She wrote "*It's worth remembering that during the first six years of Hitler's dictatorship more than 400 anti-Jewish decrees and regulations were issued, according to the [Holocaust Encyclopedia](#). Many were national laws, 'but state, regional, and municipal officials, acting on their own initiatives, also promulgated a barrage of exclusionary decrees in their own communities.'* Was the legislation 'anti-Jewish' or 'anti-Jew'? Does it matter, given what happened next?" That piece made me think of Jeanne Manford, her Jewish heritage and faith; she was born in 1920, lived through World War II and how that must have shaped her leadership. We need a broad coalition--the broadest coalition possible--in order to fight for each other.

[Editor: If you have missed it, read Sue Ginsburg's review of *Letter to My Transgender Daughter* on page 32 of the [July issue of Open Doors](#).]

Publish your artworks, photography, essays, poetry, movie and book reviews in Open Doors, send us your ideas of topics to cover and people to interview:

opendoors@pflagillinois.org

Help LGBTQ+ Youth Thrive!



Legal, Educational, and Mental Health Rights for LGBTQ+ Youth



Lunch
Provided

A Symposium and Resource Fair

Date: Saturday November 4th, 2023
Time: 9:00 AM- 4:00 PM
Location: Loyola School of Law, 25 E Pearson St., Chicago IL 60611

Scan the QR code above or visit
www.mattcohenandassociates.com/LGBTQevent
to learn more!

Rainbow 🌈 Sprouts

Youth Outlook invites you to join us for a fall full of inclusive fun and community in a safe and affirming space for LGBTQ+ K-6th graders, their families, and friends.

Fall Schedule

1:00 - 3:00 PM | Naperville

September 9th: Supporting the Coming Out Process

September 23rd: Celebrating Latinx Heritage Month



October 14th: Rainbow Sprouts 1 Year Birthday Party!



October 28th: Halloween Party

November 11th: Celebrating Trans Awareness Month

December 9th: Celebrating our Diverse Abilities



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MPOX/COVID VACCINE CLINICS

TWO LOCATIONS



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SEPT 14TH
4:30PM-6:30PM THURSDAY

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SEPT 21ST
5:00PM-7:00PM THURSDAY

*Online registration recommended for available appointments. Walk-ins welcome. 1st and 2nd dose Mpx vaccine available. Pfizer and Moderna COVID Bivalent booster also available. Supported by ViiV Healthcare's Positive Action Community Grant Program. Financial support has also been provided by Gilead Sciences.

 centeronhalsted.org/MPvaccine.html 

RESEARCH STUDIES

These studies are conducted by institutions not affiliated with PFLAG. We screen materials submitted for this section for legitimacy but encourage you to use your own judgement before entering any study to understand privacy, requirements, and incentives offered by the researchers.

TRANSGENDER FEMALES

Audrey Bowlds, M.S. CCC-SLP, and Dr. Anand Balaji Rangarathnam, PhD., CCC-SLP, are recruiting participants in a research study, “**Development of a self-assessment tool for transwomen.**”

They aim to develop and validate a voice self-evaluation tool that would enable care-seeking transwomen to rate their own voices for an individualized clinical decision making. As part of this larger project, they have designed a preliminary questionnaire and would like to understand the relevance, ease of administration and aspects related to the tool. Based on your input, they hope to revise and redesign the questionnaire that they hope to validate on a larger group of participants.

Participation in this study will involve rating the questionnaire and providing feedback via online survey using Redcap. By clicking the link below, you acknowledge that you are either a speech-language pathologist working in the area of gender affirming voice care or a transwoman/transfeminine individual with at least one year of lived experience as trans. Your participation is entirely voluntary. Researchers will not collect any personally identifiable information in this survey. If you have any questions regarding the study, please contact one or both of the investigators: Dr. Anand Balaji Rangarathnam (branga@midwestern.edu) or Ms. Audrey Bowlds (abowld@midwestern.edu).

redcap.midwestern.edu/surveys/?s=N8NEJKRNP

CISGENDER LESBIAN PARENTS

Laney Alvarado is conducting a research study for a doctoral degree in Clinical Psychology at The Chicago School of Professional Psychology.

The purpose of this study is to examine the process by which cisgender women in same-sex relationships decide to become parents.

You may participate in this study if:

- You are at least 18 years of age
- Assigned female at birth
- Identify as Cisgender
- Identify as Lesbian
- Are in a same-sex relationship
- Are parenting at least one child born between the years of 2010-2017
- You have experienced at least one instance of betrayal trauma as defined by Freyd (2008): "Childhood physical, emotional, or sexual abuse perpetrated by a parent or caregiver" before the age of 18.

During this study, you will be asked to complete an interview about your decision to become a parent. The interview will take approximately 1 hour and will be audio recorded for both remote and in-person interviews. If you wish to continue longer, and at the discretion of the interviewer, the interview may continue. You may complete this study virtually on Zoom or in-person at the Chicago School of Professional Psychology (325 N Wells Street, Chicago, IL 60654) in a private meeting room.

If you are interested and/or have any questions, please contact Laney Alvarado, M.A. at lalvarado1@ego.thechicagoschool.edu or (872) 255-9940 or contact dissertation chair Michelle Cutler, Ph.D at mcutler@thechicagoschool.edu



THEATER

First Christian Church in partnership with Mosaic Players proudly present:



SCAN OR CLICK HERE FOR TICKETS!

Saturday, September 16
TWO SHOWS
3:00 P.M. OR 7:00 P.M.



Performance location:
801 63rd Street
Downers Grove

Open Seating
Doors Open
30 minutes before curtain

“5 Lesbians Eating a Quiche” is presented by arrangement with Concord Theatricals on behalf of Samuel French, Inc. www.concordtheatricals.com



Open Space Arts

OpenSpaceArts.com

Performances are in our home base of 1411 W Wilson. All performances are at 7:30, last 90 minutes, and no late seating is possible.

A massage therapist and his female client don't have much in common. Yet as a year passes, they develop trust and treasure their time together. When the client needs extraordinary support from the therapist, their bond is tested considerably. This serious drama also provides surprises and lots of humor.

"Best new play in the Key West Festival. Plays gingerly on the heart."

– South Florida Sun-Sentinel

Sam Goodstein prosecuted Julius and Ethel Rosenberg for treason in the trial of the century. Their conviction led Sam and his wife Judith to success, notoriety, and a world that had been previously closed to them. But when troubling questions arise about the case, both Sam and Judith must decide how much they're willing to sacrifice for that success and how much they can compromise and still stay who they are. ROSENBERG examines power, gender, and political courage in Washington, DC -- and what has changed -- or hasn't changed -- since 1953.

Open Space Arts presents

MESSAGE THERAPY

A play by Joe Godfrey, Directed by David Zak
Featuring Mary Anne Bowman & Raymond Nicholas



Nine performances Sept 16, 17, 20, 23, 24, 27, 29, and Oct 1 at 7:30.

Open Space Arts, 1411 W Wilson (just East of Clark)
Openspacearts.com

[BUY TICKETS FOR MESSAGE THERAPY](#)

Open Space Arts presents

ROSENBERG

A play by David Meyers, Directed by Michael D. Graham

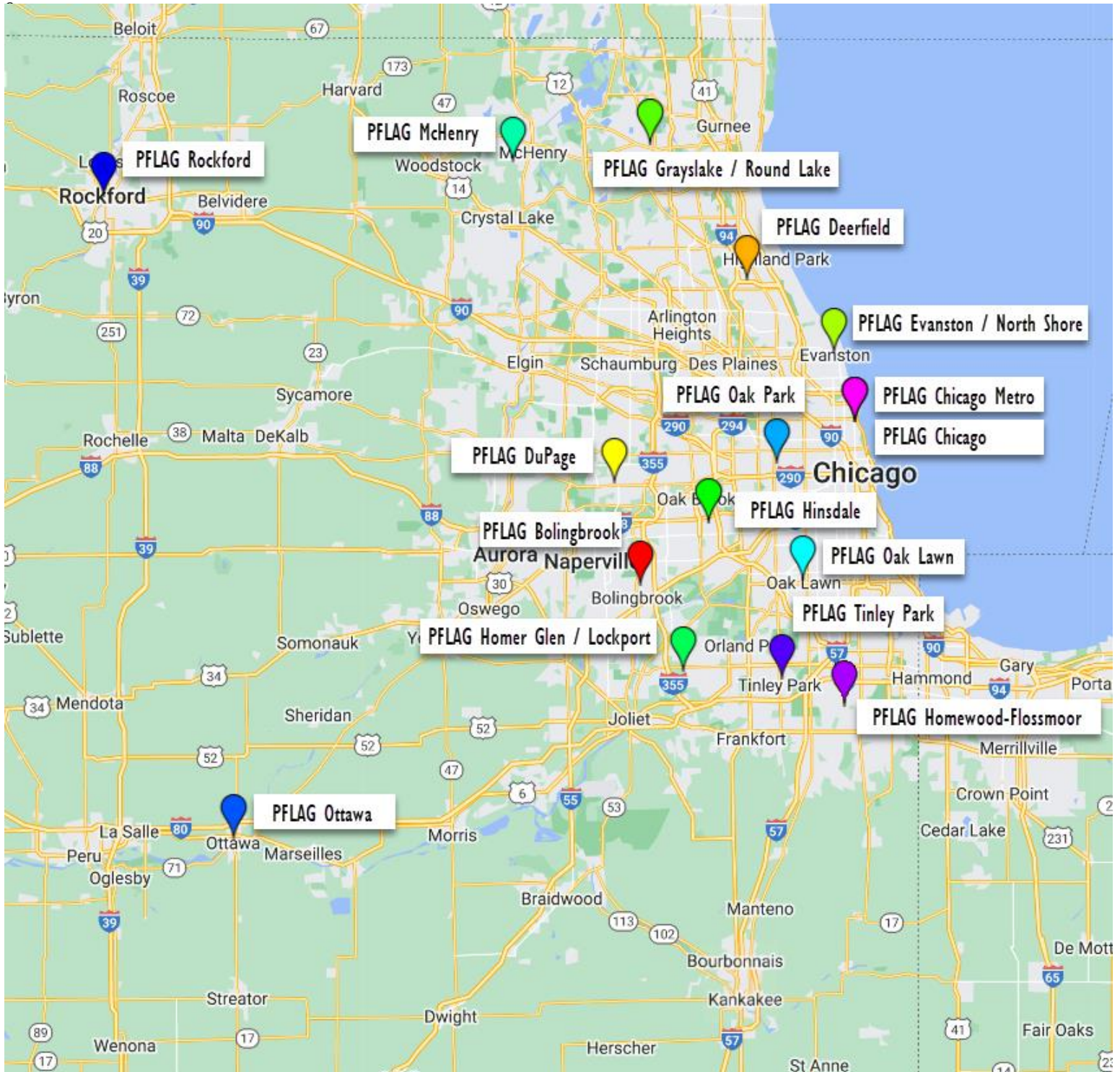


Nine performances October 21, 25, 27, 28, 29 November 1, 3, 4, 5 at 7:30.

Open Space Arts, 1411 W Wilson (just East of Clark)
Openspacearts.com

[BUY TICKETS FOR ROSENBERG](#)

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.