



February 2022 | PFLAG Council of Northern Illinois Newsletter

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Monthly Open Doors

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When the school bell rings...

Theoretically, a child's universe expands inside a place where they can learn new skills, be introduced to new ideas, develop confidence, test, and feel the warmth of new friendships, experience teamwork, and freely explore their identity and how it contributes to the world around them. As parents, we extend our trust, perhaps beyond our comfort, into the hands of educators and school administrators, with our hopes that all these things come to be. And we worry.

Sadly, we worry with good cause. All too often LGBTQ+ students face disregard, disrespect, are made to feel "less than", and fall victim to regular abuse and harassment. Tragically, they suffer lost opportunities measured by high rates of absenteeism, dropout, health impacts and academic underachievement.

Here in Illinois, we've taken recent substantive actions to target this. 2019 saw the passage of the Inclusive Curriculum Law, designed to ensure that all students recognize and celebrate the contributions of LGBTQ people as part of the history curriculum taught in public schools. Hopefully, it allows those same students to recognize the gifts of the LGBTQ+ people around them and see their potential for greatness as well. In August, Governor Pritzker signed the Keeping Youth Safe and Healthy Act which creates age-appropriate learning standards for public schools that decide to teach comprehensive personal health and safety education (grades K-5) and comprehensive sexual health education (grades 6-12). The Act mandates that such education be inclusive and identity affirming and strives to prevent the marginalizing of any student. And just last month, the Illinois Department of Human Rights issued non-regulatory guidance relating to the protection of transgender, non-binary, and gender non-conforming students under the Illinois Human Rights Act. It provides direct, actionable language aimed at combatting discrimination related to gender-based identity.

These directives, to have a measurable and lasting impact, require active and constant support so they

remain front and center with our educators, our school boards, our parent's groups, and our legislators. Toward that end, we champion the relentless efforts of organizations like Equality Illinois, the Illinois Safe Schools Alliance and Lambda Legal who, as we speak, monitor, and measure their effectiveness and promote what they stand for. And, as PFLAG parents, we support them, advocating for libraries that open the world to all students and do not prevent offerings that affirm our LGBTQ+ children, and for school policies and practices that make them visible, included and celebrated.

One bill now being advanced at the national level is The Safe Schools Improvement Act of 2021, (H.R.4402 and S. 2410), or SSIA. This Act targets bullying and harassment of students much more specifically than existing federal law that addresses school safety, with special focus on such actions based on race, color, national origin, sex, disability, sexual orientation, gender identity and religion.

Each of the above efforts strives to improve the school climate, inherently advancing the health and educational progress for all students. And isn't that what we strive for, inclusion, being welcomed and affirmed like everyone – protected, valued, and celebrated like all students. Clearly, these directives benefit all students, enabling each one to see a world that thrives on diversity and silences no one's efforts to achieve their full potential.

When the school bell rings, it should signal for all kids a warm welcome, a call to explore the world and a promise that they can be, and thrive, as exactly who they are called to be!

Onward!

Don Donahue

President,
PFLAG Council of Northern Illinois



Every Child Deserves A Family

Tell your lawmakers to cosponsor the John Lewis Every Child Deserves a Family Act

Far too many foster children spend years in the system without finding a forever home. Same-sex couples are seven times more likely to foster and adopt than opposite-sex couples and are more likely to foster and adopt hard to place children like large sibling groups, older children, and children with disabilities. Turning away qualified LGBTQI+ foster and adoptive parents limits the pool of homes available to and harms kids in care.

Additionally, 1 in 3 foster children identify as LGBTQI+, and they experience higher rates of mistreatment, long stays in residential care rather than with families, and higher rates of homelessness, being trafficked, and criminal justice system involvement.

The John Lewis Every Child Deserves a Family Act will improve the outcomes for the LGBTQI+ youth dramatically overrepresented in care. And, it opens up more loving homes to America's 400,000 foster youth. It does so by barring discrimination based on sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, religion and marital status against families or children in taxpayer funded child welfare services. And, it provides extensive resources to states, tribes, and agencies to improve care and outcomes for LGBTQI+ foster children.

Please [click here](#) to tell your members of Congress: Co-sponsor and pass the John Lewis Every Child Deserves a Family Act.

That's Who We Are

by Toni Weaver

PFLAG is more than just going to meetings;

PFLAG is more than just marching in parades;

PFLAG is more than just writing letters;

PFLAG is more than just being rabble rousers.

PFLAG is people, ordinary people, who love in extraordinary ways, people who can be called upon at a moment's notice to counsel a confused parent or a hurting child, people who stand at the ready to respond to any request for help, to share their wisdom, to share their experience, to share their love.

PFLAG is community, community that seeks to serve at all times and in all places.

PFLAG isn't limited to people who attend meetings or pay dues.

PFLAG is people who have ever been a part of a chapter, people who stand ready to share their wisdom and insight whenever called upon to help.

PFLAG is **love**.

That's who we are.



From PFLAG National

TAKE ACTION

Raise your voice for the Safe Schools Improvement Act (SSIA). Encourage your elected officials (two Senators and one Representative) to cosponsor The Safe Schools Improvement Act of 2021, ([H.R.4402](#) and [S. 2410](#)), or SSIA. LGBTQ+ and civil rights organizations are uniting to support our students and halt bullying and discrimination. PFLAGers have always advocated for student safety and well-being and for SSIA, and this initiative is to help us move this LGBTQ+ student-inclusive legislation forward.

FEDERAL

Administration proposes rule prohibiting health insurers from discriminating against LGBTQ+ people. The proposed rule would add gender identity and sexual orientation back to a list of anti-discrimination protections under Section 1557 of the Affordable Care Act after the previous administration removed those protections. Health and Human Services Secretary Xavier Becerra said that prohibiting discrimination based on sexuality and gender identity “would increase access to health care, decrease health disparities,” and align with the Biden administration’s desire that people receive “equal treatment under the law.”

Gender identity categories added to veterans’ health records. The Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) announced that it began including gender identifiers in its national medical record system last month “to help VA providers better understand and meet the health care needs of Veterans,” including transgender and gender-diverse veterans. The VA added the categories “transgender male, transgender female, non-binary, other, or does not wish to disclose” as options in its gender identity field.

GLOBAL

Israel - Israel to allow surrogacy for LGBTQ+ couples. The announcement comes roughly six months after the Israeli Supreme Court struck down Israel’s restrictions barring gay couples and single men from surrogacy within the country. The high court gave the government six months to act.

United Kingdom - Past convictions for “homosexual activity” to be wiped from records. Any conviction that was imposed on someone purely due to consensual same-sex activity under now-abolished laws will be included in an attempt at “righting the wrongs of the past”, the UK home secretary is set to announce.

Canada - Conversion Therapy Ban goes into effect. The ban on the debunked and dangerous practice took effect on January 7th. Practicing so-called conversion therapy, transporting a minor abroad to send them to a so-called conversion therapy practitioner, and promoting so-called conversion therapy are all now criminal offenses.

France - French government lifts restrictions on LGBTQ+ blood donors. Health Minister Olivier Veran announced that the new policy will take effect on March 16th and questions about sexual orientation will be removed from blood donor forms.

MEDIA

International Olympic Committee announces new framework for transgender and intersex athletes. The guidelines encourage governing bodies to avoid using unnecessary medical testing or procedures as part of determining eligibility.

US LGBTQ+ adult population estimated to hit 20 million. HRC Foundation’s analysis of government data yields an estimate of 20 million LGBTQ+ adults in the US, which is nearly twice the number of the last estimate and represents nearly 8% of the total US adult population. Bisexual adults comprise the largest contingent of LGBTQ+ people in the U.S., representing 4% of the LGBTQ+ population, while gay and lesbian adults represent 3% of the population.

Michaela Jaé Rodriguez becomes first out trans actress to win a Golden Globe. Rodriguez won the award for best television actress in a drama series for her work on Pose.

Winter Olympic Games in Beijing to set LGBTQ+ record. More openly LGBTQ+ athletes are expected to participate in this Winter Games than any before, exceeding the 15 publicly out competitors on record in 2018. Out athletes include Timothy LeDuc, the first out non-binary Winter Olympian, and several skating and other athletes are scheduled to compete. The Olympics run Feb 4th-20th.

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 Deerfield

by Jodi

Our chapter is hanging in there on Zoom. We continue to welcome new people and we continue to learn and grow. This month, we were joined by Charlie Everett (they/them/theirs), Patrick Cochrane (he/him/his) and Diego Sanchez (he/El) from PFLAG National. A short meeting of support followed.

Patrick, Charlie, and Diego educated us on anti-LGBTQ+ advocacy at the local level; anti-transgender legislation; the Equality Act; and the ways PFLAG can help with these issues. The following is a summary of what we learned.

There are well organized anti-LGBTQ+ activists influencing and infiltrating local school boards, library boards, and other local government boards, yes, right here in Illinois! Changes made at the local level can significantly impact people's lives. These groups are more widespread, more organized, and more mean-spirited than ever before. One of our members shared her firsthand experiences in combating a group in the Niles/Skokie/Morton Grove area. It is frightening. If you are wondering if it can happen in your backyard, it is already happening.

It has also been a bad year for anti-trans legislation. There were more than 350 anti-LGBTQ bills introduced this past year across 35 states. Of these bills, 197 of them are anti-trans bills. These anti-trans bills are usually athlete bans, medical care bans, or legal document change bans. Arkansas became the first state to ban transgender youth health care, refusing puberty blocking care, etc. They are the first but may not be the last as many other states have introduced similar bills. The anti-trans athlete bans and anti-trans medical care bans are direct attacks on our nation's children.

Legal document change bans prevent trans and non-binary persons from changing their gender marker and sometimes their name on birth certificates and other legal documents. These bans may prevent a person from getting a job, buying a home, taking a trip, or being admitted to a school. These bans can even

prevent a person from getting a bus pass or a library card. These bans directly alter the course of one's life. As is often the case, those most affected by these bans are those with limited resources.

The Equality Act is a bill in the United States Congress. The Equality Act prohibits discrimination based on sexual orientation and/or gender identity across key areas of life including employment, housing, credit, education, public spaces and services, federally funded programs, and jury service. Currently, only employment is federally protected from discrimination.

What can we do to help?

1. Show up to local government meetings with as many people as you can. Make your voices heard. Know what is happening at the local level in your area.
2. Talk to the media! Tell your story through traditional media and/or social media. Write an op-ed. Write a letter to the editor.
3. Share resources and best practices with other PFLAG chapters. Let's learn from each other!
4. Check with friends and families in other states. What do they need? How can we help?
5. Fight for federal anti-discrimination legislation!
6. Schedule a virtual lobby visit with members of Congress and tell them your story. Ask them to support The Equality Act. Ask them to make passage of The Equality Act a priority!
7. Send letters, emails, make calls to your elected officials. They want to hear from you. **CALL YOUR SENATORS TODAY. TELL THEM TO SUPPORT AND VOTE FOR THE EQUALITY ACT!**

We could have never hosted Charlie, Patrick, and Diego in person. Thanks, Zoom!

**Show up to local
government
meetings. Make
your voices heard.**



News from PFLAG Hinsdale

by Barb Medley

Our December traditional holiday potluck, unfortunately, was canceled due to the ongoing pandemic. We did, however, continue our annual charitable giving. Along with sponsorship from individual donations, Argonne National Laboratory, and First Christian Church in Downers Grove which donated more than 100 pairs of heavy duty socks, we were able to provide 40 gift bags to 360 Youth Services and a carload of supplies to The Night Ministry.

We met again remotely on January 2nd. We had great participation despite it being a holiday weekend, and happily new guests are finding and joining us on Zoom. Our guest speaker was Jeannie Gainsburg, the author of *The Savvy Ally: A Guide for Becoming a Skilled LGBTQ+ Advocate*.

Jeannie is not part of the LGBTQ+ community. She's always felt strongly about inclusion. After her husband gave her a book about the fight by women for the right to vote, she felt compelled to become an LGBTQ+ ally. She eventually began to write a book, and I'm so glad she did – Jeannie is open, wise and has a gift for promoting inclusion through positivity. There are many books about becoming an ally. So why did she want to write her book? She explained:

First, Jeannie found most books answered the basic questions on people's minds; she wanted her book to be action-based. Second, most were very advanced and academic. She wanted her book to be accessible to everyone. And third, some books had a very "judgy" tone, were unforgiving and almost shaming. She wants to start a conversation without people putting up walls after being put on the defensive.

Jeannie's book has been so well received that she's in the process of writing a version 2. During our conversation, Jeannie offered several practical tips. It was a great discussion. Among her advice is:

There's no expiration date on apologies – if you have said something wrong or awkward and you realize it years later, it's okay to apologize. It may spark a conversation.

Good talk – when responding to a person who says something inappropriate, answering in a positive way rather than shaming can promote a more positive

outcome. "I can see that you're coming from a place of love, but here is a more positive way to think about that..."

Her website (www.savvyallyaction.com) contains a three-minute monthly video with savvy ally tips. You can subscribe; Jeannie only sends one email a month. There are links on the website to purchase her book through the publisher, Rowman & Littlefield, using the code 4S2OALLY for a 30% discount. (It's also available from Amazon). She also has a YouTube channel where you'll find all her videos – www.youtube.com/channel/UCNTbZy88kyTvZkISdiCi00w.

Our speaker for Feb. 6 is Elizabeth Ricks. She's the legal director for the Translife Care Program at the Chicago House and Social Service Agency. She'll talk about her job there and Chicago House's role to empower people living with or vulnerable to HIV/AIDS to lead healthy and dignified lives through housing and client-centered support services.

News from PFLAG McHenry

by Toni Weaver

PFLAG McHenry has had an active two months responding to folks seeking support, either for themselves or for a loved one. Some months are quiet with no requests for help coming in; others are quite active. We are so fortunate to have an active roster of PFLAG folks ready and willing to help at a moment's notice. It's that love and devotion to the mission of PFLAG that prompted me to write the little piece "**That's Who We Are.**" (Thanks, Roxie, for inspiring the title!) [See page 3]

We're also busy preparing for the annual People in Need Forum, held normally at McHenry County College. This year the forum will be held on Saturday, January 29. The forum brings together a myriad of organizations that provide a variety of social services to the community as well as members of the general public who are seeking such services. It's a tremendous networking opportunity for all of us. However, since we're still taking Covid precautions, the P.I.N. Forum will be held virtually once again. We'll set up our virtual booth which this year will include the YouTube video of President Obama speaking about PFLAG at an HRC event and will also include the flyer for the PFLAG Council of Northern Illinois.



News from PTI Chicago

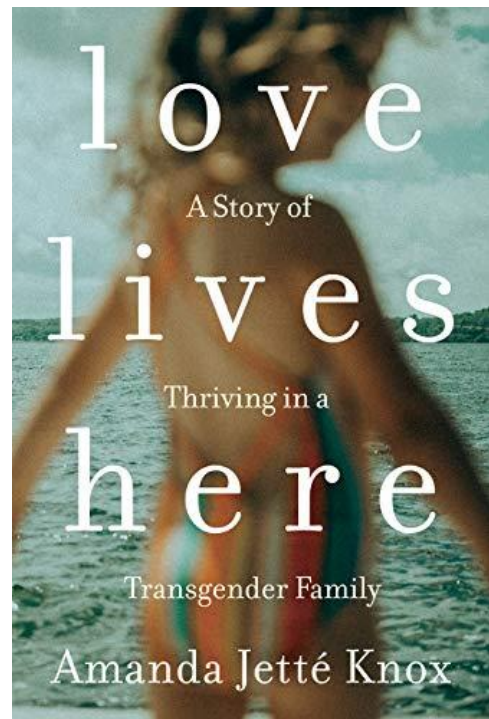
by Christine Peters

PTI Chicago hosted more than 20 participants during each of our December and January meetings. We continue to greet many first-timers and serve as an important resource for parents and grandparents who find themselves part of the extended LGBTQI+ community. Before Covid, our December meetings included a festive potluck, but this year we made the holiday special by welcoming Arlene Collins, the founder of PTI Chicago back into our midst via Zoom, as well Arlene's daughter, Maureen, with her unique perspective.

Arlene reminded us of how she launched the first PTI meeting in January of 2009 in her home with 2 participants! Arlene realized PFLAG did not address the needs of parents with trans offspring, so she created a safe support group for all of us. She described her beloved son, Quinn, who inspired her. He had been AFAB in 1971 and had always “marched to a different drummer.” At first Quinn came out as gay, and then 8 years later as trans when he was in his late 20's. He finally was able to transition when in his 30's, and Arlene reported that he attended all of the PTI meetings. His long journey was tragically cut short when he died in an auto accident at the age of 38. Arlene said he “had been born in the wrong wrapper,” but his funeral service was filled with people who loved him for who he was.

Arlene persisted in supporting the parents of trans kids despite her loss. For years she drove from Michigan to lead meetings at Center on Halsted, even when her health was compromised. Countless parents have found connection, information, and reassurance through their difficult transitions because of Arlene's devotion to trans activism. She always led us in the Pride Parade wearing the purple Proud Parent t-shirts that honored Quinn's memory. It is most telling that when Arlene reluctantly retired as the head of PTI, it took four of us to fill her shoes. Thank you, dear Arlene, for gracing us with your presence!

At our January gathering, PTI Chicago kicked off 2022 with an enthusiastic discussion of our latest Book Club pick, *Love Lives Here: A Story of Thriving in a Transgender Family*. This selection was chosen and the discussion led by Francey Oscherwitz, one of PTI's VPs and our group's librarian. The author, Ottawa writer Amanda Jetté Knox, first achieved celebrity with her parenting blog, *The Maven of Mayhem*, and there is mayhem galore as Knox's story unfolds, from the cruelty of her early years as an anglo child bullied by French-speaking peers to the disappointments of early marriage to a partner oppressed by a soul-crushing secret. Members found themselves hooked by Knox's disarmingly confessional voice—and inspired by her gutsy optimism as she guides her family through the travails and triumphs of TWO gender transitions, striving always to “lead with love.”



News from PTI Chicago, continued

Previous books club picks (*Beyond the Gender Binary; I Have Always Been Me; Tomorrow Will Be Different: Love, Loss, and the Fight for Trans Equality*) were written by transgender individuals themselves about their unique experience. Love Lives Here traces the inner journey of a parent upon learning that her child is “a girl trapped in a boy’s body,” a perspective that resonated with many PTI parents. By popular demand, our next reading will explore the experience of raising nonbinary and gender-fluid children.

We gather via Zoom on the second Thursday of each month, so **our next meeting is Thursday, February 10th, 2022 from 7:00 p.m. - 9:00 p.m. Wear your Valentine’s Day swag!** Members will receive an e-mail the weekend before the meeting with the Zoom link and password to enter the meeting. Parent/s, guardians, or family members of transgender, non-binary or gender non-conforming individuals who would like to join us for the first time should e-mail PTI Chicago President Bill Guilfoile at bill.guilfoile@gmail.com

PFLAG Connects: Communities

PFLAG Connects: Communities aim to provide a space where people with shared experiences can connect each month in virtual support settings. Our first meetings will gather people of Latino, Black/African-American, and Asian-American & Pacific Islander backgrounds to connect with each other in a safe online environment. You can ask questions and learn from others who have been through similar experiences.

Maybe a loved one has recently told you their sexual orientation or gender identity is different from what you assumed. Maybe you’re looking to learn how other people have navigated the journey. Maybe you’re looking for a space where you can find yourself reflected in the shared experiences of others.

If this sounds like you, welcome to the community! We are so glad you’re here.

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

News from PFLAG DuPage

by Bonnie Clemens

Happy New Year from the DuPage Chapter! We hope that everyone was able to find some time to relax and enjoy in December. We have had two chapter meetings since our last post. Our December speaker was Marlo Mack, author of the [Gendermom blog](#) and the [How to Be a Girl podcast](#). It was interesting to hear Ms Mack’s personal story and for us to compare and contrast her experiences with those of our own. The conversation was lively and there were a lot of questions.

In January we delved into the topic of book censorship. Across the country, books by LGBTQ+ authors and about the experiences of LGBTQ+ people are being protested and removed from school and public libraries. We used the video [You Can’t read This – the Book Banning Trend](#) from PFLAG National’s “Something to Talk About: Live” series. The video discusses Nadra Nittle’s article in the 19th, [“Librarians are resisting censorship of children’s books by LGBTQ+ and Black authors”](#) with Malinda Lo, author of *Last Night at the Telegraph Club*, Maia Kobabe, author of *Gender Queer: A Memoir*, and Deborah Caldwell-Stone, director of the American Library Association’s Office for Intellectual Freedom. We watched the video and then had a group discussion. The video is quite engaging, very well done and very informative. We learned about what we as individuals supporting the LGBTQ+ population can do to push back on this disturbing trend. The easiest thing that we all can do is to regularly check out books with LGBTQ+ themes and authors from the library. What a simple way but powerful way to signal to your community that these books are valuable!

Our meetings continue to be on Zoom. We are considering adopting a hybrid meeting approach, in-person for those who wish to be physically present combined with Zoom for those who prefer or need to attend remotely. We tentatively plan on testing this out later this spring depending on what happens with the pandemic.



Panel for Alliance RX - Walgreens Prime

by Sue Ginsburg, PFLAG Deerfield

On December 10, 2021, I was asked to participate on a panel for Alliance RX- Walgreens Prime. Present on the Zoom were 72 members of the Prism Group at Alliance Rx. I was asked to talk about PFLAG, what it is, what it does, etc. Everyone who knows me, knows that this is the easiest thing for me to do and once I get started, I can't stop. With me on the panel was Raychel Cesaro, Director of Philanthropy at onePULSE Foundation in Orlando, FL; and Aaron Almanza, Executive Director of the LGBT National Help Center. Both these people are important to our community, so I really wanted to let you all know about them!

Raychel started off her presentation with an inspiring video of survivors and relatives of survivors of the PULSE Nightclub massacre. It took 49 lives, which she refers to as "Angels", and injured 68 others. What wasn't known was that there was a global response to this tragedy. Countries from all over the world, Nigeria, France, Australia, to name a few, held memorials. President Biden signed legislation to make this a National Memorial. This was the only terrorist attack that took place on private property and the owner felt a responsibility to teach about it. Barbara, the owner, researched other memorials, going to Oklahoma City, the 9-11 Memorial in NYC, and Matt Shepard's home, as she was determined to have the memorial. In 2018, she started the onePULSE Foundation and interim memorial, asking community members what they wanted. They are now in the middle of an international design contest! Their Mission is to overcome hate 1) through the Memorial itself; 2) museum with strong education programs; 3) awarding 49 legacy scholarships in the names of the 49 "angels", specifically in the areas of what they were doing with their lives, such as nursing, acting, cosmetology, etc. The scholarships are open to all LGBTQ students all around the country!

Just because President Biden established PULSE a

National Memorial, doesn't mean that money is available through the government, so they are looking for donations. One way, which I loved, and which I've already acted upon, is for a \$49 donation, you can send in a picture and that picture will be on the permanent wall of the museum, when it is built! I sent in a picture of my daughter and her wife when we all went to the Pride Parade 3 years ago. You can get more information from Raychel at her email: rc@onepulsefoundation.org or go to www.outlovehate.com and here you can see some of the pictures already donated.

Aaron Almanza shared the evolution from the original New York City hotline established in 1996 to the high tech resources and support they provide today, which is located now in San Francisco. The Center's mission is to provide vital peer-support, community connections and resource information locally, nationally and internationally!!! Aaron has been working there for 15 years and he explained that there is a National line, a Seniors line, a Youth 25 and under line, and moderated youth chat rooms as well. It's a place where people can meet one another, vent and just be themselves. They have the **LARGEST RESOURCE DATABASE IN THE WORLD**, all free and confidential. They take over 200 calls/week and host over 40 chats/week and they are in need of volunteers. They don't always have the answers, but they help find people who can lead the way to those answers. In order to be a volunteer, you must be LGBTQ+ and over 18. They ask for only 2-3 hours/week peer support. For more information, contact Aaron, aaron@lgbthotline.org

The hotline number is: 888-843-4564.

Hours: Monday through Friday from 4 pm to midnight (eastern time); 1 pm to 9 pm (pacific time). Saturday from 9 am to 2 pm (pacific time); Saturday from noon to 5 pm (eastern time) email: help@LGBThotline.org

I've asked Raychel to speak at our February Meeting in Deerfield! Hoping for Aaron later in the year.



A letter to Archbishop ListECKi from Toni Weaver, PFLAG McHenry

January 31, 2022

Dear Archbishop ListECKi,

It was with a great deal of sadness, consternation, and anger that I read “Catechesis and Policy Questions Concerning Gender Theory.” I will not try to argue on a theological basis although I would like to point out that theology is the work of human beings, trying to be faithful to how they interpret the words of scripture. It is, nevertheless, the work of people – fallible people – trying to be faithful to what they believe is the intent of God. The Catechism of the Catholic Church, another work by fallible human beings, cannot be taken dogmatically. Yes, you’ll say that it is the work of human beings under the inspiration and guidance of the Holy Spirit. I really don’t trust human beings to always know the mind and heart of God, do you? How many centuries did it take for the Church to acknowledge that Galileo was right about the revolution of the earth around the sun?

Using the example of Galileo, I’d like to suggest that the science is still out on the question of the origins of transgender. Strides are being made in the understanding of this phenomenon, but we still can’t say with 100% certainty what the underlying cause of gender dysphoria is. We do know, for example, that some people are born intersex. That’s a scientific fact. Some of those people have ambiguous genitalia so that at the moment of birth when parents traditionally ask “Is it a boy or a girl,” the doctor must pause and carefully consider how to respond. In an earlier time, doctors frequently intervened and made the decision themselves about the sex of the baby.

The point is, we are still learning about the causes of gender dysphoria, its basis in biology, its basis in brain development. We do know that people who are transgender have a significantly higher frequency of suicidal ideation. The emotional and psychological

pain experienced is unimaginable and, sorry to say, you have just compounded the pain of these human beings and their parents and families by this unscientific expose, claiming to know the mind of Christ.

Nowhere in this document do I see evidence that you consulted with medical institutions, psychologists, the American Psychological Association, or the American Medical Association, nor with transgender people and their families. (Please connect with the local Milwaukee chapter of PFLAG.) I fear that you have done a great deal of harm, harm that will be difficult to rectify.

Gender dysphoria is being studied diligently, and the science is still out. I can’t reiterate that strongly enough. Remember: the Church was quite certain that Galileo was promoting heresy. Thank God he wasn’t burned at the stake. Yes, the Church did things like that, too, thinking it was perfectly justified.

Are you willing to utter the words of the crowd calling for the execution of Jesus, “Let his blood be upon us and on our children”? You may very well be responsible for the deaths of many innocent people; their blood will be upon your head.

Toni Weaver (she/her/hers)
PFLAG McHenry, IL

For further study:

- <https://www.sciencedaily.com/releases/2020/02/200205084203.htm>
- <https://www.apa.org/topics/lgbtq/transgender>
- <https://www.wpath.org/>
- <https://www.luriechildrens.org/en/specialties-conditions/gender-identity-children/>

Resources:

- <https://pflagillinois.org/resources/transgender/>





Below the surface of Shantell Martin’s signature black and white drawings is an artists’ inquiry into the role of artist and viewer, where a work of art is more than an object of admiration disconnected from its inception. With a meditative process defined by an uninhibited flow, her compositions embody her internal state and the impermanence of the world around her. Exploring themes such as intersectionality, identity, and play, Martin is a cultural facilitator, forging new connections between fine art, education, design, philosophy, and technology.

In addition to prestigious solo shows at some of the most renowned art institutions including the 92Y Gallery in New York City, the iconic Albright Knox Gallery, and the MoCADA Museum, Martin has carved a path for herself that is as much intellectual as a visual artist. During her two year tenure as a MIT Media Lab Visiting Scholar, Martin collaborated with the social computing group to use drawing as a medium to explore the interaction of social processes with physical spaces. At the Brown Institute for Media Innovation, Martin created a large scale wall installation and worked with





the Institute's research group to explore how visual and computerized storytelling might influence media and technology innovation.

A fashion and design icon in her own right, Martin has collaborated with iconic brands such as Nike, Vitra, Max Mara, Tiffany & Co., and in 2018, Puma launched a global capsule collection featuring her drawings. Martin has collaborated with legendary artists such as Pulitzer Prize-winning performance artist Kendrick Lamar and acclaimed designer Kelly Wearstler. In late 2018, she was asked to collaborate with the prestigious New York City Ballet, where





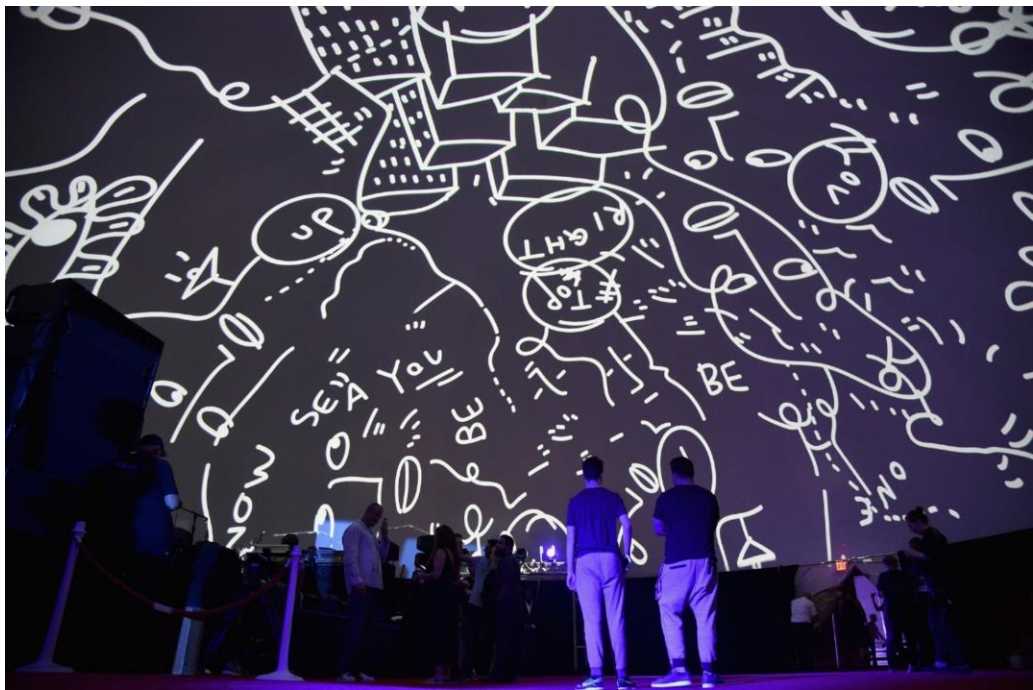
she created large scale drawings in the performance hall and foyer of the Lincoln Center for the company's celebrated Art Series. She continues to teach as an adjunct professor at NYU Tisch ITP (Interactive Telecommunications Program), where she works with her students to push the boundaries of storytelling, visual art, and technology.

Find more information:

@Shantell_Martin

ShantellMartin.art

Studio@ShantellMartin.com



“new connections between fine art, education, design, philosophy, and technology”



NOISZ STARLIVHT

a new game for iOS / Android featuring a diverse LGBTQ cast created by an LGBTQ team



NOISZ STARLIVHT is a hybrid rhythm game / bullet hell shmup for Android and iOS. Become the new #1 hit idol group, battle interdimensional music monsters, rebel against your corporate overlords, wield a mighty soul-devouring experimental weapon, and be unstoppably, unapologetically gay in this standalone sequel to the 2018 rhythm bullet hell VN, NOISZ (PC, coming soon to Arcade / Switch).

Build friendships with your team, explore the world of NOISZ, customize your outfits for fashion and fighting power, and experience an exciting new hybrid gameplay concept that's possible only on touchscreen.

FEATURES: An expanding songlist (20 tracks at launch) packed with famed rhythm game artists. A massive story in visual novel format. A diverse cast written by an LGBTQ team. Deep character customization unprecedented in rhythm games. Play the entire story and most songs free.

NOISZ STARLIVHT 12+

Rhythm bullet hell idol VN

RELEASE DATE: 2/2/22

DEVELOPER: Anarch Entertainment

PLATFORMS: iOS / Android

PRICE: Free, offers In-App Purchases

LANGUAGES: English / Japanese

Website: starlivht.noiszgame.com

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

Facebook ([@noiszgame](https://facebook.com/noiszgame))

YouTube

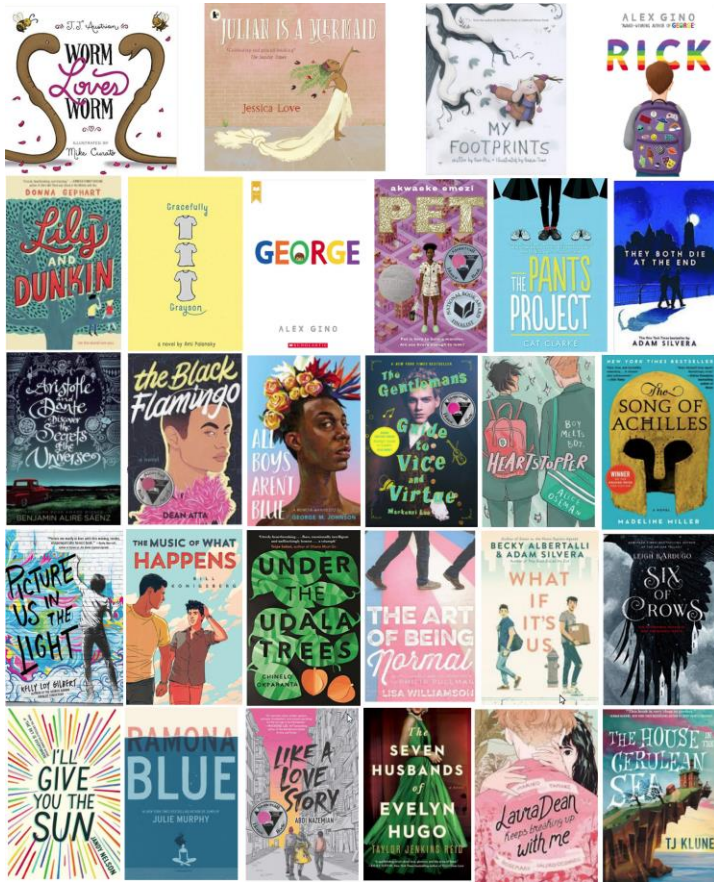
Discord

Disclosure: one of the game creators is the Open Doors Editor's daughter

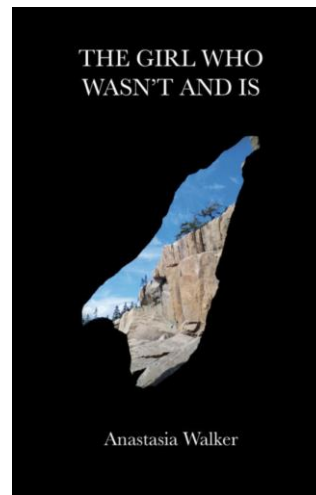


BOOKS, BOOKS, BOOKS

This carefully selected [LGBTQ+ Teen-Reviewed Book List](#) is brought to you by Youth Services of Glenview/Northbrook. Books are arranged by age level and short helpful comments are included in this PDF file presentation.



The Girl Who Wasn't and Is, Anastasia Walker's first book of poetry, is a deeply personal work and a meditation on community, history, and the natural world. In a series of poems and a closing autobiographical essay, the poet embraces her identity as a transgender woman through a harrowing, wonderful journey from her childhood on the Maine coast to her post-transition life in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. Original photos and drawings, and the interspersed stories of family and friends, community members, historical and mythological figures, and the allied struggles of others create a broad sense of connection. *The Girl Who Wasn't and Is* is a rich mosaic that invites readers to a conversation about death and life, despair and hope, time and memory, and the perennial complexities of love.



The book will be released in February 2022

[The author's blog](#)

[The publisher](#)

[Barnes & Noble](#)

[Amazon](#)

Get published! Email essays, photography, artworks by, for, or about LGBTQ+ people to:

opendoors@pflagillinois.org

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RSVP @ [BIT.LY/COH-ARTISTS](https://bit.ly/coh-artists) • \$5 DONATION • CASH BAR



JAY FERNANDEZ



JOJO BABY



Thu. Feb. 3

6:30 pm

IHMEC Presents: *LGBTQ+ Life & Death Under a Nazi State*

Explore how the Nazi state reacted to lesbians, bisexuals, and transgender people with a lively lecture presented by Laurie Marhoefer, a historian of queer and trans people, and Jon Bridgman, Endowed Associate Professor of History at the University of Washington.

Virtual Event

[RSVP HERE >](#)



Submissions open until
May 31, 2022

RADIANCE

CREATIVE WORKS BY LGBTQ+ YOUTH

lgbtqradiance@gmail.com



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publication
of art & writing
by LGBTQ+ teens



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to submit!

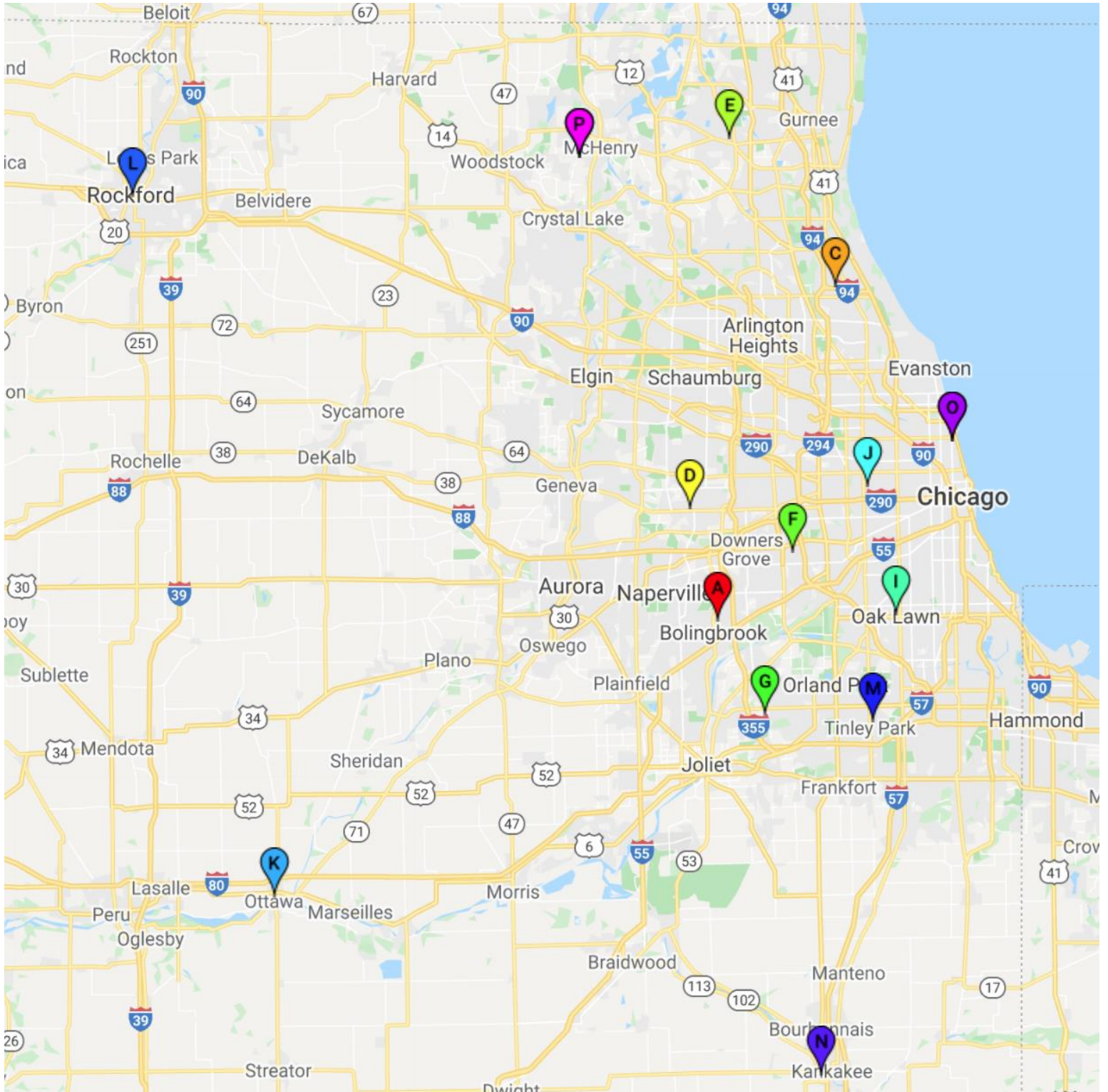
Creative Writing:
Short stories, poetry,
and personal narratives.

Visual Art:
Drawing, printmaking,
painting, mixed media,
and three-dimensional works.

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@LGBTQRADIANCE

EDITORS
Erin Mikulec, Ph.D.
Kyle O'Daniel
Jordan DeWilde

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.

