

Naked Identity II by Lauren Muskara – interview and more artworks on pages 15-20



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PFLAG
COUNCIL OF
NORTHERN ILLINOIS

opendoors@pflagillinois.org

Open Doors

March 2024

ANGER vs. LOVE

As I was choosing a topic for this column, I thought about the call to “be angry” or an approval “it’s okay to be angry” that I hear nowadays from people I admire and respect. Anger is a very justifiable reaction to recent events. Nex Benedict, a 16-year-old nonbinary student in Oklahoma died on February 8th after a bullying incident at their high school. Numerous states keep passing discriminatory laws targeting the LGBTQ+ community – you’ll find some news about that on page 6 of this issue. [Texas Attorney General has demanded that PFLAG National turn over information about its support of families in Texas seeking gender-affirming medical care for their transgender youth.](#) Crimes are committed around the world by warmongering despots. We have no deficit of infuriating news. I’m not questioning if it’s okay to be angry – it’s a human emotion and it’s valid. I’m questioning if we can change the world by being angry. Is it productive and constructive?

My answer is “No.” I’m strongly convinced that anger is an ineffective way to improve things. It inspires revolutions, but angry revolutions are bloody and breed hatred on the other side. We just end up in a more and more angry world. It may help to achieve short-term tactical victories, but it’s a terrible long-term strategy. I don’t want to call others to get angry to motivate them to accomplish something – and this is where I disagree with some of my friends in the ally community. Angry people pay a high price, even when their anger helps them to reach goals. Angry people aren’t happy. I also think that it may demotivate someone from constructive actions. If they are angry, they may feel they they’ve already sacrificed their happiness for the cause, and now they don’t have any energy left to do something real. It’s a waste...

If we keep repeating the PFLAG motto “Leading with Love”, but also call for anger, we contradict ourselves. There’s no room for “anger” in “Leading with Love”. These

words are antonyms – anger is destruction while love is creation.

I dream of people becoming kinder to each other. I dream of wars ending forever. I dream of John Lennon’s “Imagine” becoming the world anthem and a blueprint for a future society on this planet. I dream of LGBTQ+ people being safe and respected. I dream of a world full of love, empathy, intelligence, humor – not full of anger, fear, and suffering.

And so, when reacting to terrible events, I acknowledge my anger and anxiety, I understand who is responsible, and I know that I will not forgive them. But I also know that I must step out of my anger and come back to the place of love in my heart to be able to build a better future. It’s not universal love to everyone – definitely not to the heartless hateful people hell-bent on damaging the lives of others while benefitting themselves. It’s my love to the good ones, to the victims, to the innocent, to the kind friends, to my family, to you, my fellow PFLAGers. That love motivates me a hundred times stronger than anger does. That love gives me happiness and strength to keep working on our mission. In Lennon’s words: “You may say I’m a dreamer, But I’m not the only one.”

Andrew Zanevsky (he/him)

PCNI President





The Synchrony Scholarship is a \$2500 unrestricted scholarship for Illinois LGBTQ+ undergraduate, graduate, and continuing students from 17 to 28 years of age with the purpose of encouraging LGBTQ+ people to continue their educational and career aspirations after high school. All responses are confidential.

This application will close after March 30, 2024.

The Synchrony Scholarship is made possible by a generous grant from the Synchrony Foundation and the Synchrony Pride+ Network in partnership with the PFLAG Council of Northern Illinois (PCNI). Synchrony's Education as an Equalizer program is an initiative to expand access to higher education, skills training in high-growth fields, and financial literacy for underserved communities and its own workforce.

If you have any questions, please contact info@pflagillinois.org.

**Access more information
and the application by scanning
or going here:
<http://tinyurl.com/sbbpnvy5>**



VOTER REGISTRATION

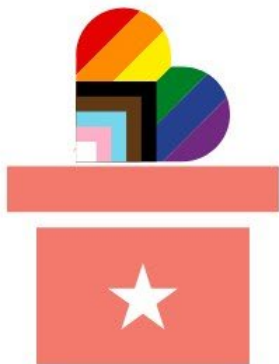
Do you have an IL Driver's License or State ID? Then you can register online to vote!



Scan this code (or click on a computer or tap on a mobile device) to see if you are registered to vote



Scan this code (or click on a computer or tap on a mobile device) to register to vote or update your registration



PFLAG
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Unconditional Love from PFLAG Parents

by Deb Smollen (she/her), PFLAG Hinsdale

Hello everyone, I would like to introduce myself. I am Deb Smollen from the PFLAG Hinsdale chapter. I'm back for my second year coordinating the Mother's Day fundraiser. This year, Julie Perenchio from PFLAG DuPage has agreed to help me run the fundraiser.

My friend and mentor, Marcia Prichason successfully ran this fundraiser for many years. I hope I can live up to Marcia's success with this event.

In 2023 PFLAG's annual Mother's Day fundraiser, "Kisses From Mom" was renamed to "Unconditional Love from PFLAG Parents" to make the event welcoming to all PFLAG parents.

Mother's Day, Sunday May 12th, is only a short time away, and with that comes our long-awaited fundraiser.

Sidetrack, a favorite Chicago LGBTQIA bar, graciously welcomes PFLAG for the afternoon/evening. As we solicit for donations on the sidewalk outside, we exchange Hershey's Kisses (tagged with PFLAG contact info) and REAL hugs from PFLAG parents (and other supportive allies).

It is a great opportunity to feel the amazing outpouring of love and appreciation for the work we do in support of our own LGBTQIA loved ones. It also allows volunteers from different chapters to meet and spend time together.

This fun and emotionally gratifying event is also rewarding financially. Proceeds from the fundraiser are split, with 50% going to Council and the remaining 50% divided evenly amongst the participating chapters.

The event will run from 3:00-8:00 P.M. and will be broken into 3 shifts. We are looking for 7 people per shift. Shifts are as follows:

- **1st 3:00-4:30 pm**
- **2nd 4:30-6:00 pm**
- **3rd 6:00-8:00 pm**

Anyone wishing to volunteer for a shift should contact me via email at casey971@att.net or cell phone 630-936-1660.

Please provide your name(s), how many people will be participating, your chapter, email address, contact telephone number, and choice of shift.

Please make a commitment to be there if you sign up, as some people are turned away each year due to the limited amount of slots per shift.

I would like to thank everyone in advance for their support.

Sidetrack is located at 3349 North Halsted, Chicago, IL 60657.

I am including testimonials from fellow PFLAG members, who have volunteered for many years.

Mother's Day is a happy day for most of us; spending time with our families with dinner, candy and flowers. Since joining PFLAG I have found new meaning attached to this day of celebrating mothers, I think it is a day of mothers being mothers- right from the heart.

This fundraiser at Sidetrack encompasses everything that being a mom means to me. As people pass by they stop and we explain why we are there; many stop to share their stories. The stories vary from having accepting parents to the ones we so often hear at our meetings- ones of rejection and loss. As they share laughter can be heard and tears are often shed- by them and me! Mom hugs are also given freely to say you are a person who deserves love and acceptance.

So please come join the PFLAG parents and spend a few hours of your Mother's Day at this event- you'll be changed. It is truly one of the things I most look forward to every year.

Meg Valentini- PFLAG Chicago Metro

One way I express my love for the LGBTQIA+ community is by participating in Hugs & Kisses from Mom at Sidetrack on North Halsted on Mother's Day. It is hard to miss us — we are loud and proud. Even though it might start off as a bit awkward, most interactions come with a warm, "I love PFLAG! Happy Mother's Day" and "Thank you for being here!". I also hear too frequently, "I wish my mom accepted and loved me when I came out." As a PFLAG parent or ally, your effort to be present and express love to the LGBTQIA+ community on Mother's Day has a positive impact and brings a smile to many who don't have support from their biological families.

Suellen Cook, PFLAG Hinsdale



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

LGBTQ+ asylum seekers face hardships in their home countries and in their journeys to the U.S. Persecution due to sexual orientation is grounds to apply for asylum in the U.S., however asylum seekers face long wait times to process their requests to stay in the U.S. and mistreatment by Border Patrol officers.

STATE MATTERS

Florida – State to no longer allow gender marker changes on driver's licenses. Robert Kynoch, deputy executive director of the Florida Department of Highway Safety and Motor Vehicles, wrote in a memo to the department's executive director on January 26th that the department would rescind a provision on "gender requirements" in the Driver License Operations Manual that allowed Floridians to change the gender marker on their licenses. State Representative Anna Askamani described the policy changes as "another gross example of how every state agency has been weaponized to attack trans people."

Iowa – Bill to remove anti-discrimination protections for gender identity from state law fails. The attempt to strip trans and non-binary Iowans of their civil rights protections failed to clear a judiciary subcommittee, where it failed on a 3-0 vote on January 31st.

Utah – Governor Cox signs bathroom ban bill into law. The governor signed the bill into law on January 30th. The bill requires people to use bathrooms and locker rooms in public schools and government-owned buildings that match their sex assigned at birth, as well as requiring new government buildings to include single-occupant bathrooms.

Virginia – All anti-trans bills defeated. On February 8th, the Senate Education and Health Committee voted to table SB37, a forced outing bill, and SB68, an anti-trans athlete ban. All other anti-LGBTQ+ bills actively under consideration have also been defeated in committee or withdrawn by their sponsors.

South Dakota – State issues apology and payment to trans advocacy group. The Transformation Project's contract with the state Department of Health to provide community health services to the LGBTQ+ community was abruptly canceled on December 16, 2022. The Transformation Project sued, claiming the cancellation was discriminatory. The state settled the suit, agreeing to issue an apology from the Department of Health and a payment of \$300,000.

GLOBAL MATTERS

Canada – Prime Minister condemns Alberta anti-trans policies. Prime Minister Trudeau called the new policies, which would place restrictions on medically necessary care and sports participation for trans and non-binary youth, an attack on vulnerable Canadians.

Russia – First known arrests made under anti-LGBTQ+ activism policy. At least three people have been jailed or fined for displaying rainbow-colored items.

Vatican City – The Pope criticizes "hypocrisy" in some reactions to his decision to allow blessings for same-sex couples. In an interview released on February 7th, the Pope said "Nobody gets scandalized if I give my blessings to a businessman who perhaps exploits people, and this is a very grave sin. But they get scandalized if I give them to a homosexual."

Greece – Parliament votes to legalize same-sex marriage. The Greek parliament voted 176-76 to approve a bill legalizing same-sex marriage and adoption by same-sex couples on February 15th. Greece is the first Christian Orthodox country to legalize same-sex marriage.

MEDIA MATTERS

Amber Glenn becomes first openly LGBTQ+ U.S. women's figure skating gold medalist. Glenn, who is openly bisexual and pansexual, won the U.S. women's figure skating championship on January 26th.

Play based on the life of PFLAG founder Jeanne Manford to be staged at the University of California, Santa Barbara. "Everybody's Favorite Mothers" by playwright James Sill runs at the UCSB Hatlen Theater February 22–March 2.

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

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to receive the full newsletter:
pflagil.org/membership-and-donation/**

List compiled by Kathy King-Watters
(she/her/ella) of PFLAG Tinley Park

PFLAG **2024 Pride Event List**
Updated 2/21

 **Sat May 18 Springfield Pride**
Sun May 19 Plainfield Pride
Sat June 1 Elgin Pride
Sat June 1 Rockford Pride
Sat June 1 Vandalia Pride

 **Sat June 1 Shedd Aquarium Pride Night**
Sun June 2 Equality Illinois Pride Kickoff
Sun June 2 Buffalo Grove Pride

 **Fri June 7 Homewood Flossmoor Pride**
Sat June 8 Ottawa Pride
Sat June 8 Woodstock PrideFest
Sun June 9 Woodstock PrideFest
Sun June 9 Aurora Pride
Sun June 9 Kankakee Pride Picnic
Sat June 15 Park Forest Pride
Sat June 15 Southern Pride Carbondale
Sat June 15 Hawthorn Mall Pride Fest

 **Thu June 20 Romeoville Pride**
Thu June 20 DeKalb Pride Fest & March
Sat June 22 Elmhurst Family Pride
Sat June 22 Mt. Vernon Pride in the Park
Sat June 29 Navy Pier Pride
Sun June 30 Chicago Pride Parade
Sat July 13 Ottawa Pride Prom
Sat July 27 Bolingbrook Pride
Sat August 3 Bloomington Pride
Sat September 14 Naper Pride
Sat September 21 Joliet Pride

 **More dates will be added as we learn of them!**

Trans, Media, and Fashion

FashionBar Chicago is pleased to announce **Chicago Fashion Week** powered by FashionBar, scheduled from April 21st to April 30th 2024, at Water Tower Place on Chicago's Magnificent Mile.

Program includes: Thursday, April 25, 2024:

Trans, Media, and Fashion 5:30pm to 8:30pm - [GET TICKETS](#)

2022
U.S. TRANS SURVEY
Early Insights




US Trans Survey - Early Insights

The first results from the 2022 U.S. Trans Survey were released last week. Over 92,000 people across the U.S. participated in the survey, making it the largest survey ever of transgender people in this country. Given all of the misinformation and disinformation circulating online and in the media, this survey comes at a critical time for our trans and nonbinary loved ones.

View the highlights and download the full Early Insights report at ustranssurvey.org.

CHICAGO FASHIONBAR WEEK ★

THE SHOWS

DESIGNER REVEAL & AVANT GARDE COMPETITION
SATURDAY, APRIL 13TH
2024 2PM - 6PM

ATTEND THE SHOWS
SUNDAY, APRIL 21ST
APRIL 28TH 2024

SHOP THE MARKETPLACE
SATURDAY, APRIL 27TH
- APRIL 28TH 2024
WATER TOWER PLACE (LEVEL 3)

FEATURING MODEL & ENTREPRENEUR SHARAUN FROM NYFW & AMERICA'S NEXT TOP MODEL - @SHARAUNB

SCAN TO GET TICKETS





CALL TO ACTION

Dear PFLAG member:

This year, over 400 anti-LGBTQ+ bills have been introduced across the country in state legislatures attacking our right to exist. Here in Illinois we are doing the opposite and protecting LGBTQ+ lives.

Support trans people by taking action for State Rep. Kevin Olickal's bill to modernize the name change law. [**Click HERE to tell your State Representative to support and co-sponsor House Bill 5164 to modernize the state's name change law.**](#)

Among its provisions, HB 5164 would:

- Cap the exorbitant court filing fees for name changes;
- Repeal the archaic requirement that an individual must publicize their name change in news media; and
- Protect an individual by allowing them to request that their name change record be kept private if public disclosure would negatively impact their health or safety.
- HB 5164 would advance safety and support for many communities, including transgender people, adoptees, survivors of domestic or intimate partner abuse, survivors of human trafficking, survivors of gender-based violence, and refugees.

Take action today. [**Click HERE to tell your State Representative to support and co-sponsor HB 5164.**](#)
Thank you for your advocacy.

In solidarity

José Wilson
Director of Civic Engagement
Pronouns: He/him
EQUALITY ILLINOIS

How to express positions on pending Illinois legislation

**Submitted by Art Nicol (he/him),
PFLAG Chicago Metro**

REGISTER ONLINE WITH THE ILLINOIS GENERAL ASSEMBLY:

1. Go to the Illinois General Assembly Website at www.ilga.gov
2. At the website, click on GA Dashboard found in red under Reports and Inquiry
3. At the Dashboard site, click on Register on the left column
4. At the Create an Account page, follow the requests to put in your email and create your password. Check that you agree to the Terms and Agreements and then click register.
5. You will receive an email acknowledging your registration. You must confirm your registration from that email.
6. Now that you have created an account, you can log in whenever you need to file a witness slip.

FILE A WITNESS SLIP:

1. First, follow the directions above (steps 1 and 2) to get to the GA Dashboard once you are registered.
2. When you are there, click log in found at the upper right of the screen.
3. Then click Senate or House as appropriate at the left of the screen.
4. Then click Committees at the left of the screen.
5. Go down to find the appropriate Committee and if it says Scheduled to the right of it, click on the second icon View Committee Hearings.
6. Then, click on View Legislation on right.
7. When bills appear, find the bill of interest and click on the second icon Create Witness Slip (a pen and paper).
8. Complete the witness form. Your personal information will be filled in from your registration data. Leave the Description as Original Bill. Make sure to select either opponent or proponent based on the bill you are referring to under POSITION and record of appearance only under TESTIMONY. Check the Terms of Agreement then click Create (Slip).



GENEVA/TRI-CITIES

by Elaine McClure (she/her)

PFLAG Geneva/Tri-Cities is hosting our inaugural meeting, our Meet & Greet on Monday, March 11th from 6:30-8pm to introduce ourselves to the community. Please email us at pflaggenevatricities@gmail.com to get location details. We will continue our monthly meetings on April 8th, the 2nd Monday of each month from 6:30-8pm. We are excited for our Chapter to connect with the community! You can contact us to get added to our email list for chapter updates & also follow us on [Facebook](#).

At our March Meet & Greet we will be collecting donations for the Charity Out of the Closet. Out of the Closet collects donations of clothing, accessories, and beauty products for transgender/nonbinary/gender nonconforming individuals from ages 8-80+. They host pop-up closets throughout the suburbs and the city of Chicago for transgender/nonbinary/gender nonconforming individuals to shop for free. Here is a list of items they accept:

- Men's, Women's, and Teen's clothing
- Wigs
- Shoes
- Bags, wallets, and backpacks
- Jewelry
- Chest binders
- Hair accessories and styling equipment
- Undergarments
- Packers
- New makeup and makeup brushes
- New beauty and hygiene products

For more information about Out of the Closet Charity, please check them out at www.outoftheclosetcharity.org.

We can't wait to connect with the Fox Valley Community March 11th & don't forget to bring a donation for this amazing charity!



TINLEY PARK

by Kathy King-Watters (she/her/ella)

PFLAG Tinley Park has been jumping into planning our year with both feet. It's amazing how much is already planned and we're still in February! We've been compiling a list of pride events in Illinois and we welcome more additions to it, so please email us at pflagtinleypark@gmail.com if you know of others so they can be added. We're looking forward to attending some of these in areas outside of Chicagoland and are excited to see how even in these tough times for our LGBTQ+ loved ones, there are a lot of people and places that support them.

In a similar vein, we've been building off an idea started by our friends at the Kankakee Area LGBTQ Network. Called the Rainbow Reference Pages, we've been listing affirming and LGBTQ+ businesses, therapists, and medical practitioners in the Chicagoland area as we become aware of them. In doing so, we've made great connections with new partners we had no idea were in the area! All the entries were referred by the businesses themselves, chapter members, or followers of our Facebook page. We want to support those who support our LGBTQ+ loved ones, so feel free to contact us at pflagtinleypark@gmail.com with other businesses to add. We have included directories like Everywhere is Queer, Strands for Trans, the LGBT Chamber of Commerce Illinois, the National LGBT Chamber of Commerce, and the Chicago Coalition of Welcoming Churches as resources also. There is also a section that lists gender affirming medical programs, since people often ask where their loved ones can get affirming care. A newer program is the one at the University of Chicago, which happens to own Ingalls Hospital in Harvey. Their program helps bring gender affirming care to the south suburbs, something that has been sorely lacking. You can find the Rainbow Reference Pages at this link: [Rainbow Reference Pages - PFLAG](#).

PFLAG

MCHENRY

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

In late January, PFLAG McHenry (County) participated in the People In Need (PIN) Forum, at McHenry County College (MCC). This is a free, annual event to which the public is invited, where they can learn about the abundance of local resources and support available for themselves and others. Exhibitors showcase essential community resources available to help those in need and present workshops to address topics such as immigration, senior issues, caregiver resources, LGBTQ, substance abuse and addictions, and homelessness. PFLAG McHenry staffed a resource table where we made available many of our publications, along with some of our "bling" & "freebies". We met & chatted with some wonderful people, making new contacts & reconnecting with old friends. This is traditionally our first event of each year, after a winter of "hibernation", so it felt good to be back out among the community.

Speaking of winter "hibernation", we ventured back out into the real world, ditched our Zoom meeting for February, & actually had our first in-person meeting since last

November. While Zoom meetings are easy to attend & convenient during inclement weather, there is no substitution for the comradery & fellowship that is generated during in-person meetings. We had some new faces join us in a lively evening of conversation & discussions. We are looking forward to seeing more of our friends, in person, as the weather continues to improve & we all start to venture out of our homes a little more. I sincerely hope the prediction of an early Spring from our very own groundhog, Woodstock Willie, holds true!



Ellen Swanson (left) and Chris Kocol (right)
at the People In Need (PIN) Forum. Photo by Toni Weaver.

PFLAG

DUPAGE

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

PFLAG DuPage is now in its 21st year! The chapter continues to thrive and regularly attracts new members. The demographics of the group have changed somewhat over the years as we now have more families than ever before with transgender and non-binary loved ones.

PFLAG DuPage meets in Wheaton, and we recently joined the Wheaton Chamber of Commerce. Our goal in working with the Chamber is to expand our visibility and credibility within the community and to increase support for LGBTQ+ initiatives. Kelly continues to meet with librarians in the area to identify ways to collaborate. And as we leave the holiday season behind us we are in the process of lining up community activities for this spring and summer. Our first community activity of the year will be to host a PFLAG table at the Glenbard Parents' Series Community Wellness Fair in Glen Ellyn on Thursday, Feb. 22.

For our February meeting we had Dave McNamara (Volunteer Coordinator) from 360 Youth Services speak to us. Not surprisingly, 360 Youth Services serves a disproportionately large number of LGBTQ+ youth. Dave provided information about the housing programs offered by 360 Youth Services for youth ages 18 - 24 which include the emergency shelter, transitional housing, and the rapid rehousing project. He also shared information about the Cornerstone Group Home for boys aged 13 - 17, youth counseling for ages 10 - 25, and the extensive substance abuse program. It was great to hear about the numerous organizations that come together to make these programs a success.

Our Name Change Scholarship Program, created in 2021 in memory of Paul Hanson, recently awarded its eighth scholarship! Each scholarship covers the financial fees for an LGBTQ+ individual to legally change their name and gender marker to match that of their true being. It's been rewarding to watch this program grow. What better gift than that which allows someone to live as their authentic self!

PFLAG

DEERFIELD

by **Sue Ginsburg (she/her)**

We welcomed LK Strader (she/they), Founder/CEO of Sex For Humans. LK is an affirming therapist, intimacy and sex coach as well as a sex educator. LK's motivation for founding Sex For Humans was to help her fellow humans get back to the basics of intimacy. She draws on her experience with activism and sex education, coupled with her MA in Psychology, to provide personalized services for couples and individuals, 18 years and older, seeking to re-ignite intimacy in their lives. Her clinical practice areas are focused on couples, individuals, dating profiles, sex education and Parents of LGBTQIA+ children. To parents of LGBTQIA+ children LK reaches out: "Whether your children are young and still at home or off living their lives as independent adults, I'm here to support. For many parents there is a strong desire to be supportive and practice allyship for their children and it can be challenging to navigate education and support of the children's LGBTQIA+ identity, I've got you. Likewise, parents experience a range of emotions related to their child coming out. That's normal and it's not your child's role to help you process those feelings. That's why I'm here. I want to help you educate yourself, support you in processing your feelings and help you discover how to support your child as their most authentic self."

LK recognized that while helping your child to support her real self, and supporting them as they come out, adults needed support as well and she wanted to help them.

She provides support for parents on how to teach their children sex ed. and makes sure young people have access to this information. LK helps parents process the knowledge of their child coming out.

She will even help write a dating profile for you!

Some of her workshops include:

- **Queer Sex ED.:** Comprehensive sex ed. for all. Sex ed. should start early and warns parents to not shame curiosity in their children.
- **Overcoming sexual shame:** learning about our relationship with shame and how to handle it.

You can reach LK at: www.sexforhumans.com or by email at lk@sexforhumans.com

[Ed: Read an interview with LK on pages 25-26.]

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.

January and February have been a bit of a quiet month but we are always available to provide support for all who need it. Here's a fun update: **PFLAG Oak Park Area is now up to 28 paid members and counting!** This number is up from just 8 back in 2020! Our community is growing but our bond is only getting stronger.

OP Chapter Update! We have a **NEW CHAPTER PRESIDENT!** During the latest chapter elections, member **Sarah Corbin** was elected to serve as our new president. Congratulations, Sarah!!

During our January meeting, we started the new year with a special guest speaker, PFLAG DuPage leader Dan Hemmer! Dan's spouse, Kelly Hemmer, is the chapter president for PFLAG DuPage and she was in attendance as well! As the proud parent of a nonbinary child, Dan is passionate about this work and shared his wealth of knowledge gained from his years of experience, as well as from his years of attending the PFLAG National Convention, including this year! The key takeaway from his presentation was this, we don't need to understand each person, we just need to value them as they are. Unconditional love is an action. Live it by respecting each person's unique self. You can even learn a lot about yourself in the process.

In times of uncertainty, confusion, or ignorance, it is best to keep ourselves educated for the benefit of the ones we love. Many wonderful resources were recommended during our meeting that ranged from websites to books. I

compiled a short list below for anyone wishing to check them out.

- pflag.org/resource/transgender-reading-list-for-adults
- What Would You Do? – Tips & Tools for PFLAGers and Allies in Tough Situations: [Recording & Training Toolkit](#)
- Book: [I Have Something To Tell You](#) by Chasten Buttigieg
- Official PFLAG Website: pflagoakpark.org/about
- March 31st, Trans Day Of Visibility → Resources: glaad.org/tdov & [Trans Day of Visibility: A Global Perspective | Stonewall](#).

Lastly, please check out the official PFLAG Oak Park Area Website created by one of our members, Cori McMillan! <https://pflagoakpark.org/> It highlights the history of our chapter, meeting details, contact information, and soon-to-be launched is our tab of Resources.

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

Please enter through the double doors (in the rear of the building) from the parking lot off Kenilworth.

Our next meeting will be held in the new year (still hybrid: in person and via Zoom) on March 24th at 3PM. Mark your calendars!



Guest speaker Dan Hemmer, PFLAG DuPage

PFLAG

OTTAWA

by **Rev. Jennifer Amy-Dressler**
(she/her)

Given that the LGBTQIA+ community is often the target of book challenges, most active PFLAG members agree with PFLAG's stance against banning books. But did you ever come across a book that you DID want to ban?

The Ottawa chapter PFLAG read a "children's book" at our January meeting, received by our chapter president's children during the December holiday period. As it came from a relative who does not hold the family's supportive stances on gender and orientation, the parents wisely diverted children's attention until they could preview the book. If you have not heard of the "children's" picture book "Johnny the Walrus," you have probably heard of its author Matt Walsh, a far right conservative commentator with The Daily Wire. The satirical picture book is actually written for adults. It attacks transgender identity by comparing it to a child's imagination at play, skewers the idea that trans children know their actual gender, and taunts parents and social institutions (including schools, psychology, and medicine) who support trans kids. Because of the mocking tone and offensive nature of the book, we read it silently as a group from photos of the pages shared on screen, then discussed it.

Unfortunately, this is not the only example of books that might initially present as innocent. Particularly in the far-right conservative religious realm, books are taking a new tone of "loving" LGBTQ+ people. Yet these books do not accept gender identities or sexual orientations that do not align with religiously-prescribed roles. Readers are encouraged to be loving, essentially to gain trust before then attempting to "correct" or "fix" the LGBTQ+ person. Bait-and-switch, or wolf-in-sheep's-clothing. The discussion was an eye-opening reminder of the need to maintain vigilance, and to speak up against hateful speech in publishing. While banning such books would feel good, educating people so they don't fall for these messages is the wiser, better, longer-lasting, albeit harder, strategy.

PFLAG

HINSDALE

by **Marcia Prichason (she/her)**

Our February speaker was David Settje. David is an author of both non-fiction and what he calls "Gay Speculative Fiction" under the pen name, Damian Serbu. His talk focused on the latter. David is also a member of Equality Downers Grove and serves on the Education Committee.

David is a self-described history buff and a college history professor. He describes speculative fiction as writing involving magic, the unknown, ghosts and vampires but without the horror element. His identity as a gay man figures into his novels.

David began writing fiction halfway through graduate school. It was a stress reliever for him, and a way to relax. He always was a fan of vampire, mystery and gothic fiction. He adds historical events, such as the French Revolution, into his novels. We had a really engaging conversation with David, who is interesting, personable and enthusiastic about his subject. You can find information about him on his website, <https://damianserbu.com>.

Our **March 3rd speaker will be Michelle Langheld**, the parent/guardian coordinator of Rainbow Sprouts for kids from grades kindergarten through 6th grade. Rainbow Sprouts is part of Youth Outlook.

Email opendoors@pflagillinois.org to publish your artworks, photography, essays, poetry, movie and book reviews in **Open Doors**, send us online resources to share and ideas on topics to cover and people to interview.

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PFLAG

PTI CHICAGO

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

Amid the big-picture doom and gloom, our flesh-and-blood trans kids and grandkids live, learn, work and pursue their private dreams in Chicago and Los Angeles, Minneapolis and Morton Grove. And their news is not all bleak. At our February 8th meeting, with only 12 participants and the planets aligned in our favor, we took time to share good news and let it sparkle, like precious gems . . . or Valentines:

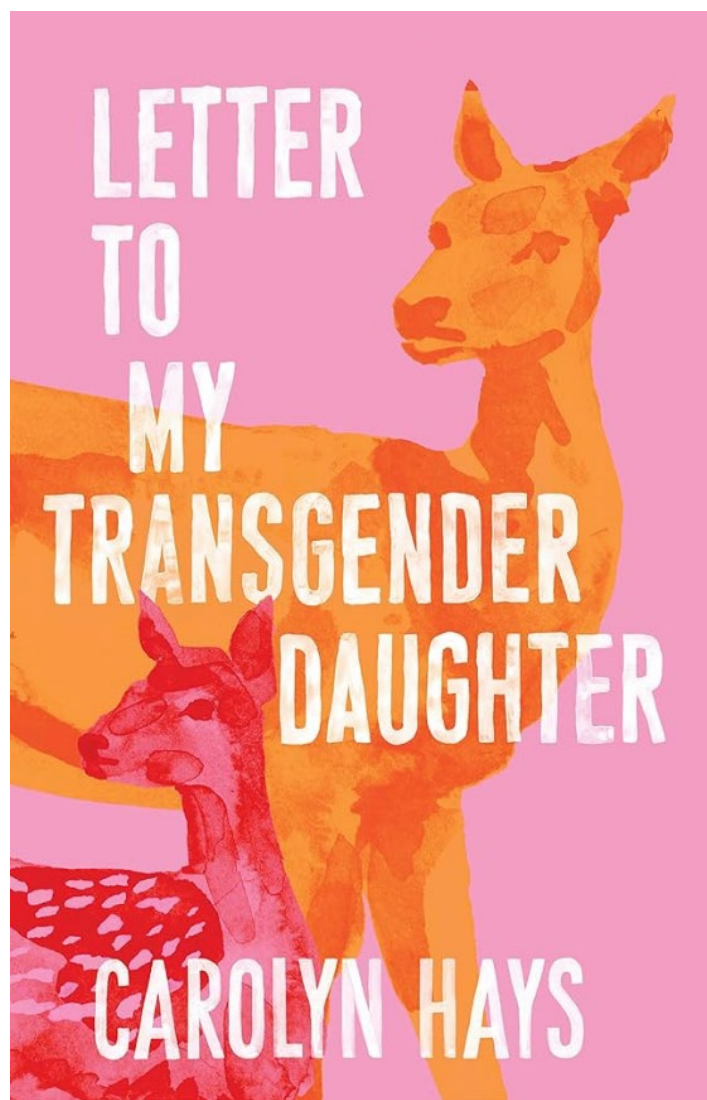
- A child steeled herself to attend her first trans-femme support meeting—and forgot all about feeling awkward and self-conscious.
- A recent rabbinical school graduate was hired by an activist congregation in the American South.
- A trans male/nonbinary couple took a risk and challenged their prospective landlord to alter conditions of the lease that they regarded as unfair. Won and done.
- A 20-something daughter dressed up and accompanied her proud mom to a glittery big-city gala benefit where she was embraced by old and new friends and told she was gorgeous. (We all saw a photo and were dazzled.)
- Having walked numerous times past a community church that sported a Pride flag, a trans teenager ventured inside—and was welcomed. They're now a regular attendee.
- A trans 30-year-old is the first-ever queer person (and the youngest member) to join the board of directors of the church they grew up in.

Our next Book Club selection is the acclaimed memoir by Carolyn Hays, *[A Girlhood: Letter to My Transgender Daughter](#)*, which we'll discuss during the first hour of our

April 11th meeting. For a list of our past Book Club readings and recommendations, contact Francey (she/her) at Franceyo101@gmail.com.

We hope you'll join our next meeting! We continue to greet many first-timers and serve as an important resource for parents and grandparents of the extended LGBTQI+ community.

PTI Chicago gathers via Zoom on the second Thursday of each month, so **our next meeting is Thursday, March 14th from 7:00 pm to 9:00 pm**. Participants will be sent an email with the meeting link and password a few days before the meeting. Parents, guardians, or family members of transgender, nonbinary, or gender-nonconforming individuals who would like to join us for the first time should e-mail PTI Chicago co-president Francey Oscherwitz (she/her) at Franceyo101@gmail.com.



Lauren Muskara

Interview by Ann McAuliffe (she/her)

ARTIST STATEMENT

Lauren Muskara (b. 1997, TX) is a Chicago-based biomedical visualization designer and communicator, researcher, and fine artist. Her work examines the intersection of art, science, medicine, and technology. Comprised of realistic and minimalist paintings and drawings aimed at amplifying complex biomedical experiences, her work questions the connections between biomedical exploration and the expressive, conceptual aims of art. Passionate about advancing initiatives of diversity, equity, and inclusion within the realm of gender-affirming care, she seeks to explore possibilities in the areas of anaplastology, biomedical illustration, painting, drawing, and interactive media.

Previous locations of Lauren's publications and exhibitions include the American Journal of Bioethics, the American Chemical Society's Journal of Chemical Education, Frontiers in Immunology, Springer Protocols, the Dallas Museum of Art, and the International Museum of Surgical Science. Lauren obtained a [Master of Science in Biomedical Visualization](#) with an emphasis on visual learning, visual thinking, and scientific inquiry. Currently, Lauren is researching prostheses as a non-surgical alternative to surgery for transgender, non-binary, and intersex (TNBI) individuals and looks at how visual elements can be used to advance survey methodology. Her work has been awarded a [Walter Spohn Trust \(WST\) Anaplastology Research Grant](#), which awards those whose interdisciplinary research has the potential to make a genuine difference in the lives of anaplastology patients. Lauren was also awarded the Elena M. Zavos Isotita Endowed Scholarship for her commitment to the transgender community.

To bolster the impact of biomedical visualization, Lauren volunteers in professional organizations such as the Association of Medical Illustrators (AMI) and the Student Association of Medical Artists (SAMA). In SAMA, she founded the position of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) chair. During this time, she



helped organize an annual guest lecture, an outreach event, and monthly community forums. Such meetings utilized a DEI lens (considering race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, socio-economic status, age, invisible and visible disabilities, religious beliefs, political beliefs, or other ideologies) to create a safe space to address concerns from members.

Before pursuing a Master of Science in Biomedical Visualization, Lauren graduated from [Southwestern University](#) in 2021 with a Bachelor of Arts in Studio Art, a Bachelor of Science in Biology, and a Minor in Health Studies. While at Southwestern, she divided her time between conducting undergraduate research in a molecular ecology lab and developing her fine arts practice. In addition to being a Paideia, King Creativity, and SCOPE scholar, she received the Lancaster Award in Studio Art, the Vicente D. Villa Award in Ecology and Evolutionary Biology, and the King Creativity Walt Potter Prize.

Lauren Muskara's Contact Info:

Email: lauren.muskara@gmail.com

Website: linktr.ee/LaurenMuskara

Instagram: [@musk.art](https://www.instagram.com/musk.art)

Twitter/X: [@Lauren_Muskara](https://twitter.com/Lauren_Muskara)

LinkedIn: [@Lauren-Muskara](https://www.linkedin.com/company/Lauren-Muskara)

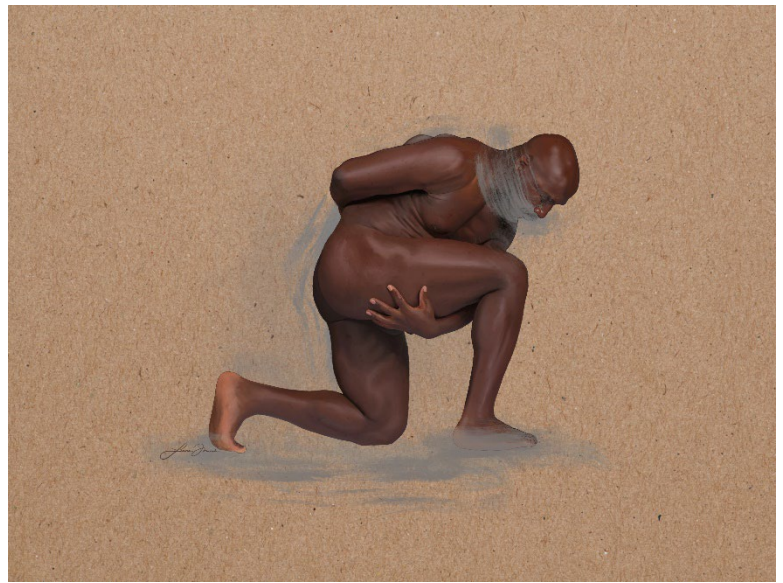
INTERVIEW

Open Doors: Welcome to Open Doors. You are a biomedical visualization specialist, researcher, and fine artist. You recently graduated from the University of Illinois at Chicago (UIC) with an M.S. in Biomedical Visualization. Congratulations! How did you discover your passion for painting and drawing? When did you first start painting, and when did you decide to be an artist?

Lauren Muskara: Thank you! I have been drawing since I could hold a pencil, and my parents enrolled me in art classes at the age of five. I didn't start seriously viewing art as a career until I met my first art mentor, Anne Quaintance Howard (Ms. Q), in middle school. At the time, I was also intrigued by the life sciences and was unaware of career paths that intersected art with science. Ms. Q. encouraged me to incorporate my passion for the visual arts with my interest in the life sciences. I began oil painting during my undergraduate education. My very first painting class was with Kristen Van Patten, who encouraged me to pursue a degree and career in studio art.

OD: You have a fascinating quote on your website, "where art & science converge" - which is very emblematic of your academic pursuits. Can you share some background with us on your undergraduate studies as both an artist and a scientist?

LM: While at Southwestern University, I worked as a researcher in a molecular ecology lab under Dr. Romi L. Burks. In this lab, I studied the invasive apple snail (*Pomacea maculata*) and the utility of environmental DNA (eDNA), which refers to the genetic material an organism sheds into the environment. My time in this lab led to the



Naked Identity III, Digital media, 2023, 16.5" x 22"



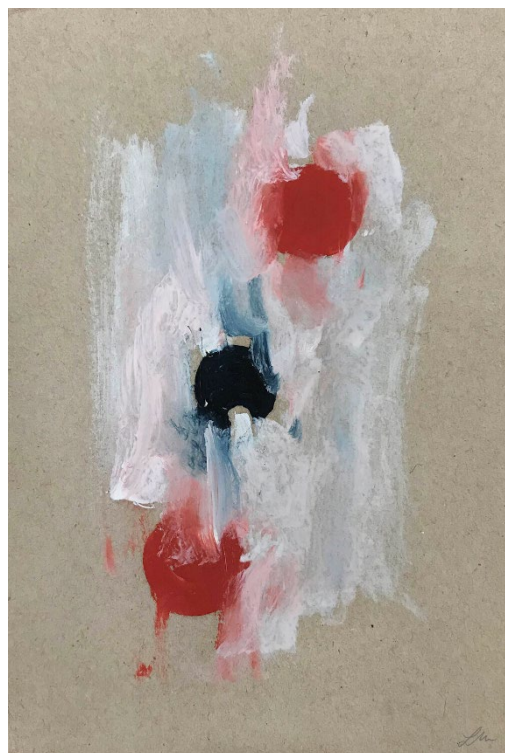
Naked Identity I, Digital media, 2023, 22" x 16.5"

direct inspiration for my first solo exhibition, Muskara et al.¹(2020), which presented a body of work that blurred the division between the fields of art and science. The paintings and drawings in this series are aimed at amplifying the molecular components of objects. This exhibition questioned the connections between scientific exploration and the expressive, conceptual aims of art. While the work in this series appeared to be created with traditional painting materials, foreign matter was incorporated into the paint, which called into question the meaning of the pieces presented. For example, one painting, titled *Pomacea maculata*, incorporates copper sulfate, which is a substance that in reality kills the very object represented in the painting, the apple snail. Artwork like the diptych *Pomacea maculata* and *Copper Sulfate* aim to question concepts of what is “real” (copper sulfate, paint, canvas) versus “illusionistic” (centuries of art mimetic traditions) versus “abstract” (the abstract shortcuts the sciences use to demonstrate concepts like chemical structures) to ignite conversations between the fields of art and science.

OD: How did the experience of combining a fine arts degree with a traditional STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Math) degree lead you toward your path

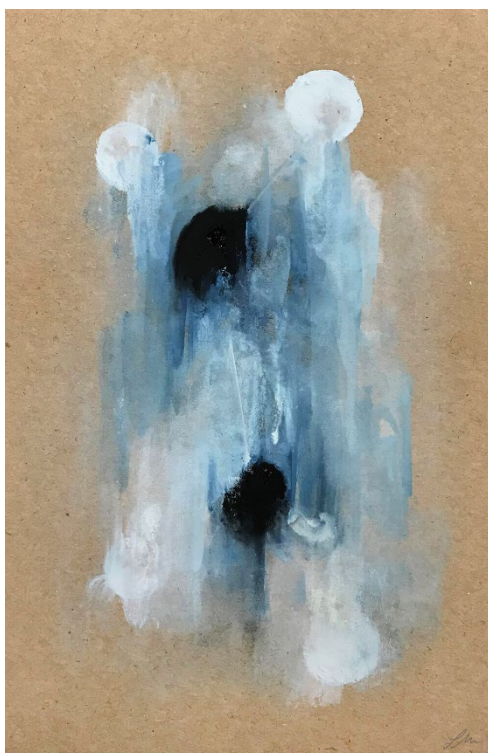
as a Biomedical Visualization Master’s Student? This sounds like a highly specialized degree. What drew you to the UIC College of Applied Health Sciences? Are there other students who share a similar background to yours?

LM: I didn’t enter college thinking I would pursue art as a career. In fact, I entered college as a biology major on the pre-med route, thinking I would pursue reconstructive plastic surgery! It wasn’t until I met my second art mentor, Victoria Star Varner, who encouraged me to hone my painting and drawing skills, that I seriously entertained the idea of majoring in art. Professor Varner ultimately encouraged me to pursue a master’s in the niche field of biomedical visualization, which explores the intersection of art, science, medicine, and technology. There are currently only five graduate programs in North America that offer a degree in biomedical visualization/medical illustration (only four when I applied!). I was drawn to UIC’s Biomedical Visualization (BVIS) program because of the opportunity to conduct anaplastology research, the emphasis placed on learning cutting-edge technology, and the supportive environment cultivated by the instructors. In the BVIS program, I bonded with many like-minded individuals who were also interested in this intersection of



Carbon Dioxide

Oil on cardboard, 2018, 7.5” x 5”



Ethane

Oil on cardboard, 2019, 7.5” x 5”



Propane

Oil on cardboard, 2019, 7.5” x 5”

disciplines. I found my people in BVIS, which truly enriched the learning environment and made for great discussion.

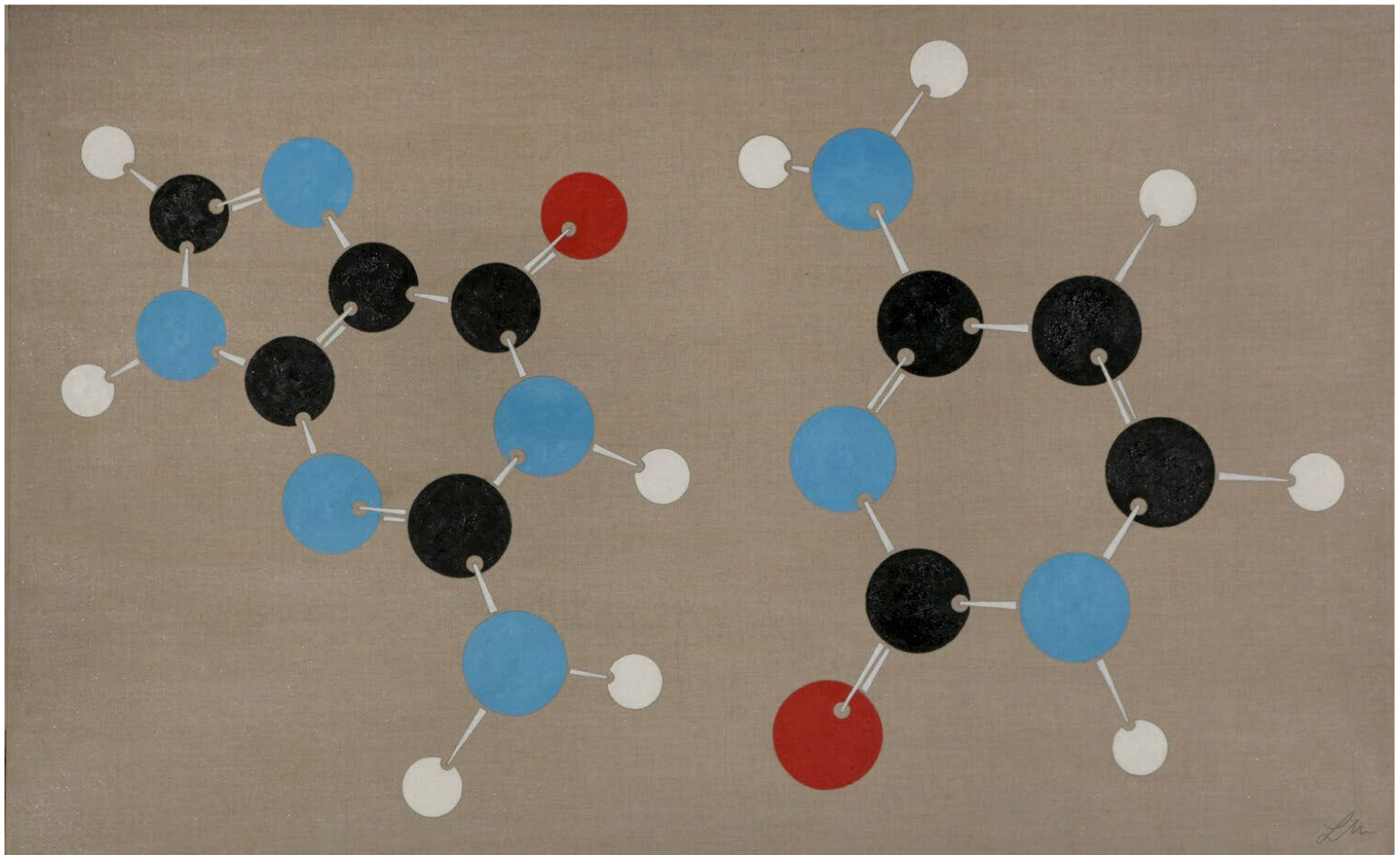
OD: You are passionate about advancing diversity, equity, and inclusion initiatives within the field of biomedical visualization and exploring possibilities within the areas of “anaplastology, biomedical illustration, and interactive media.” Can you educate us on the practice of anaplastology? What does it involve? Who are the patients? How does it address a patient's needs? (By the way, we feel passionate about DEI endeavors, too!)

LM: Anaplastology is a specialized field of healthcare that creates custom life-like prostheses to restore or complete a patient’s anatomy. Historically, prostheses created by anaplastologists were limited to craniofacial applications such as ear, nose, and eye prostheses. Advances in materials and technology have expanded the possibilities for prostheses beyond craniofacial applications. Modern prostheses have expanded to include hand, feet, breast, and nipple forms. It is also important to note that

gender-affirming applications is relatively new in the field of anaplastology.

Anaplastologists are unlike other healthcare providers in that they require training in art in addition to science, medicine, and technology. They have expertise in using different materials like acrylic and silicone as well as knowledge in clinical techniques. Anaplastologists strive to achieve highly realistic prostheses that effectively simulate human anatomy to meet patients’ goals. Strong prosthetic candidates include patients who have suffered trauma and/or experienced an absence or loss of anatomy due to injury, disease, congenital origin or misaligned sex assigned at birth. For example, a patient may pursue breast prostheses if they have experienced breast cancer, an injury to the chest, or gender dysphoria.

OD: One of the research projects mentioned in your biography looks at prostheses as a non-surgical alternative to surgery for transgender, non-binary, and intersex folks and looks at how visual elements can be used to advance survey methodology. Can you give us



Shared Genetics, Oil and hair on linen, 2019, 24” x 36”

some insight into how this nonsurgical alternative will advance healthcare options for the LGBTQ+ community? Who is a candidate for this alternative? What does the process involve for the patient? Is there a team that evaluates and works with the patient?

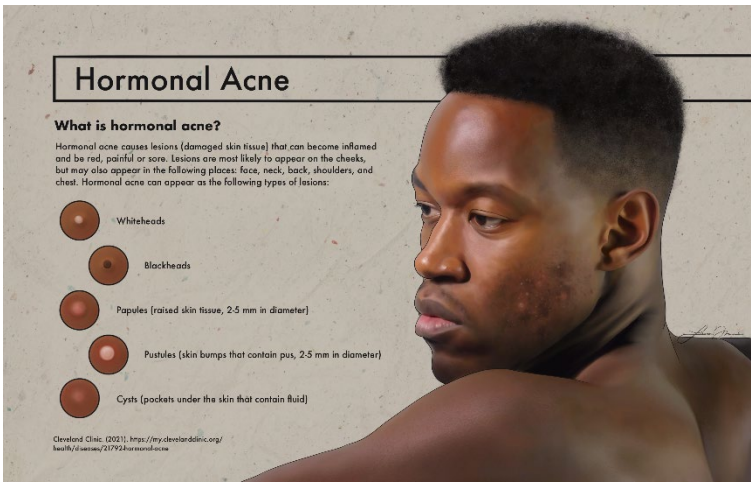
LM: Gender-affirming care encompasses a range of patient-centered interventions to support an individual’s gender identity. Such interventions address emotional, interpersonal, and physical aspects of patients’ lives. The most commonly performed medical interventions in gender-affirming care are hormone therapy and gender-affirming surgeries. However, many individuals seeking gender-affirming care do not want to pursue, or cannot pursue, hormone therapy or gender-affirming surgery. For example, many patients have concerns about health, age, safety, occupational security, financial limitations, legal restrictions, access to long-term care, irreversibility, limitations to achieving desired presentation, or general preparedness. Prostheses can provide a non-surgical, non-invasive alternative option for anyone seeking gender-affirming anatomical modification (e.g., transgender, non-binary, and intersex people).

Many people ready to start transitioning speak to a gender-affirming care provider or community advocate (note: transitioning looks different to everyone, and not everyone transitions. Forms of transitioning include social, medical, and legal). I think a great first step for those seeking gender-affirming care is looking for non-profit community organizations either online or within their geographic area when accessible. These organizations have great transition-related resources. Another option is gender-affirming care clinics, which

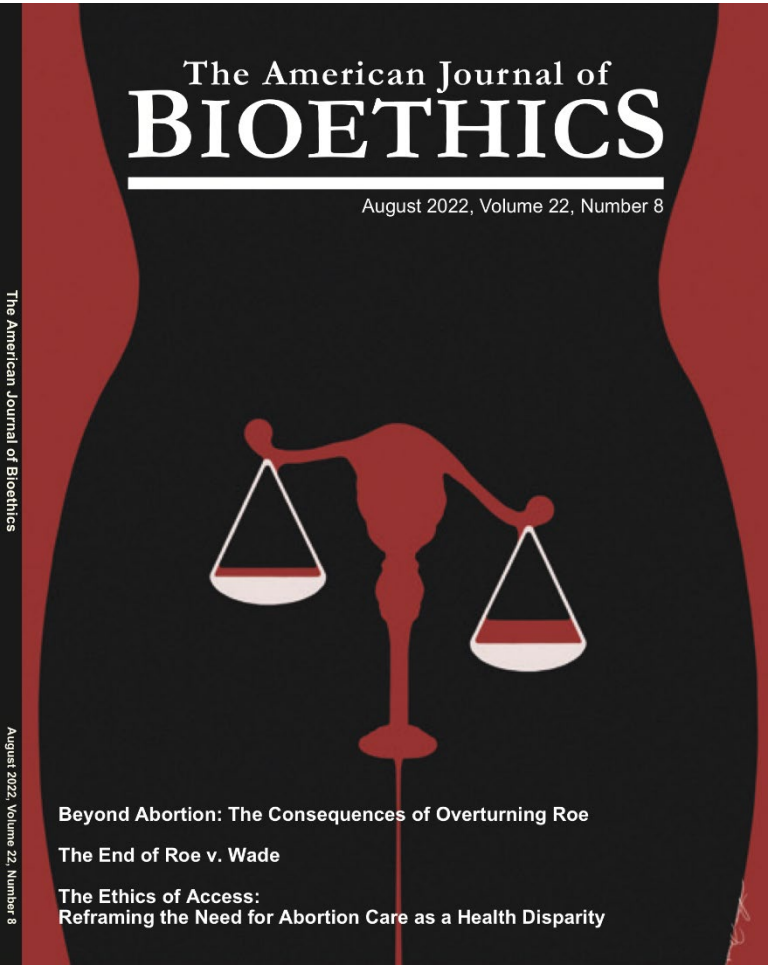
typically offer a more comprehensive approach to guiding people through transitioning. However, this isn’t always an option for people due to geographic availability or insurance coverage. Some people see a health provider directly. Specific transition-related medical providers include therapists, general practitioners, and endocrinologists.

While gender-affirming providers, clinics, and non-profits can be amazing resources, they are not always the end-all-be-all for prosthetic-related care. This can be due to various reasons, though mainly due to a lack of knowledge and education on non-surgical interventions. This means that prosthetic-based options may not be automatically discussed with patients. I hope that this will change in the near future. Everyone looking to transition is entitled to have all their options shared with them, but pursuing gender-affirming prostheses often requires self-advocation.

I would also like to touch on health insurance coverage quickly. Health insurance should cover transition-related



Hormonal Acne Educational Poster



*The American Journal of Bioethics
Roe vs. Wade – Special Edition Journal Cover*



Color Studies of Ear Prosthesis

care. However, some companies require letters/a gender dysphoria diagnosis from a healthcare provider that details why trans-related care is medically necessary. I recommend checking out the “Health Coverage Guide” from the National Center for Transgender Equality for anyone interested in learning more about gender-affirming care and health coverage.

OD: Are there other applications for anaplastology or additional technologies that may benefit transgender, non-binary, and intersex (TNBI) folks? How are TNBI folks referred to your clinic? Does a surgeon make the referral? Or a gender-affirming care clinic?

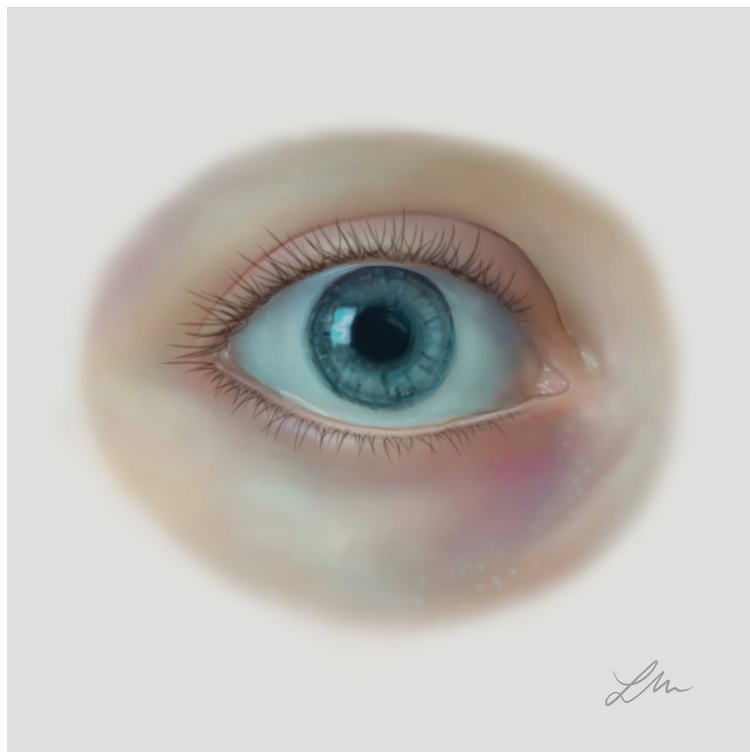
LM: Gender-affirming prostheses, like breast, nipple, and penile prostheses, can all be provided or custom-made by an anaplastologist. That being said, it is important to find the right anaplastologist to work with your case. For example, for my gender-affirming prosthetic research, I chose to work with Erin O’Fiel Stevens, a certified clinical anaplastologist and mastectomy fitter, because she advertised working with the transgender community. While breast and nipple prostheses are commonly available, custom-made penile prostheses and packers are uncommon in the anaplastology community; however, Erin and I are working to change this. In terms of referrals, anyone can see an anaplastologist for gender-affirming prostheses, but if a patient wants the

possibility of insurance coverage, a doctor’s referral is needed.

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

LM: For my fine artwork, I like to explore the “Death of the Author” theory named by Roland Barthes. Put simply, this theory posits the death of the creator is the birth of the viewer. Although I have artist statements that detail my intent behind each of my series, the meaning of my pieces is not necessarily fixed. I want the effect my artwork has in the world to be created by both my artist statements and the viewer through their interpretation. For my biomedical visualizations, which are inherently educational, I prioritize depicting historically underrepresented groups and bringing social justice issues to light. In all these pieces, I prioritize utilizing an intersectional lens, which considers race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, socio-economic status, age, invisible and visible disabilities, religious beliefs, and political beliefs.

OD: Thank you for your commitment to the transgender-identifying community. We look forward to learning more about your life-affirming work. ♥



Eye as a self-portrait, Digital media, 2021, 12” x 12”

Camp Outright, Vermont

Camp Outright is a residential summer camp with a queer twist! It's a vibrant camp for youth 13-17, that's all about queer joy, finding your people, adventure, fun, and community.

Camper applications are open from Feb 26 - Mar 13. No rush needed to apply, we don't operate on a first come first serve basis.

We offer full and partial scholarships and we don't turn anyone away due to a lack of funds.

LIT applications are open from Feb 26-Mar 20 and Camp Staff applications are open from Feb 26-April 5. Both roles offer a stipend.

If you have any questions, email Emma at emma@outrightvt.org or visit the camp website outrightvt.org/camp-outright.



CAMP OUTRIGHT 2024 ^{13.0!}
A Residential Summer Camp with a Queer Twist!

- Ages 13-17
- Located in Vermont
- Session 1: July 5 - 11
- Session 2: July 13 - 19
- No one turned away for lack of funds

Apply at outrightvt.org
Applications open February 26 - March 13
Queeries? Email camp@outrightvt.org

OUTRIGHT
VERMONT

Camp Outright is a week-long summer camp where LGBTQ+ and allied youth connect with peers and experience the joy of being their most authentic selves.



VOLUNTEER AT A QUEER SUMMER CAMP!

CAMP OUTRIGHT 2024 ^{13.0!}
A Residential Summer Camp with a Queer Twist!

- Hiring counselors and floaters ages 20+
- Located in Vermont: July 2 - 19, 2024
- \$500 Stipend + access to equity funds
- Trans femme & QTBIPOC folks encouraged to apply!

Apply at outrightvt.org
Applications open February 26 - April 5
Queeries? Email camp@outrightvt.org

OUTRIGHT
VERMONT

Camp Outright is a week-long summer camp where LGBTQ+ and allied youth connect with peers and experience the joy of being their most authentic selves.



QUEER SUMMER CAMP LEADER-IN-TRAINING PROGRAM

CAMP OUTRIGHT 2024 ^{13.0!}
A Residential Summer Camp with a Queer Twist!

- Ages 18-19
- Located in Vermont: July 2 - 19, 2024
- Earn a stipend!
- Trans femme & QTBIPOC folks encouraged to apply!

Apply at outrightvt.org
Applications open February 26 - March 13
Queeries? Email camp@outrightvt.org

OUTRIGHT
VERMONT

Camp Outright is a week-long summer camp where LGBTQ+ and allied youth connect with peers and experience the joy of being their most authentic selves.

STRONGHOLD CAMP

Stronghold Camp in Oregon, IL will be offering Kin*dom Camp for LGBTQIA+ youth, ages 12-17, in June.

Camp registration is open, but Stronghold still needs to fill virtually all staff positions for the summer, including nurses, cabin counselors, support staff and lead support staff, licensed counselors, a music director, sensory room professional, and chaplain.

Please check out the details at Kin*dom Camp and forward the link to anyone & everyone who might have a talent to share to get this program up and running or who might be interested in attending. (Staff June 14-21; campers June 16-21, 2024.) The website has the application link for campers. However, there can't be a camp without staff, so please help as you are able!

For more information visit the website: <https://strongholdcenter.org/Summer-Camp/KINDOM>

PCNI ONLINE STORE

Last year, we launched an online store at www.zazzle.com/store/pflagil where we sell branded T-shirts and other items. The response has been fantastic! Many of us proudly wore PCNI T-shirts at Pride events last year, and as a result, PCNI's budget received a few hundred dollars in commissions.

Have an idea about different items or new designs you'd like to see in the store?

Email us at info@pflagillinois.org!

Donuts, Faith & My Coming-out Stories



Saturday, March 23

10 am to 11:30 am

happens at

United Church of Hyde Park

1448 E. 53rd Street, Chicago, IL 60615



\$5 donation suggested

Sponsored by

Chicago Coalition of Welcoming Churches

Donuts, Faith, and My Coming-out Stories

No matter where you are on your life and faith journey, this is the place for exploration and support. A breakthrough in your life, a new experience, a story in your heart, or your questions of faith are all welcome to share here.

Donuts and coffee are provided. We will also provide

- selected stories from Queer Clergy - A History of Gay and Lesbian Ministry in American Protestantism
- selected stories from Young Queer America - real stories and faces of LGBTQ+ Youth
- poem and color sheets

A suggested \$5 free donation to support our LGBTQ+ Ministries.

[Facebook event page](#)

[Eventbrite page](#)

[LGBTQ+ Ministries at United Church of Hyde Park](#)



Center on Halsted and Youth Services' Pride Youth Program present

Trans Youth & Family Summit 2024

Saturday, March 16th
NEW LOCATION
9AM-2PM

Registration opens: January 17, 2024

An opportunity for trans and gender expansive youth and their families to come together to learn, connect to resources, and build community. Includes workshops and activities for both youth and adults. Lunch included! For more information contact youth@centeronhalsted.org

CENTER ON 3656 N. HALSTED

 Youth Services

RSVP at centeronhalsted.org/tyfsummit2024

3656 N. HALSTED ST • CHICAGO, IL

Registration is now open for the **Trans Youth & Family Summit**! Center on Halsted is proud to partner with **Youth Services** in presenting this program on Saturday, March 16th from 9:00am-2:00pm. Hosted at Center on Halsted, the summit will be an opportunity for trans and gender expansive youth and their families to learn, connect to resources, and build community. The event includes workshops on transition-related health care, legal transition, mental health, and more! Lunch will be included.

RSVP

Future Outlook 2024 Conference



April 16-17, 2024
Joliet, IL

Join us for two days of expert-led sessions, networking, and professional development opportunities.

Perfect for Educators, Mental and Physical Health Practitioners, Social Services Providers, and anyone working with LGBTQ+ youth and their families. Enhance your skills while earning CEUs, CPDUs, and CMEs.



Conference Topics

Educator, Health, General, and Intermediate tracks will cover topics including:

Empowering Education and Advocacy

Strategies for supporting LGBTQ+ youth through education, advocacy, and community support

Supporting Health and Wellbeing

Mental health support, gender-affirming care, and safe practices for LGBTQ+ youth

Building Inclusive Environments

Creating safe spaces and supportive ecosystems in schools, healthcare settings, and workplaces

Networking & Resource Fair

Network with other professionals and discover helpful local resources. Affirming and inclusive organizations can discover resource fair and sponsorship opportunities [here](#).

Register today for special early-bird pricing!

- One and two-day tickets available
- Includes breakfast and lunch
- Discounts for students

**REGISTER
HERE**



YOUTHOUTLOOK

Get to know Sex for Humans -

A Conversation with LK Strader

by Ann McAuliffe (she/her)



Open Doors: Welcome to Open Doors, LK! You are the founder of Sex for Humans. Can you tell us about your background and how you decided to establish your company?

LK Strader (she/they), Founder/CEO of Sex for

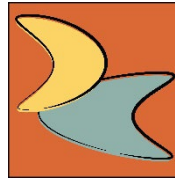
Humans: LK is an intimacy & sex coach as well as sex educator.

I founded Sex for Humans in 2020 after completing my masters in Counseling Psychology. Sex for Humans was born out of a deep desire to support folks in getting back to the basics of intimacy and to provide support for parents around sex education and supporting their LGBTQIA+ children. I draw from my experiences working in education and my counseling degree to guide the work and support Sex for Humans provides.

OD: Who do you serve?

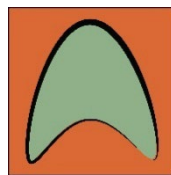
LK: My coaching services serve couples, individuals and parents in the area of sex education and supporting their LGBTQIA+ children.

Couples



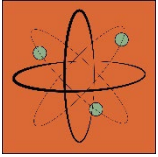
Whether you're struggling with communication, seeking to enhance your sex life or struggling to hold space for your partner, there's something here for you. Relationships are a joint effort, which requires maintenance. There's no shame in things feeling a little stale or having lost sight of how to connect with one another the way you once did. There's no shame in struggling to navigate tough conversations in a newer relationship. Let's work together to (re)discover the spontaneity you need to make intimacy feel natural.

Individuals



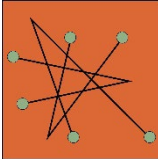
Struggling to connect with others on a deeply intimate level can leave us feeling like there's a big hole. It can feel very lonely. I fully believe that all folks have the capacity for intimacy. Together we can find what's standing in your way. Perhaps you just need to clear out the cobwebs and unpack some baggage, so that you can fully settle into an intimate space with yourself and with others. This journey can also teach you how to advocate for yourself in relationships to ensure you get what you need, which helps folks feel safe enough to be intimate.

Sex Education



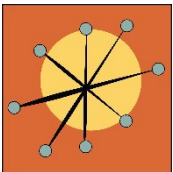
Talking about the birds and the bees is well known for making parents squirm. There's often a strong sense of dread and panic trying to navigate these conversations with young people. Yet, there's a deep desire to ensure young people are educated and equipped to navigate their bodies and the world. Maybe this territory is even more unfamiliar because you never received a quality "sex talk". Don't worry! They say it takes a village and I am here to be part of yours. I can assist you in exploring your anxiety and equipping you with the knowledge so that you're prepared to embark on this journey with your child.

Parents of LGBTQIA+ Children.



Whether your children are young and still at home or off living their lives as independent adults, I'm here to support. For many parents there is a strong desire to be supportive and practice allyship for their children and it can be challenging to navigate education and support or the children's LGBTQIA+ identity, I've got you. Likewise, parents experience a range of emotions related to their child coming out. That's normal and it's not your child's role to help you process those feelings. That's why I'm here. I want to help you educate yourself, support you in processing your feelings and help you discover how to support your child as their most authentic self.

Dating Profiles



There are few things less intimate than endless swiping on dating apps. However, with the way technology has changed the dating landscape, it can feel impossible to escape the digital game. Maybe you've been swiping but aren't getting any matches. Maybe you're looking to call intimacy into your life. Together we can explore your profile to ensure you have your best foot forward.

OD: What do services do you offer?

LK: In addition to my more individualized coaching services, I also offer workshops and education for groups. My current offerings are Queer Sex Education and Overcoming Sexual Shame. In addition, I am very open to working with groups and organizations to provide custom workshops within my scope of sex, gender and sexuality. I'm always happy to collaborate and develop educational offerings that fit the needs of my clients!

OD: If folks would like to learn more, how can we find you?

LK: You can reach me at: www.sexforhumans.com or by email at lk@sexforhumans.com



OPEN DOORS ON PAPER?

We're exploring the possibility of offering Open Doors in a printed magazine format. While most people are comfortable with the electronic (and eco-friendly) version, we understand that some subscribers would strongly prefer a paper copy.

If we proceed with this service, paper copies will arrive approximately two weeks after the online newsletter release and the cost per issue may be \$5-\$10.

If you'd be interested in receiving Open Doors in print, please drop us an email at opendoors@pflagillinois.org.



THE GERAGHTY 2520 S Hoyne Ave

CENTER *on* HALSTED'S

HUMAN FIRST

GALA '24

SATURDAY, APRIL 20TH

SAVE *the* DATE

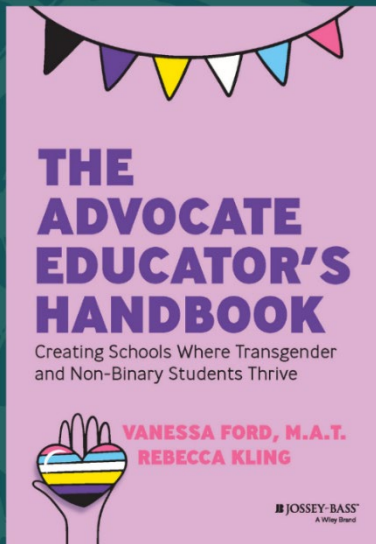
—THE—

GERAGHTY.

CENTER
ON 3656 N.
HALSTED

27

RECOMMENDED BY PFLAG NATIONAL



Learn more at:

www.TheAdvocateEducator.com



10 Things You Can Do To Be An Ally To LGBTQ+ People

\$46

Ask Questions

Or do your own research. Commit to getting the answers for what you don't know!

Stay Informed

Learn about the challenges, issues, and realities facing LGBTQ+ people from reliable sources.

Speak Up

When you hear anti-LGBTQ+ jokes, slurs, or misinformation, say something.

See all 10 Things You Can Do To Be An Ally at StraightForEquality.org/10ThingsAllly

PFLAG LOVE TAKES ACTION



Donate to PFLAG National to help fight unconstitutional demands of the Texas AG



Resources for Chapters!

by Kelly Hemmer (she/her)

New Button designs are available in the [Shared Graphics](#) files.

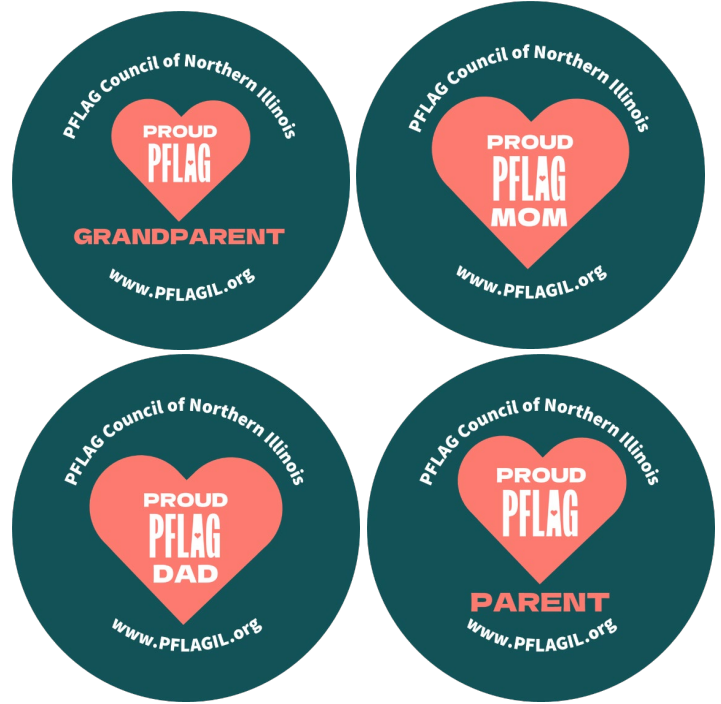
These designs are in the PFLAG Brand Buttons folder.

To find it:

- Open "Buttons" folder
- Open "Ready to Print Buttons" folder

There are tons of other resources in the [Shared Graphics](#) files! In addition to the over 100 button designs, be sure to check out the Graphics Elements and Templates folder where there is a large selection of templates and graphics.

Reach out to Kelly Hemmer if you have any questions or requests: hteam7493@gmail.com



PRIDE PRESENTS

Short Pieces
Comedians
Theatre
Storytelling

Sapphic

SHOWCASE

APRIL 19- 28, 2024
FRIDAY & SATURDAY
@ 7:30PM

SUNDAY
@ 3:00PM

APRIL 19- 28, 2024
PRIDEARTS CENTER

4139 N BROADWAY
CHICAGO, IL 60613

PRIDEARTS.ORG
(773) 857 - 0222

GAGGED ORDER

A DRAG SHOW

Cash Bar & Snacks!
21+ must show ID

Tickets on Sale NOW!
\$10 preorder / \$15 at the door
\$80 for a table of 10

featuring

Duke Ellington Ballroom HSC

Dr. Moana

MARCH 29 7-10 PM

Hosted by NIU Law GSA

SCAN TO PURCHASE YOUR TICKETS NOW!

All proceeds will be donated to Youth Outlook, a local charity supporting LGBTQ+ youth.

Donations Accepted!

Contact Geoffrey Diver with any questions
z1975611@students.niu.edu

Seeking Research Participants

For a qualitative study on how peoples' personal perceptions of their own gender have changed over the course of the Covid-19 pandemic and related quarantining experiences.

Purpose

This study seeks to explore the different ways which the current pandemic has provided individuals opportunity to develop their individual experience of gender beyond a binary understanding of gender.

The goal of this study is to discover and discuss themes within the narratives told by participants about their gender exploration experiences over the course of the pandemic. This will ideally contribute to the sum of literature on nonbinary lives to help inform healthcare professionals, legislation writers, and those who are in the process of exploring their gender.

Participants

This study is seeking approximately 5 to 8 individuals who are willing to participate in an interview.

Interviewees who qualify:

- Experienced a shift in their personal experience of gender, beyond a binary understanding of gender, over the course of the Covid-19 pandemic
- Have experienced a quarantining period of a minimum of 14 days
- Lived in the United States for this period
- Are of adult age (18+)

Participants will be eligible to opt-in to a raffle for a \$50.00 Visa gift-card.

Contact

If you are interested in participating in this study (Transcending Binaries: An Exploration of Gender Identity Trends and Narratives During the Covid-19 Pandemic (IRB #23-045)) or if you have questions about this study, please reach out to the primary researcher via email at kchupron@adler.edu. Eligible participants will need to attend the interview via Zoom from a private and secure space.

If you have any concerns about the content of this flier, please contact the Institutional Review Board of Adler University at irb.adler.edu.

Many thanks for your time and consideration. If you believe you know someone who would qualify for this study and would be interested in participating, please feel free to share this flier.



MAKE YOUR VOICE HEARD!

Take the survey



Family Equity Justice Survey 2024

Family Equity Justice Survey 2024 is part of the effort to diversify our capacity and understanding related to BIPOC LGBTQ+ families. Therefore, it is very important to reach as many BIPOC LGBTQ+ parents as possible. The survey takes about 10 minutes to complete and is currently available in English, Español, and Français. By participating in the survey, you will be sharing essential aspects of your journey as current and future LGBTQ+ parents! [CLICK HERE TO TAKE THE SURVEY.](#)

This survey is part of the Family Equity Justice Project. [CLICK HERE to learn more.](#)

Transgender and Gender Diverse Participants Needed

for 1 hour Zoom interviews about romantic relationships and sexuality

Adolescents (15-18)
&
Young Adults (19-25)

Earn \$50 for your time

Contact us:

affirmingrelationshipstudy@gmail.com



RUTGERS
Center for Health, Identity,
Behavior, and Prevention
Studies

Seeking Trans, Non-binary, and Gender Non-conforming Adults

We are researching mental healthcare access and experiences among Trans, Non-binary, and Gender Non-conforming People

- Participants will earn up to \$20. Please contact Madelyn Owens or Dr. Krause by emailing CHIBPS.Rutgers@gmail.com with any questions.
- To determine eligibility for a 45-90 minute focus group on zoom, scan the QR code or go to <https://go.rutgers.edu/8maeipxv>

Contact the Center for Health, Identity, Behavior, and Prevention Studies with any questions at: chibps.rutgers@gmail.com

This research conducted by CHIBPS at One Riverfront Plaza Suite 1020 Newark, NJ 07102.

Help us learn more about your experience with mental healthcare and peer support services.



V2 11.15.2022



CHICAGO SOCIAL
BUTTERFLIES

Chicago Social Butterflies is a new newsletter from **Windy City Times**. More than 100 LGBTQ+ clubs, promoters and nonprofits are hosting amazing events each month. We want to help our readers find you!

When we printed a weekly newspaper, it was a one-stop shop for finding out what was happening. But now it is hit-and-miss finding things on websites, social media, or by subscribing to dozens of newsletters.

On Feb. 29, we are launching this twice-monthly newsletter (2nd and 4th Thursdays) called **Chicago Social Butterflies**, backed up by a new website debuting soon. It's a way to have a new one-stop link to our community's vast offerings.

It's **free** to the event hosts and **free** to subscribers.

Note: This is not for ongoing or repeat events such as drink specials, meetings, etc. This is for special events, benefits, parties—for example the AIDS Walk, a gala, a pop-up, or your Sunday drag brunch. You will need to submit a new listing for each event, and that will always be free. The website will list all correctly submitted events, and the newsletter will curate highlights. We strongly urge you to get events submitted at least one month prior.

Thanks to our terrific team working on this launch: Vivian Gonzalez with design, website and marketing, Jean Albright on calendar, Jake Wittich on writing and curation, Lu Calzada on marketing and writing, Matt Simonette as editor, and Terri Klinsky as publisher.

Now our readers won't have to say, "Why didn't I hear about that?"

Tracy Baim, Windy City Times cofounder

Please share this with your friends!

<https://chicagosocialbutterflies.com/>

PCNI WEBSITE REDESIGN

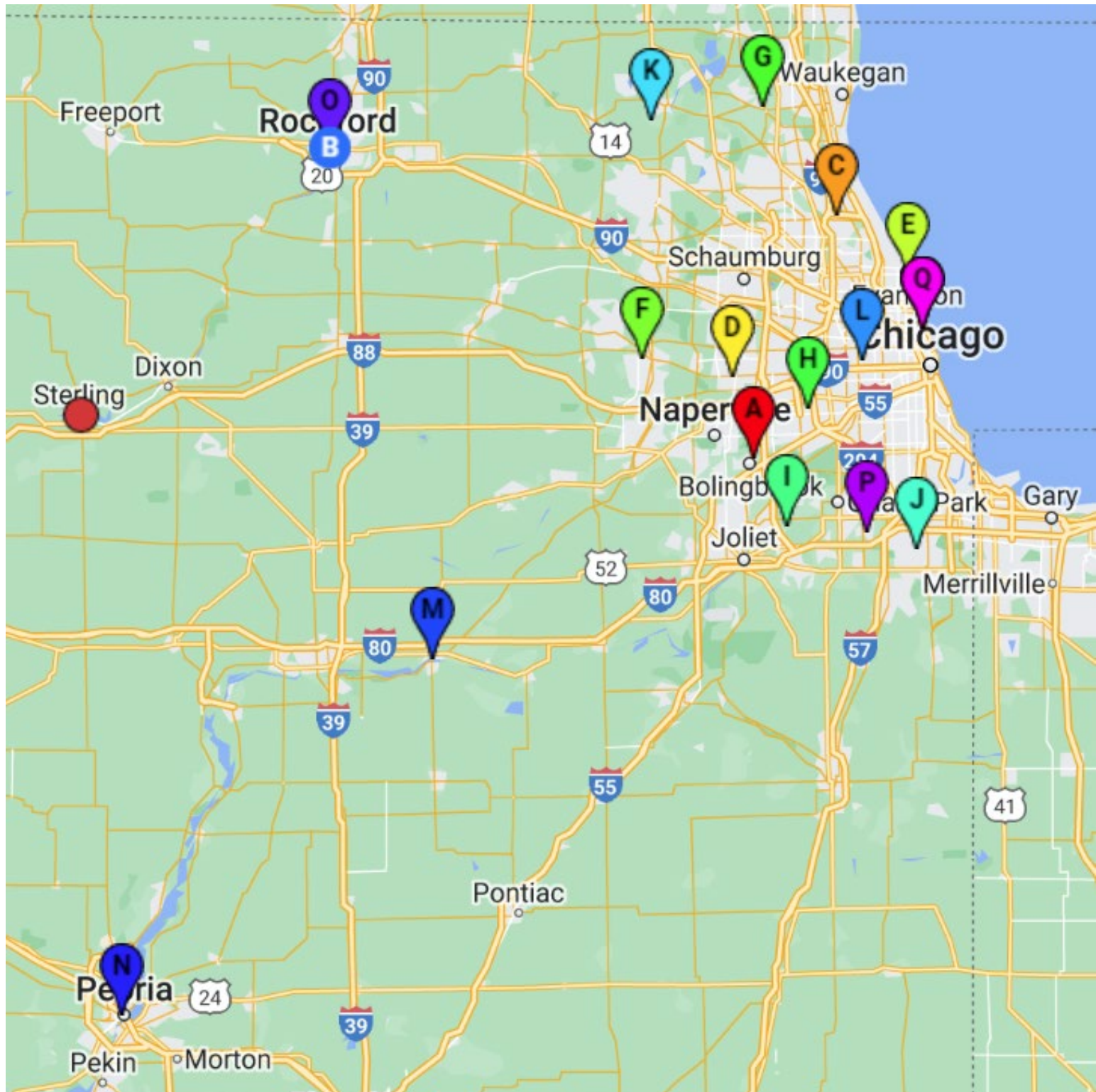
PFLAG National has created a common platform that allows any PFLAG chapter to create their own website. They will cover hosting costs and provide technical support. This ensures that chapter sites have a consistent look and feel, using elements of the PFLAG brand. Additionally, PFLAG National resources will be directly accessible from each chapter's website. The redesign also addresses the issue of outdated chapter sites. If a volunteer who originally created a site stops supporting it, the new platform ensures that maintenance and updates can continue seamlessly.

PCNI has formed a Website Redesign Committee and is working on implementing a new PCNI site using PFLAG National's platform. If you have any comments, ideas, or complaints about our current site www.pflagil.org, please email us at info@pflagillinois.org. We value feedback on usability (navigation, finding information, etc.) and ideas for content (identifying obsolete resources and suggesting new ones).

We're planning to make Open Doors more prominent on the new site, as it has out most up-to-date and valuable content.



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.