



# Open Doors

Art by Arnie Ginsburg,  
a member of PFLAG Deerfield

# WE REMEMBER ... AND RECOMMIT

For many of us, November is a month of reflection. It is anchored by **Thanksgiving Day** which, in its very name, celebrates the spirit of both appreciation and generosity. We pause to count our blessings, to tally the good fortunes we have realized and to be thankful for those in our life whom we treasure. We consider as well the hardships we've weathered, the struggles we've won and lost, the cherished lives that exist only in our memories. And perhaps, in that reflection, we find a way to step into the future with the resolve to make something better, to contribute to a brighter tomorrow for those whose today may fall short.

On November 20, we recognize the **Transgender Day of Remembrance**, a day when the nation gives proper honor to those who lost their lives due to anti-transgender bigotry and violence. It is a day when we grieve that loss and celebrate a group of people who often feel erased or disrespected. Together with **Transgender Awareness Week** which precedes it, this is a time when we reflect on the ongoing violence affecting the transgender community, raise their visibility, address the issues faced by their community and recognize and applaud the achievements made by transgender individuals worldwide.

Why do we pause in such a way, and why do we remind others to reflect on such memories? Because, as the philosopher Santayana wrote, *"Those who cannot remember the past are doomed to repeat it."*

And so, we must consider that remembering need not be a reflection alone – but a commitment as

well. We now look forward, instead of back, remembering to reach out all year to those seeking support, remembering to advocate all year for those without a voice or senselessly targeted with hate, remembering to stay informed throughout the year so that we can educate others in turn.

We close November with the promise of **Giving Tuesday**, which occurs each year on the Tuesday following Thanksgiving. Established in 2012, Wikipedia's definition is an inspiring one -- a "global generosity movement unleashing the power of people and organizations to transform their communities and the world". I encourage you to recognize and thank the many organizations whose relentless efforts to support the LGBTQ+ community bring about the good we celebrate, and whose continued resolve brings us hope. And if you are fortunate enough to be able to do so, please consider giving legs to their efforts by donating to their missions.

During this month of reflection and thanksgiving, I want to thank all of those in leadership positions in our PFLAG chapters and in our many ally organizations for their work in supporting and celebrating the LGBTQ+ community. And perhaps more importantly, I thank all of you who lead by example.

We are PFLAG ... We remember ... and we advance our mission to Support, Educate and Advocate lest others forget.

*Don Donahue*

President,  
PFLAG Council of Northern Illinois



# From PFLAG National

## FEDERAL

### [U.S. issues first passport with 'X' gender marker.](#)

The country's first gender-neutral passport was issued to Dana Zzyym, an intersex military veteran who sued the State Department in 2015, according to Lambda Legal.

### [Twitter suspends Rep. Jim Banks's \(R-IN\) account after he intentionally misgenders Dr. Rachel Levine.](#)

Dr. Levine is the Assistant Secretary for Health, the first transgender person to hold an office that requires Senate confirmation. Banks misgendered the Admiral in response to the news that she had become the first woman to become a four-star officer in the U.S. Public Health Service Commissioned Corps.

### [Biden Administration calls Texas's transgender athlete ban "hateful."](#)

Gov. Greg Abbott signed a transgender sports ban into law; the White House denounced the move as "hateful" in a statement on October 26th.

### [White House and State Department acknowledge Intersex Awareness Day.](#)

Historically, The White House held its first roundtable with intersex advocates on Oct. 27th. Both mark the first US federal governmental Intersex Awareness Day recognitions.

## MEDIA

### [Campus Pride releases list of "worst, most unsafe" colleges for LGBTQ+ students.](#)

The list of about 180 of the "absolute worst, most unsafe college campuses for LGBTQ students in the United States" was released October 25th. The current list is an update from 2016 and has 50 new schools and universities listed.

### [Chicago celebrates 2021's LGBTQ+ Hall of Fame inductees.](#)

For 30 years, the LGBTQ Hall of Fame has honored people and organizations that have made an impact on Chicago. This year's virtual celebration helps replace the 2021 COVID-cancelled Pride Parade festivities.

## GLOBAL

**Canada** - [Proposed bill would prevent Quebecers from changing sex designation on official documents until after gender-confirmation surgery.](#) Since 2015, Quebecers have been able to change their sex designation on their identity documents without having to undergo gender affirming surgeries which would be covered by nationalized healthcare, but Bill 2 would reverse that.

**Ghana** - [Ghanian parliament considering a bill criminalizing homosexuality and making advocating for LGBTQ+ people a crime.](#) If passed, the new bill would allow for up to 10 years in prison for LGBT people and penalize those who defend LGBTQ+ people or publish information that could be considered "encouraging homosexuality." The bill also promotes so-called "conversion therapy."

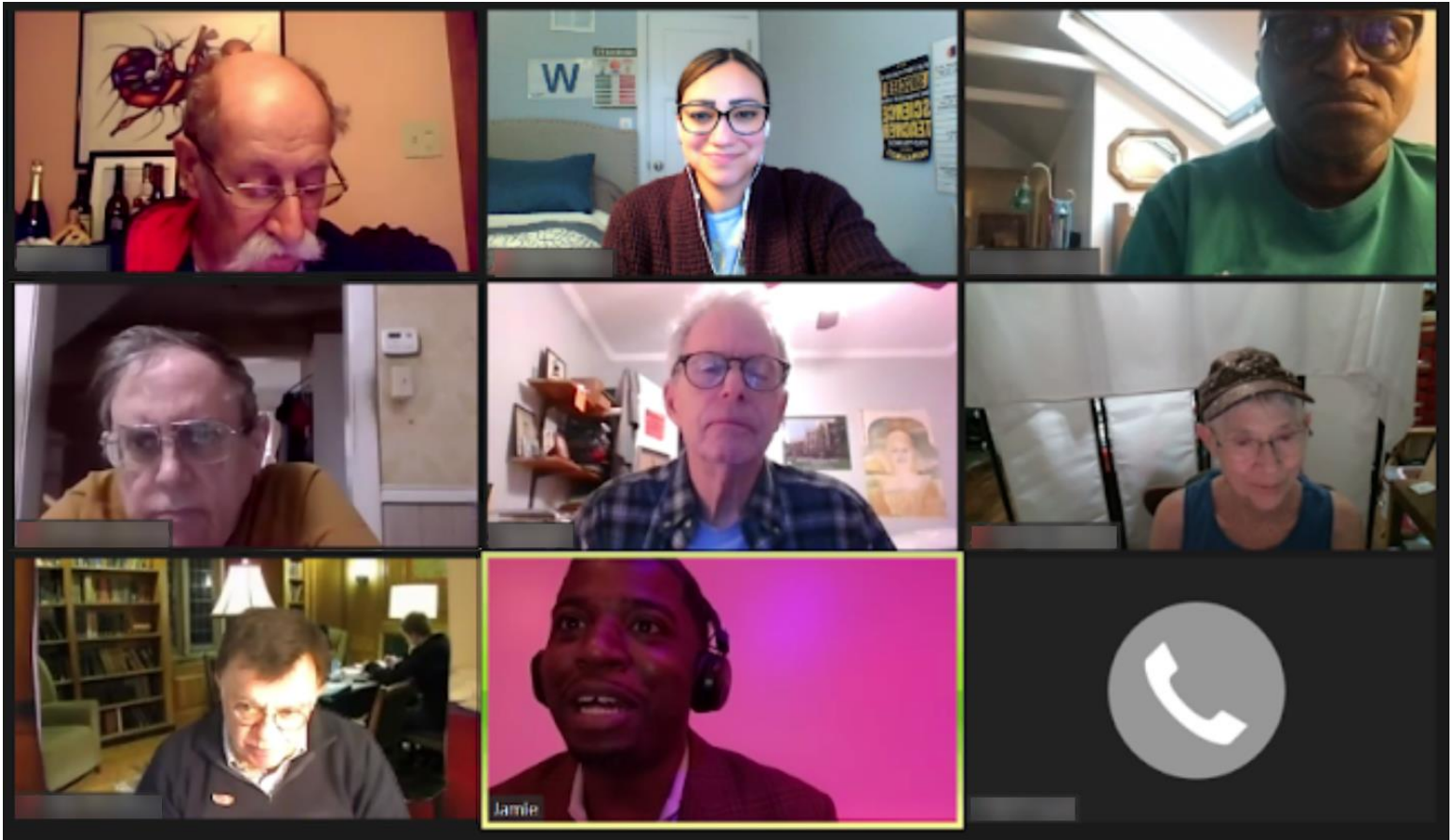
**Italy** - [Italian Senate strikes down LGBTQ+ hate crimes bill.](#) The bill, which would have criminalized violence and hate speech targeting a person's sexual orientation or identity, faced strong opposition from right-wing parties in the Senate, ultimately killing the bill.

**Poland** - [Polish parliament to examine anti-LGBTQ+ legislative proposal](#) dubbed "Stop LGBT," which aims to prohibit the "promotion" of same-sex relationships and would ban Pride parades.

**Russia** - [Putin describes transgender rights as 'crime against humanity.'](#) President Putin made the comment in a speech he delivered in Sochi, a resort city on the Black Sea where the 2014 Winter Olympics took place.

**These articles are excerpted from *Policy Matters*, an email publication of PFLAG National. Become a PFLAG member to receive the full newsletter: <https://pflagil.org/membership-and-donation/>**





## ***News from PFLAG Oak Park***

**by Nancy Johnson**

### **NO MEETING IN DECEMBER!**

Some of us attended the annual fund-raising Gala of Oak Park Area Lesbian and Gay Organization (OPALGA+) in October. Our attendees said it was great fun. The food was good, and after the fund-raising part concluded, there was dancing.

At our ZOOM meeting on the 23rd, our guest speaker was Jamie Frazier, pastor of Lighthouse Foundation Church of Chicago. Lighthouse Foundation of Chicagoland ([lightfoundchi.org](http://lightfoundchi.org)) is a Black Queer-led, multiracial social justice organization that advances justice for Black LGBTQ+ people across Chicagoland through empowerment, education, and entertainment. They have partnered with several other

organizations to cooperate with their mission.

We will still be meeting via ZOOM in November, but don't have a speaker yet.

## ***News from PFLAG Deerfield***

**by Jodi**

PFLAG Deerfield held its first picnic on October 10! We've missed each other so much and it was wonderful to meet in person for friendship, hugs, and treats! Special thanks to Ann McAuliffe for organizing the event and a shout out to Sue Ginsburg for the brownies! The weather couldn't dampen the day. Even the children and the pets had fun! Our Zoom meetings are going strong. Our October meeting focused on support and did not disappoint. It's what we do best. Happy Halloween Everyone!



## ***News from PFLAG Hinsdale***

**by Barb Medley**

Our speaker for October 3rd was Jameson (Jamie Pagano), from Partners in Pride Wellness Center. Partners in Pride offers outpatient mental health counseling, support groups and peer events focused on the LGBTQIA community. It also provides access to the LGBT (Let's Give Back Together) Clothing Closet for those in transition. Jamie offers professional advice about how to support our children as they come out and/or transition.

Jamie, who is transgender and uses the identifying pronouns he/his, began his career prior to his transition as a lesbian therapist. In 2001 he started receiving referrals to trans young adults. Eventually he started his own practice, Partners in Pride Wellness, to be a safe place for all. The practice started as a social and clinical support group providing individual and family counseling. They were there to support young individuals over 18 who were isolated in their homes. They're now a social gathering place. They have started a clothing closet for those transitioning. For those wondering about donations, the closet could especially use things like larger-size shoes for trans women, and smaller-size shoes for trans men. The website is [www.mypartnersinpride.com](http://www.mypartnersinpride.com).

Jamie provided an informative overview, and we had a great dialogue. His suggestions for being supportive included using preferred pronouns and thinking about signaling in various ways that you are supportive. He answered a lot of questions. As a trans man, it is especially important to him to work with families on the difficult issues faced, such as how to deal with non-supportive or hostile family members.

Jamie sent us an educational slide on resilience

which was very helpful and included the following points:

Building internal resilience includes living authentically; self-advocacy; rejection of binaries; defining/asserting gender identity; reframing negative events; and successfully navigating misgendering, familial relationships, being misunderstood and negative media portrayals.

Building external relationships includes local community involvement; reducing isolation; activism and challenging the status quo; and, most importantly for us all, making the world a better place for the next generation.

**Our November speaker is John D'Emilio from the Gerber-Hart Library, one of the first to check out books on LGBT+ subjects. He also wrote, "Queer Legacies," containing stories from Gerber-Hart's archives.**

## ***News from PFLAG McHenry***

**by Toni Weaver**

PFLAG McHenry is laying low these days with a plan to hold meetings on an ad hoc basis. Very simply put, **we may not have a meeting every month unless the need arises**. We feel that the needs of our parents who have transgender/non-binary/gender non-conforming will be met most excellently by the Chicago PTI. Seriously, when was the last time you fielded a call from a parent who has a gay, lesbian, or bisexual child? Anyone?

Our focus, then, is not so much on meetings as it is on education. That really seems to be our niche. Stay tuned!

**Get published! Email your essays, photography, artworks to Open Doors: [opendoors@pflagillinois.org](mailto:opendoors@pflagillinois.org)**

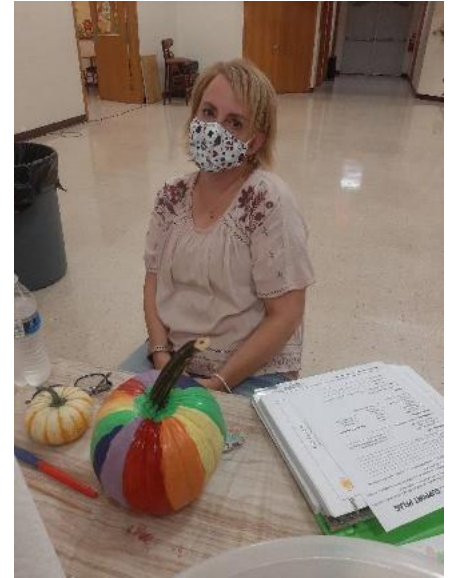




**News from PFLAG  
Homer Glen/ Lockport  
by Michelle Eckmayer**

This past month we celebrated Fall by painting Pride pumpkins. We had fun making pumpkins to show our LGBTQ+ trick or treaters they are loved!!!

Here are just a few of our treasures



## News from PTI McHenry

by Andrew Zanevsky

The leaders of PTI McHenry, in consultation with the PFLAG Council of Northern Illinois, PFLAG McHenry, and PTI Chicago, have decided to suspend online meetings of PTI McHenry until further notice.

We encourage all members to join one of the following PFLAG groups for support, education, and advocacy:

- **PTI Chicago**, which will continue hosting monthly Zoom meetings on the 2nd Thursday of every month at 7-9 PM. It runs a book club, invites guest speakers, has a strong group of leaders.

If you are not on the PTI Chicago mailing list already, email to [ptichicago1@gmail.com](mailto:ptichicago1@gmail.com) to sign up.

- Any other local chapter of the PFLAG Council of Northern Illinois - visit <https://pflagil.org/chapters/> for the list. Contact the chapter before your first meeting to get most recent information on the meeting date/time and physical location or Zoom instructions.

However, PTI McHenry is **not closed**. Stay tuned for an announcement from Mary Genzler about reopening in-person meetings! Logistics of a safe reopening in the age of COVID are being worked out.

Mary ([pflagptimchenry@pflagillinois.org](mailto:pflagptimchenry@pflagillinois.org)) and Andrew ([opendoors@pflagillinois.org](mailto:opendoors@pflagillinois.org)) will also be available for as-needed one-on-one calls with existing or new members (parents of transgender and gender non-conforming individuals) in need of support.

## The Illinois Holocaust Museum Exhibit

**RISE UP: STONEWALL AND THE LGBTQ RIGHTS MOVEMENT** is a special exhibition open in **The Illinois Holocaust Museum** in Skokie through May 8th, 2022.

It explores the June 1969 police raid of the Stonewall Inn as the flashpoint that ignited the modern gay rights movement in the United States. In the fifty years since the Stonewall Uprising, America's LGBTQ population has struggled for equal rights and representation under the law. Rise Up shares the voices and tells the stories of this movement.

Blending together historic images and artifacts of the LGBTQ+ rights movement, the 85 items on display in Rise Up include posters from Harvey Milk's campaign for public office in San Francisco, a rainbow flag in its original colors signed by its creator Gilbert Baker, and early LGBTQ magazines and publications.



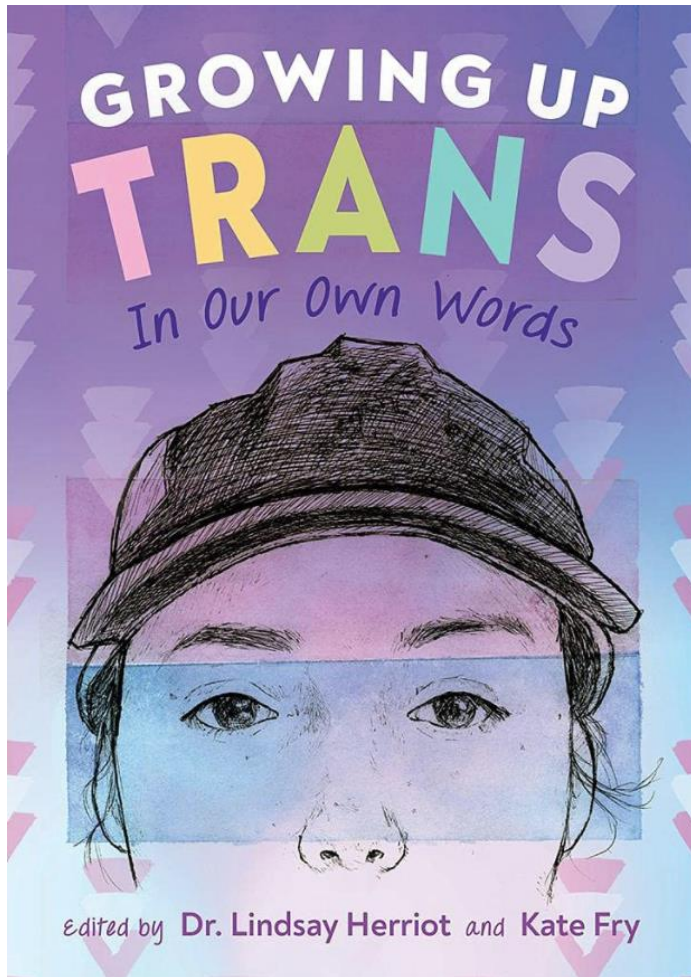
**Click here for more information, virtual tours, group tours, or field trips:**

<https://www.ilholocaustmuseum.org/exhibitions/rise-up-stonewall-and-the-lgbtq-movement/>



## **Book: Growing Up Trans: In Our Own Words**

Recommended by Julie Schoen



by Dr. Lindsay Herriot (Editor), Kate Fry (Editor)

What does it mean to be young and transgender today? [Growing Up Trans](#) shares stories, essays, art and poetry created by trans youth aged 11 to 18. In their own words, the works illustrate the trans experience through childhood, family and daily life, school, their bodies and mental health. Together the collection is a story of the challenges, big and small, of being a young trans person. It's a toolkit for all young people, transgender or not, about what understanding, acceptance and support for the trans community looks like. questions and tips from experts in the field of transgender studies to challenge the reader on how to be a trans ally.



## TRANS TUESDAYS

Safe space for gender expansive teens (ages 13 to 19 years old) to meet, socialize and connect with each other.

Start date: Nov. 9, 2021  
Continuing Nov. 30, Dec. 14  
then resuming in January.

Masks will be required for attendance per current IL mask mandate.

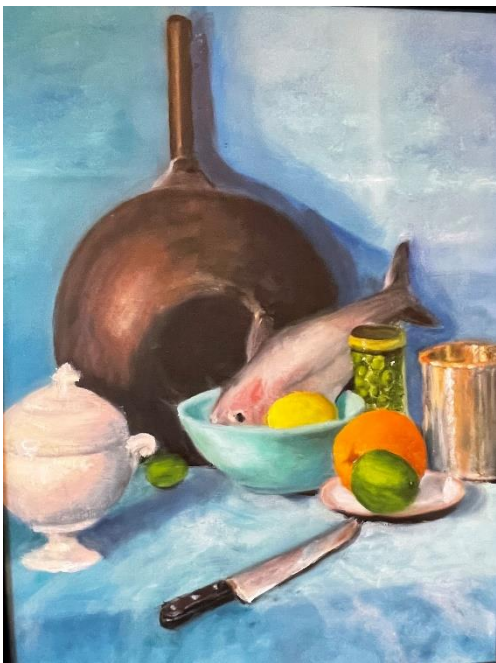
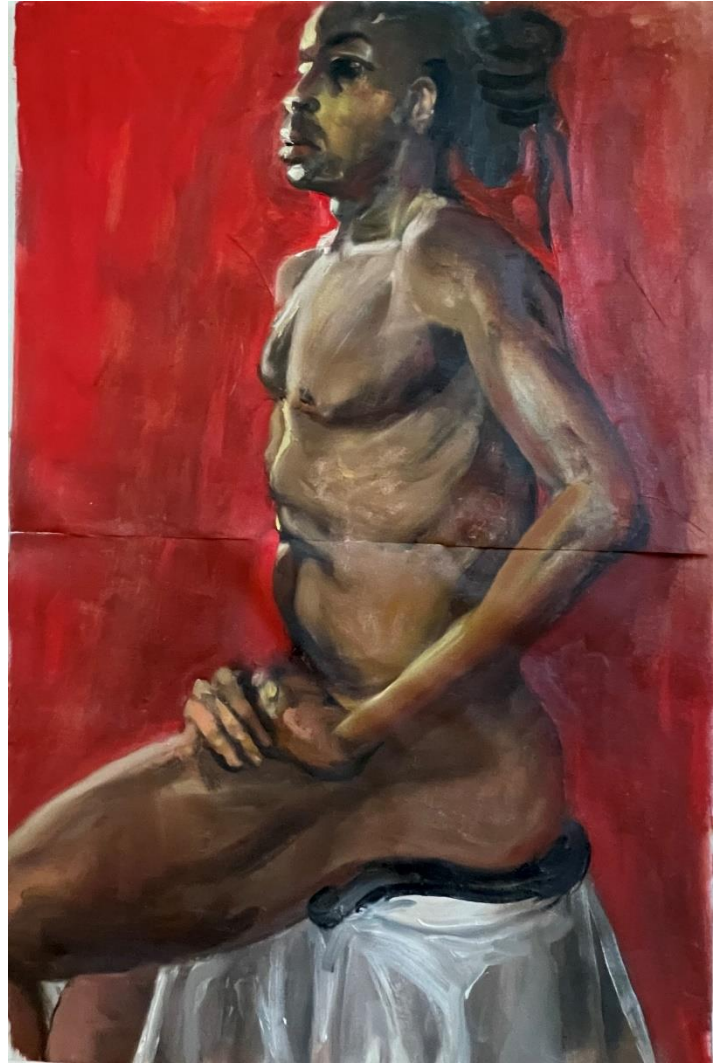
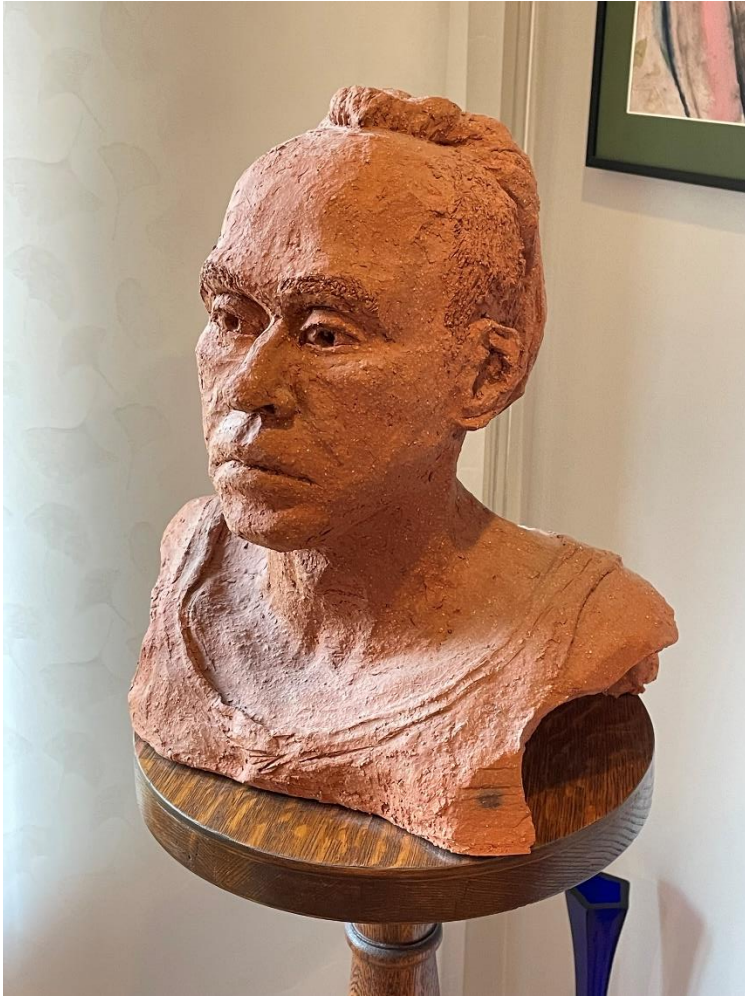
Join us on select  
Tuesdays from 6 to 7  
PM at  
the **Break**  
6292 Northwest Hwy  
Crystal Lake

Sponsored by Northwest Treatment Associates in  
Collaboration with the Break/ Youth Center

For more information contact  
Carol Fetzner, LCPC at [nwtacounseling.com](mailto:nwtacounseling.com)  
or [Jamierotf@gmail.com](mailto:Jamierotf@gmail.com)



# Art by Arnie Ginsburg a member of PFLAG Deerfield



Art by Arnie Ginsburg,  
a member of PFLAG Deerfield





📅 Friday, Nov. 19

🕒 9:00 am - 4:00 pm

### Mental Health First AID Virtual Training Courses

MHFA teaches you how to identify, understand and respond to signs of mental illness and substance use disorders. Gain the skills you need to reach out and provide initial support to someone who may be developing a mental health or substance use problem and help connect them to the care.

📍 Virtual/Zoom

[RSVP HERE >](#)



\$35 to participate!

*Celebrating 10 Years!*

### Santa Speedo Run Northalsted 2021

Saturday, Dec. 4 2021! We are back in-person this year, stripped down to our speedos and supporting a great cause. It's our 10th Anniversary, so join us in making this the biggest and best Santa Speedo Run ever!

Support Center on Halsted when you sign up and start raising money today!

Location  
Sidetrack the Video Bar  
3349 N. Halsted st.

[SIGN UP HERE >](#)

CENTER  
ON 3656 N.  
HALSTED

## Open Gym Volleyball is Back!

Mondays and Thursdays  
(excluding holidays)  
6:00 pm

Center on Halsted will reopen Open Gym  
Volleyball every Monday and Thursday  
night at 6:00 p.m.

starting on November 11th.

There is a \$7 fee per night or the option  
to pay only \$30 for a monthly pass.

The Center continues to follow City,  
State, and CDC guidelines. All patrons  
are required to wear a mask.

# Strangers with Myself

Essay by Skye Schoen

Have you ever felt like a stranger? Maybe the first day at a new job; you walk in and suddenly feel intimidated by the number of eyes on you, scrutinizing your every move. It can be an uncomfortable, overwhelming feeling at times. But have you ever felt like a stranger in your own skin? No matter how many times you introduce yourself, you never seem to get to know the person everyone sees you as? Because for some people, that's a reality they live in every day.

It was June 3rd, 2004 when a planned c-section gave way to Mr. and Mrs. Schoen's second child, me. It was at that moment, when the doctors handed them their little bundle of joy and said "meet your new baby girl!" That was when the trouble started. I grew up in a happy home, loving parents, and a big sister. But through the facade of a happy childhood, no one knew the internal dissonance I was experiencing.

From my very first memories, I knew something was wrong. They had made a mistake. While the world was trying to braid my hair and dress me in flowery blouses, I was counting down the hours till I could change back into my white t-shirt and gym shorts. Family gatherings became a wrestle between my mother and me which normally ended with me crying and her not understanding why putting on a nice outfit and letting my sister brush my hair was such a big deal. While these things seemed trivial to my mother, what was going on internally was something I couldn't yet put into words. Every warning bell was going off in my head as I sat in the back of the car, letting my sister braid my hair while silent tears streamed down my face. They only got louder as I had to sit through another family gathering wondering why my cousin Ethan didn't have to wear a flowery top

and have his hair braided. If I could go back in time and just say the words, "Mom, I'm a boy." I would. I would in an instant. Absolutely no question about it. I would choose to relive every event in my life over again, all the ups and the downs, if it meant I could live it as who I truly was. A boy. I find myself cursing my younger self, why couldn't I just tell someone what I instinctively knew was true. There has been no point in my life where I have questioned the validity of who I truly was. So why couldn't I have just toughened up and let those four simple words leave my mouth? I could have changed the whole course of my life at that moment. But I didn't. Instead, I chose to live through the trauma of growing up as somebody I don't even recognize today. But it's not fair of me to put that all on her. How can I when it was easier to be complacent in my own suffering than try to describe the indescribable?

There are so many things I want to say to that little kid. To the little girl that refused to wear long pants outside on a cold day because she thought wearing shorts would make her look more like the boys on the playground. To the middle school girl who spent the whole day researching boy's hairstyles before her haircut appointment to finally get the short cut she had been begging her parents for. And to the teenage girl who couldn't handle the weight of it all and almost took her own life because suicide seemed like a better alternative than telling the world the truth; that inside that confused little girl was a boy who had been waiting patiently in the wings for his turn to take center stage. There are so many things I want to say to her. But most of all I just want to thank her. Thank her for sticking with it when quitting seemed like a much easier road to take. I want to thank her; thank myself

## “HAVE YOU EVER FELT LIKE A STRANGER IN YOUR OWN SKIN?”



for finally saying something.

It was the end of a long day, during a therapy session with my mother and trusted therapist that those four words were finally said. “Mom, I’m a boy.” It was at that moment that my life changed forever. It was at that moment that I was finally free. With each day the real me began to shine through. The barriers I had built up all those years began to crumble, and my reflection began to feel less and less like a stranger. I still had a long way to go, and I still do have a long way to go. But I had spent my whole life thinking that my current reality was only something I could dream about, and now I get to live it every day.

My journey since that day has definitely had its ups and downs. There are still days full of struggle. There are so many questions yet to be answered, it can feel overwhelming sometimes. But now I find that a lot of my struggles come from the way I am perceived by the world. It’s a difficult thing to understand, I get it. I can have a tough time putting it into words, and I’m experiencing it first-hand. But there are those who won’t even make an effort to understand and would rather use it as fuel to be cruel to others.

Unfortunately, people like this are pretty easy to find

in my High School. Having started High School presenting as female and now finishing off my senior year presenting as male, I am frequently reminded of my prior status. I am often misgendered, by students and teachers alike. Most of these occurrences are in no way malicious. People are still adjusting to the change, and I understand that. But sometimes that’s all it takes to bring back those feelings of internal dissonance.

I’m excited for the next chapter of my life to begin. To graduate High School, hopefully start hormone treatments, and start my college career as who I truly am, with nobody knowing what came before. I am so close to that point in my life it’s hard not to count down the days. But no matter what chapter of my life I’m in, I can’t forget about the little girl that came before. I wish she could see me now. She would be so proud of me, but not as proud as I am of her. Even when things seemed hopeless, she found a reason to keep going. She’s the reason I am who I am, even if she feels like a complete stranger to me. But she doesn’t have to be a stranger forever. With every passing day, I am becoming less of a stranger to her, and more of exactly who she knew she was all along.



# THEATER

## [Pride Arts](https://pridearts.org) [pridearts.org](https://pridearts.org)

STREAM the PrideArts  
Fall Film Festival  
November 1 – 29

[BUY TICKETS HERE](#)

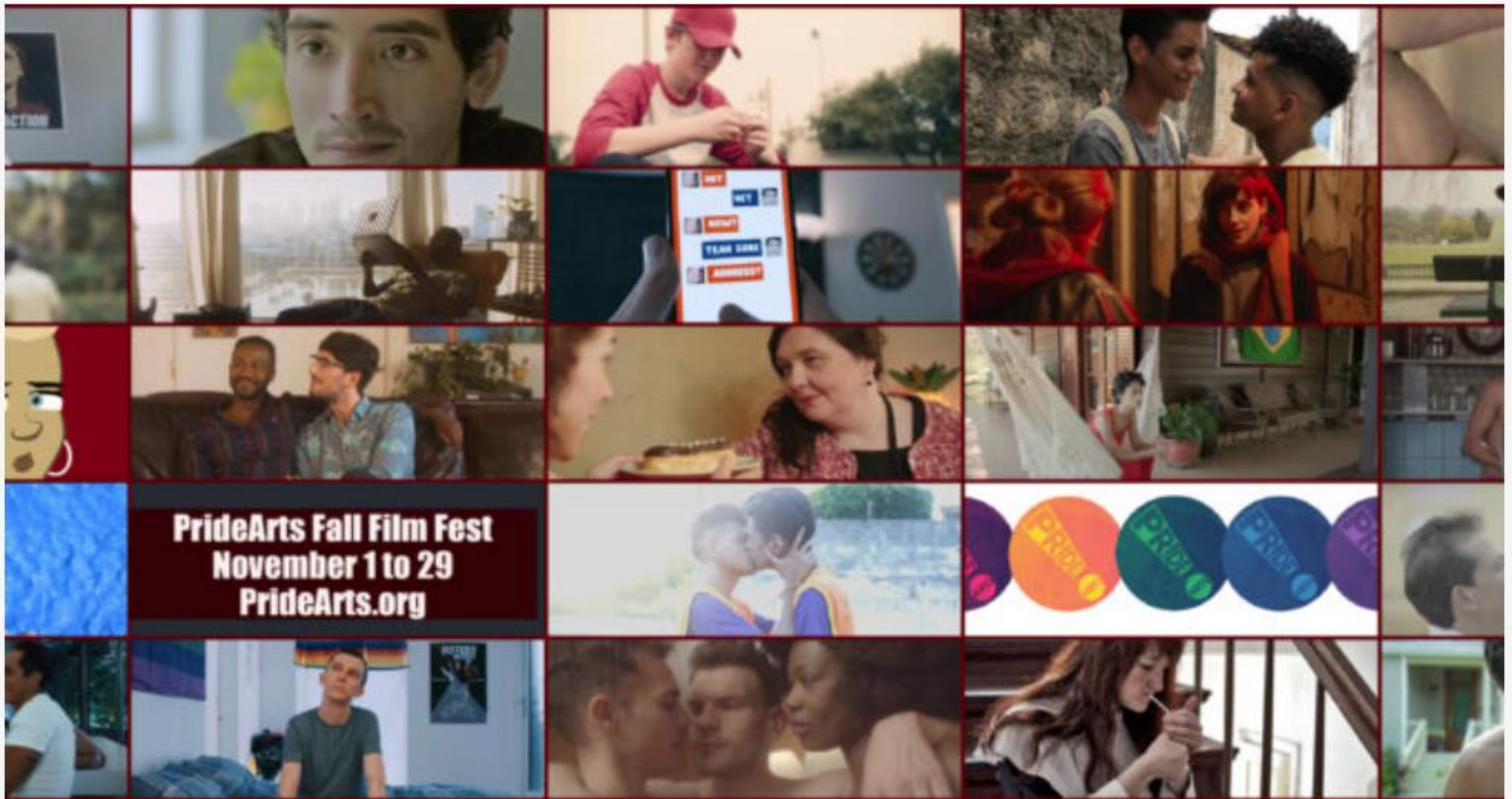
FALL SHORTS PROGRAM WEEK 1 - **November 1 – 8**  
Short LGBTQ+ films from Pakistan

FALL SHORTS PROGRAM WEEK 2 – **November 8 - 15**  
8 short films from the US, Brazil, Germany, and Guatemala

FALL SHORTS PROGRAM WEEK 3 – **November 15 - 22**  
6 short films from the US, UK, Brazil, and the Netherlands

FALL SHORTS PROGRAM WEEK 4 – **November 22 – 29**  
7 short films from the US, France, Canada, and Brazil

## PrideArts Fall Film Festival is now on!

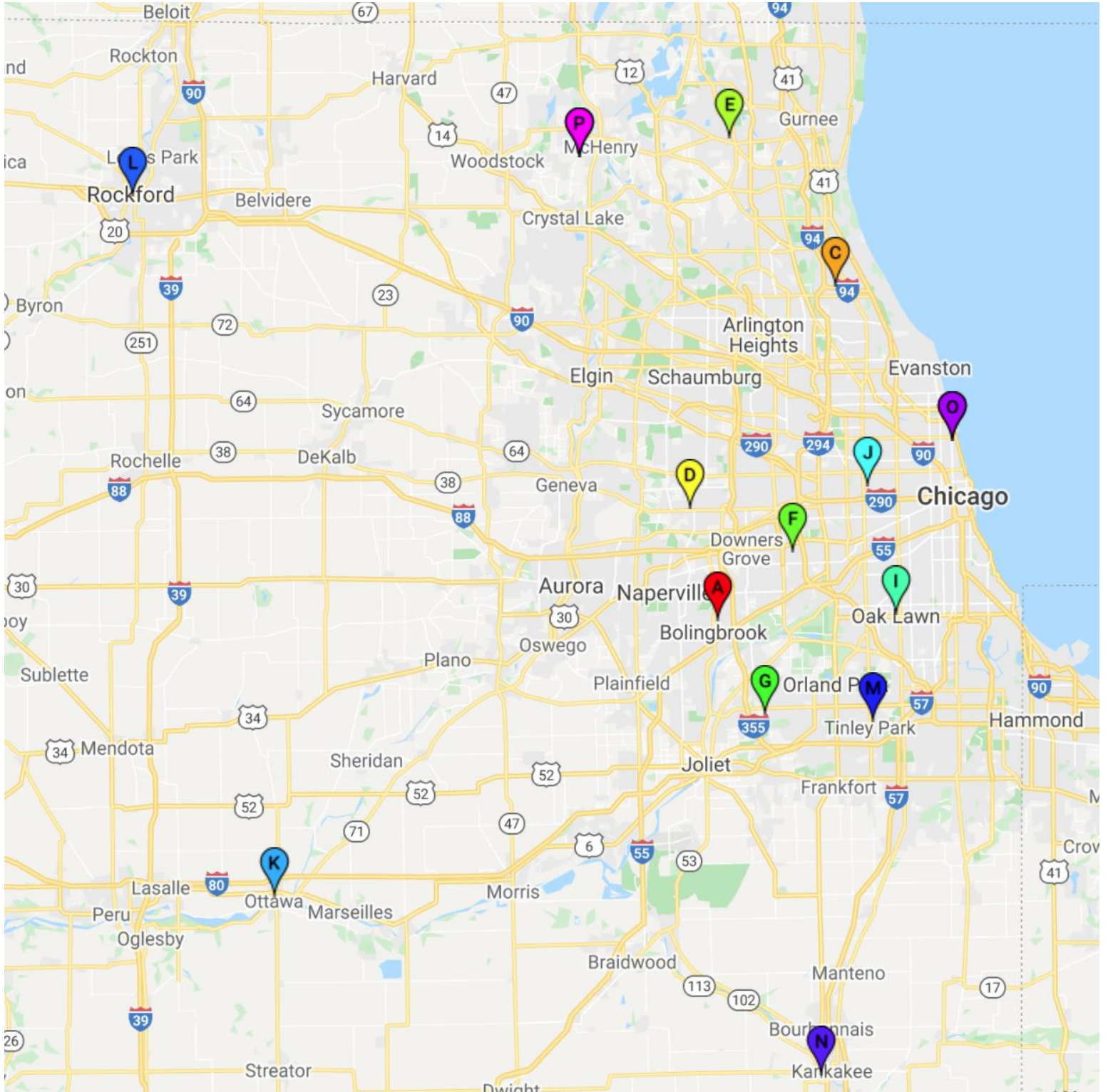


November 1 to 29. Four programs, each streaming for a week, featuring 32 international queer short films.

See trailers from some of the film fest selections [here](#).



# PFLAG Northern Illinois Chapters



**Click/tap anywhere on the map to open it online and find regular meeting dates/times. Note that most chapters are meeting online on Zoom due to COVID-19. Contact the chapter about access before your very first meeting.**

