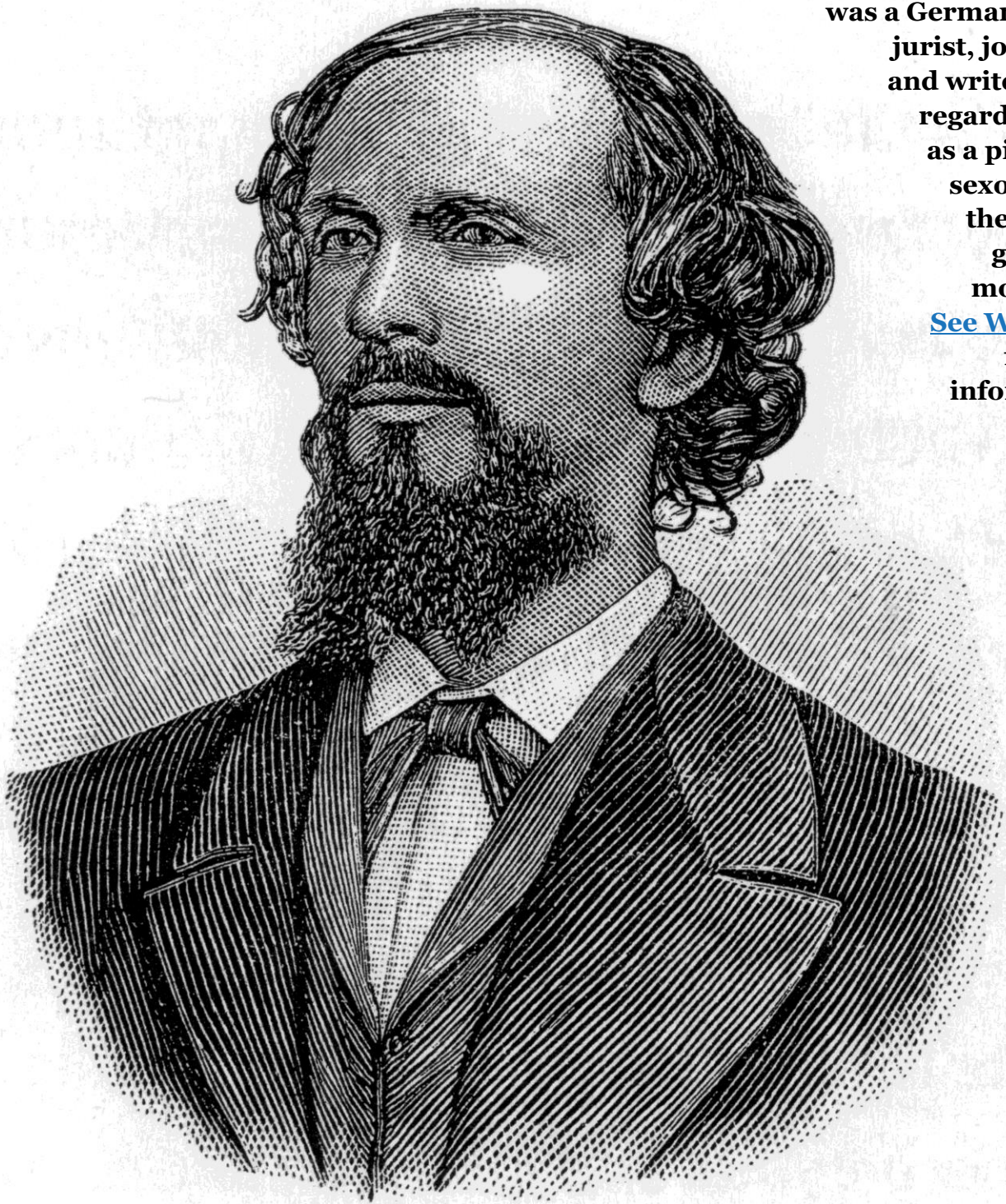


**Karl Heinrich Ulrichs
(1825–1895)**
was a German lawyer,
jurist, journalist,
and writer who is
regarded today
as a pioneer of
sexology and
the modern
gay rights
movement.
[See Wikipedia](#)
for more
information.



April 2022 | PFLAG Council of Northern Illinois Newsletter

opendoors@pflagillinois.org

Monthly Open Doors

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PFLAG celebrates ABOUT FACE THEATRE!

PFLAGers have long regarded **About Face Theatre** as one of our local treasures, an organization whose mission closely supports our own and one which presents an extraordinary platform to showcase talent within the queer community. Their vehicle is a uniquely effective one. Their voice is an important one and their intentions are clear – **“Through bold theatre and arts-based educational programs, our work celebrates the persistence and joy of queer identities while shining a spotlight on the social inequalities impacting LGBTQIA+ people.”** I recently found myself on About Face Theatre’s [website](#), exploring its upcoming offerings, and thought its work and aspirations more than uplifting, more than inspiring -- downright joyous! I wanted to take a closer look.

Good fortune prevailed. I had an opportunity to spend a little time on the phone with Charles Riffenburg, About Face Theatre’s Marketing Manager, who graciously provided me a closer look into their mission on opening night of their current production of “Laced”. Seems I had a backstage pass of sorts -- a chance to get behind the scenes for a few minutes to better appreciate the treasure they truly represent.

He shared that About Face Theatre’s focus on enabling queer artists to tell queer stories is intertwined with a deep commitment to meeting the needs of its community – its artists, patrons, staff and audience at large. “Community building is a central core of what we do,” Charles says. Workshops are one of the tools they use to develop such meaningful content, to decide which causes or issues or organizations warrant a spotlight in their productions and to constantly measure its impact through feedback from its community. Another way they interact with and learn from the community at large is through the extension of grants which offer, for instance, rehearsal space and performance opportunities to keep this dialogue active. Ultimately, all of these efforts give voice to perspectives that the LGBTQ+ community needs to see played out on stage.

I asked Charles if he knew about PFLAG and how he might define the ways in which our missions intersect. After answering with a quick “Yes”, he focused immediately on the About Face Youth Theatre program, a construct established in 1998 which allows LGBTQ+ youth aged 13-24 the opportunity to explore and debate relevant content, consider what programming is necessary to best present it and make sure it advances its mission to affirm LGBTQ+ people. This work is an integral part of their collective programming, is guided by About Face Theatre’s staff and presented on stage

as part of their mainstage season. Being with other queer youth and experiencing the type of sharing that comes from this effort is so important. These groups of young people, perhaps more than other groups, Charles offers, tend to be particularly responsible about the content they create, the areas of focus they emphasize, the messages they propose to convey on stage. He relates that they have always had activism at their core, an example of which was the work they did amid the limitations of the pandemic to stay together, focusing much of their energies on responding to the George Floyd tragedy. The support which these young people provide to each other, and the product of their time together in creating programs to benefit the broader community, is immeasurable.

Promotion of this program and encouragement of participation, Charles believes, may be how the PFLAG community can best support About Face Theatre’s continuing success, perhaps more effectively than through donations or ticket sales. Charles credits current Artistic Director Megan Carney with the programs growth and impact and encourages those who want to know more to visit <https://aboutfacetheatre.com/education/youth-theatre/>.

As a PFLAG parent, I was particularly impressed to hear about their commitment to intergenerational sharing and their active efforts to get queer elders involved in passing down their history and their perspectives. Soothing words for a PFLAGer to hear!

About Face Theatre is an impressive organization and its commitment to diversity runs deep – from its performance staff to its leadership team to those that facilitate workshops. In particular, the creative arts staff has made it a key priority to materially advance the involvement of trans people and people of color in all aspects of content creation, programming and presentation.

I encourage you to find the joy, the optimism, the positive spirit of exploration, the freedom of youth expression that About Face Theatre represents. Get to know them. There are some outstanding upcoming productions. Support them in the audience or as a patron – and please consider what involvement in their Youth Ensemble Program could mean to someone you love.

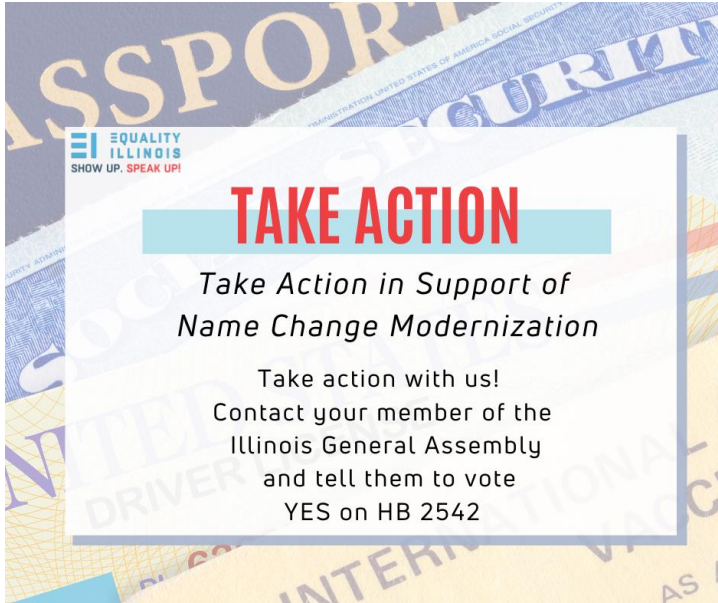
And thank you Charles!

Don Donahue

President,
PFLAG Council of Northern Illinois



Equality Illinois calls to action



Despite all our progress with LGBTQ equality, Illinois' name change law is one of the most restrictive in the United States and harms vulnerable communities. HB 2542 has a simple premise. The same standard should apply to all name changes. HB 2542 allows judges to decide about allowing a name change for a person with a felony conviction. This is how all other name changes in Illinois occur. There shouldn't be a harsh statutory prohibition for some people.

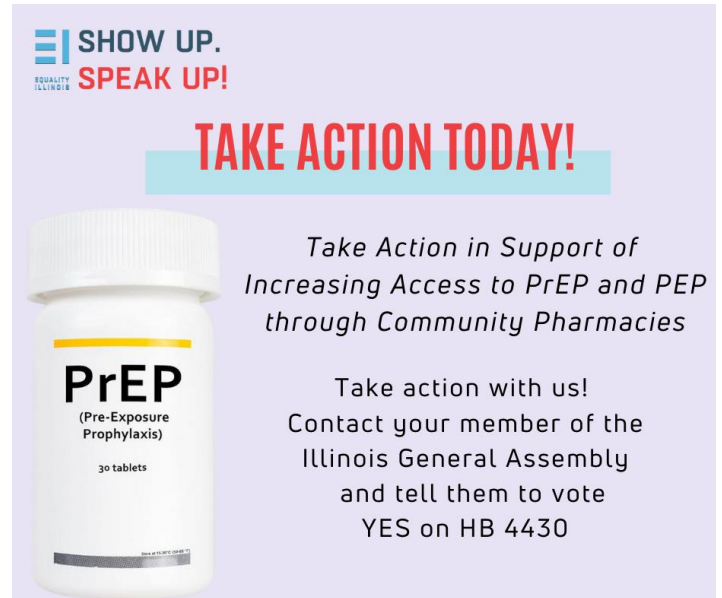
Legal documents that show who we are authentically are essential to being able to fully engage in society. For many people in our community, a legal name change is key to those documents.

HB 2542 would bring Illinois in line with the majority of other states and is an important step to ensure that gender-expansive people and survivors of human trafficking live safer and more authentic lives. We applaud the leadership of trans advocates, the ACLU of Illinois, Chicago House and Social Service Agency, the Transformative Justice Law Project, the Chicago Bar Foundation, and all members of the HB 2542 coalition for advancing this critical legislation.

Here, our values are justice, fairness, and equality under the law. HB 2542 is consistent with those values.

Please tell your state senator to support HB 2542:

[CLICK HERE TO TAKE ACTION NOW](#)



To advance the goals and strategies of the Getting To Zero in Illinois plan to end the HIV epidemic in Illinois by 2030, the state of Illinois will need to make key investments in HIV testing, prevention and treatment. HB 4430 would allow pharmacists to dispense and administer HIV prevention drugs — including pre-exposure prophylaxis (PrEP) to people at risk and post-exposure prophylaxis (PEP) for people who may have been recently exposed to HIV — without a prescription. Pharmacists are trusted community leaders who can help expand access to HIV prevention drugs.

HB 4430 also supports residents of rural communities who would be able to access their HIV prevention treatments at a community pharmacy rather than travel greater distances to visit a primary care provider or public health department.

Equality Illinois is proud to support HB 4430 and be part of the coalition with AIDS Foundation Chicago, Pride Action Tank, the Illinois Pharmacists Association, Howard Brown Health, the Illinois Retail Merchants Association, the Rainbow Cafe LGBTQ Center, Prairie Pride Coalition, and other stakeholders.

[CLICK HERE TO TAKE ACTION NOW](#)



Equality Illinois calls to action



SHOW UP.
SPEAK UP!

TAKE ACTION TODAY TO

Disrupt Disparities for LGBTQ Older Adults

Take action with us! Contact your member of the Illinois General Assembly and tell them to vote YES for SB 3490.

LGBTQ older adults and people living with HIV face unique challenges as they age because of a lack of affirming resources and services and stigmatization. SB 3490 keeps Illinois moving forward as a leader in advancing equality and affirming care for LGBTQ older adults and older adults living with HIV.

SB 3490 would do the following:

- Create a 3-year Illinois Commission on LGBTQ Aging to review systems, create opportunities for testimony and hearings, and recommend policy changes;
- At the Department on Aging, require the Director of Aging to appoint an LGBTQ Older Adult Advocate to ensure the needs and experiences of LGBTQ older adults and older adults living with HIV are considered and incorporated throughout the agency's programming and policymaking; and
- Require providers that are funded by or contract with the Department on Aging to complete LGBTQ older adult awareness and competency training.

This bill already passed the Senate with bipartisan support. Now, ask your state representative to support SB 3490 in the House.

[CLICK HERE TO TAKE ACTION NOW](#)



SHOW UP.
SPEAK UP!

TAKE ACTION NOW!

Take Action in Support of
Cultural Competency
Training for Healthcare
Professionals

Take action with us! contact
your member of the
Illinois General Assembly
and tell them to vote
YES on HB 4654

Contact your member of the General Assembly and urge them to vote YES on HB 4654 and support required and consistent cultural competency training for all healthcare professionals.

People with disabilities, people of color, LGBTQ+ people, people living with HIV, and intersex people disproportionately experience poorer outcomes, discrimination, a lack of respect, and a lack of social and cultural support when interacting with a health care provider. An important way to help improve healthcare outcomes for these communities is to ensure health care providers are consistently educated with cultural competency and cultural humility as part of continuing medical education. This is already required in several other states. Cultural competency should be part of continuing medical education in Illinois, too.

[CLICK HERE TO TAKE ACTION NOW](#)

Equality Illinois builds a better Illinois by advancing equal treatment and full acceptance of the LGBTQ community.

Learn more, act, and support our mission at www.equalityillinois.org



From PFLAG National

TAKE ACTION

Tell your Senators: Vote YES in support of The Equality Act. In his State of the Union address, President Biden named The Equality Act as a priority to sign into law. This elevated moment lets us join him to call for its passage in the Senate. Contact your Senators and tell them that we're still fighting for Senate passage and for them to vote in favor of this critical piece of legislation. We need to make sure Senators hear from us – people who care about LGBTQ+ equality – saying we urge them to take action NOW. Even if your Senators have committed to vote yes, call them, email them, and tweet them your thanks; they need to know that the majority of people in this country support protections from discrimination. Help get the Equality Act across the finish line!

COURT

Biden administration states support for trans students' bathroom rights in Florida. The Biden Administration is calling for the Atlanta Federal Court of Appeals to uphold the decision of the lower court in favor of equal protection under Title XI for transgender students to use bathrooms that correspond to their gender identities.

FEDERAL

President Biden strongly condemns Texas Gov. Abbott's order calling for child abuse investigations into parents of trans kids. The statement was released on March 2nd with a list of actions that the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services said it would take to protect trans youths and their families in Texas against a recent directive from Gov. Greg Abbott that calls on the general public and “licensed professionals” to report the parents of trans minors if it appears the children are receiving gender-affirming medical care. The President called the order “government overreach at its worst,” and added that “Affirming a transgender child’s identity is one of the best things a parent, teacher, or doctor can do to help keep children from harm, and parents who love and affirm their children should be applauded and supported, not threatened, investigated, or stigmatized.”

New ABC poll: 62% of Americans oppose legislation that prevents teachers from discussing sexual orientation or gender identity in elementary schools, like the recent “Don’t Say Gay” bill passed in Florida.

STATE

We’ve seen a marked rise in anti-LGBTQ+ action in state and local governments in the last year. Legislation targeting trans youth is being introduced in many states and local schools and libraries are being pressured into censoring LGBTQ+ history and stories. Visit <https://pflag.org/protecttranskids> to take action against anti-trans bills in your state today. We also encourage you to [join our #ReadWithLove campaign](#) and fight censorship by:

- Participating in [Book Ban Busters](#) and “[Troublemaker Trainings](#)”
- Listening to the [PEN America Press Conference w/ Jean-Marie Navetta](#)
- Reviewing the newly updated [GLAAD: Books Not Bans](#) (Media Guide)
- Passing safe schools policies in your district: [SafeSchoolsForAll.org](#).

GLOBAL

Some LGBTQ Ukrainians are fleeing to countries with anti-gay laws. Many LGBTQ+ refugees fleeing Ukraine face anti-LGBTQ+ laws in the countries where they seek asylum. Humanitarian groups across Europe are working to move LGBTQ+ refugees to safe, welcoming places.

MEDIA

Eliot Page will discuss trans identity in upcoming memoir PAGEBOY. Elliot Page’s memoir will be released in 2023 by Flatiron Books, and will discuss his trans identity, mental health, and his experience in Hollywood.

Seven percent of Americans now identify as LGBTQ+ according to new poll. According to a recent Gallup poll, 7.1% of US adults identify as members of the LGBTQ+ community.

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 McHenry

by Toni Weaver

Change is coming to McHenry! After serious consideration and discussion the leader of McHenry PTI and the board of PFLAG McHenry decided to **bring the two groups back together** in a single unit, a move that will bring strength to both groups. For all intents and purposes PFLAG McHenry was really just duplicating the work of McHenry PTI. With 99% of new inquiries being centered on issues relating to having a transgender, gender non-conforming, or non-binary family member, the board felt that it just made sense to recombine into one entity.

The meeting day will be the 2nd Tuesday of the month at Tree of Life Unitarian Church in McHenry. Election of a new board will take place in early April, and in-person meetings will resume in May. Stay tuned!

News from PTI Chicago

by Francey Oscherwitz

PTI Chicago welcomed 22 new and returning members for a full two hours of confidential sharing at our March 10th monthly meeting via ZOOM. We continue to greet many first-timers and serve as an important resource for parents and grandparents who are part of the extended LGBTQI+ community.

Uppermost on some parents' minds was outrage and concern over recently passed Texas laws promoting prosecution of parents whose minor children receive/participate in gender-affirming medical interventions—from puberty blockers to surgery. Even if struck down by courts, the passage of any legislation seeking to criminalize gender transition is dangerous, with toxic anti-LGBTQI+ rhetoric echoing throughout the public sphere and falling on the ears of our vulnerable children. All agreed that our brave kids—whatever their age—deserve to see positive reflections in the media they consume & the world they live in.

And just in time, along comes a public celebration—March 31, Trans Day of Visibility.

One parent argued—optimistically and persuasively—that out of these painful clashes over values and agendas, progress and regress, new leaders from generations X, Y, and Z—many of whom regard gender variance as a non-issue—will emerge to break the stalemate. They cited the example of brave survivors of school shootings, compelled by trauma and loss to become activists, speaking out publicly against gun violence.

Another interesting topic arose when a participant observed an increased number of Chicago PTI families with multiple children identifying as non-binary, trans, or gender-fluid, perhaps reflecting a larger trend and a possible genetic component.

We hope you'll join our next meeting! PTI Chicago gathers via Zoom on the second Thursday of each month, so **our next meeting is Thursday, April 14th, 2022 from 7:00 p.m. - 9:00 p.m.** Participants will receive an email with the 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.



News from PFLAG Chicago Metro

by Lance Fortnow

In March we had a hybrid meeting, our first in-person event since February of 2020. For yours truly, who joined the monthly virtual meetings in the summer of 2020, this was the first chance to meet a collection of regulars and newcomers in person. We cannot thank the Center on Halsted staff enough for being incredible hosts. We also want to thank Enova International whose generous donation allowed us to purchase the tech to have a successful hybrid meeting.

It's been a long time since we've given an update in Open Doors. During the pandemic, we held several virtual panels for corporations, including Willis Towers Watson and CNA, to tell our stories and answer questions from employees, many of whom are members or have family members in the LGBTQIA+ community. We hope to expand these efforts and let parents and other family members know they are not alone and offer the support they need.

We meet at the Center on Halsted at 2 PM on the third Sunday of each month. Note the April meeting will be held a week later than usual, April 24, to avoid the Easter holiday. Please email us at chicagometropflag@gmail.com for more information or for a zoom link to participate remotely. You can also join us on [Facebook](#).

News from PFLAG Hinsdale

by Barb Medley

Our March speaker was Charlie Everett, the Chapter Engagement Coordinator for PFLAG's midwestern region, who gave us an overview of their duties in this position. Chapter Engagement provides assistance in areas including leadership, volunteers, programs, education, chapter representatives and conflict resolution. PFLAG National supports the individual chapters through the regional chapter engagement coordinators.

Charlie was interested in learning about our chapter. They provided information on resources available to us, including the PFLAG Academy Online, a free monthly members-only training webinar. Past topics have included creating a thriving chapter; working with schools to provide support, education and advocacy; conflict resolution and ally engagement. Charlie's the Midwest chapters' contact for any issues.

In addition to individual chapters, the regional Chapter Engagement Coordinators work together on state initiatives, a very busy area of concern at this moment in the country. Finally, Charlie helped us put together a chapter SWOT (strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats) analysis, as a way to get to know us better and also a helpful exercise for us to think about how we're doing as a chapter and how we can move forward more successfully.

We're hoping our April meeting can be in-person for the first time since the pandemic lockdown. Hopefully we can offer a hybrid meeting. Our speaker is the daughter of one of our members who will talk about the Trevor Project. It provides 24/7 crisis support services to LGBTQ young people. It's free and confidential.

News from PFLAG DuPage

by Bonnie Clemens

This month we heard from Kelly Mannion (she/her), 360 Youth Services Program Manager for Transitional Housing. Kelly, as you can imagine, is upbeat, compassionate and a wealth of information! She has spent 9 years in homeless services, over two of those with 360 Youth Services.

360 Youth Services

<https://360youthservices> has been around for 50 years, and does prevention work, counseling, and transitional housing for youth ages 18-24. They currently serve 38 youth in transitional housing, with 8 beds in Naperville specifically dedicated for LGBTQ youth. Youth can spend up to 2 years in the transitional housing program while they work towards independence. Our chapter learned details about this program and the typical course that youth may experience during their time there. We had many questions for Kelly and were especially interested in finding out how our chapter could best support them in their mission. It was time well spent!

For those of you interested in donating to the housing program please find links to 360 Youth Services' Amazon and Target wish lists on their web site at: <https://360youthservices.org/housing/donate-supplies/>

If you or someone you know would be interested in mentoring you can find information about the 360 Youth Services mentoring program at: <https://360youthservices.org/mentor-program/>



News from PFLAG Ottawa

by Ken Brown

Greetings from PFLAG Ottawa. We have continued to meet on Zoom. We are considering a return to in-person meetings in April.

In January, we enjoyed a special presentation from the secretary of PFLAG Ottawa, Jordan Johnson. Jordan spoke about LGBTQ persons in history, including Rock Hudson, David Bowie, Leslie Gore, Barbara Jordan, Alan Turing, Oscar Wilde, Lorraine Hansberry, and Sally Ride. Jordan also talked about unconfirmed (but likely) LGBTQ figures in history, including William Shakespeare, Abraham Lincoln, Mahatma Gandhi, James Buchanan, Michelangelo, Emily Dickinson, Eleanor Roosevelt, and Florence Nightingale. Finally, Jordan spoke about transgender figures in history, such as Egyptian Pharaoh Hatshepsut and Roman Emperor Elagabalus. Her presentation prompted a lively discussion.

In February, Charlie Everett joined us from Washington D.C. As many of you know, Charlie is the PFLAG National's Chapter Engagement Coordinator for the Midwest Region. Charlie shared a slide show which detailed the role that PFLAG plays at the national level and showed us how PFLAG National can help local chapters. Charlie also shared their personal journey growing up in rural Texas, and then moving on to college in Washington D.C. We wished Charlie the best as they move back to their home state of Texas in March!

As mentioned, we would like to return to in-person meetings in April. Our plan is to host a local pastor and his husband who have recently moved to Ottawa. The pastor is leading a local congregation that supports his sexual orientation and ministry. He and his husband plan to share their personal journey, as well as the ways we can work together to support PFLAG Ottawa and the Youth Outlook teen drop-in center in Ottawa.

As always, we at PFLAG Ottawa hope you are staying safe and healthy!

News from PFLAG Deerfield

by Jodi

As of now, we are planning on returning to in person meetings in May! Yay!!! This month, following discussion, we elected officers to a two-year term. Results are as follows:

Sue Ginsburg and Barbara Levie (Co-Presidents); Ann McAuliffe (Vice President); Mike Wilson (Treasurer); Jodi Zavos (Secretary); and Sue Heinrich, Modesta Sailor; Bob Ciulla; Alisa Kober; Karen Freed and Jim Levie as Executive Committee members at large.

We then proceeded with a meeting focused on giving and getting support which is what PFLAG does best! As always, we were grateful to be together!

Sue reminded us of an advocacy opportunity sent to us by Charlie Everett, Midwest Regional Chapter co-ordinator:

"Fifty years ago, Jeanne Manford learned her gay son was hospitalized because a city official had assaulted him, and she decided that enough was enough. She wrote a letter to her local newspaper on April 29, 1972 announcing, "I have a homosexual son and I love him." Jeanne Manford launched a movement, and a year after that letter printed, she founded what we know today as PFLAG. Today, as powerful people turn their assaults to the rights and lives of LGBTQ+ youth—transgender and queer youth, in particular—PFLAG National asks you to #LeadLikeJeanne, with your own letter to the editor in a hometown paper.

Take this action today: [This template offers a draft letter to the editor](#), which can be used by chapter leaders and members to send to the local press. (We encourage you to send lots of letters!) Let's #LeadLikeJeanne as we celebrate not only the 50th anniversary of Jeanne's letter on April 29th, but also the 50th anniversary of Jeanne marching with her son Morty, on June 28th, in support of equality."

So, get out those pens and start writing to your local paper!

Happy Spring!



LETTERS

[Edited for size]

Dear Friend,

My name is Miłosz and I'm a board member of Lambda, the oldest Polish LGBT+ organization in Warsaw.

Like all of Europe and the world, we are in shock about the invasion of our neighboring country, Ukraine. But for us, there is no time to be paralyzed by worry and fear.

Thousands of LGBT+ people, rainbow families, and human rights activists are fleeing from Russian troops.

So many of our Ukrainian friends are trying to cross the border to Poland. And we know that we have a historic responsibility to provide safety, security, connection, and love in this time of tragedy and fear.

We need your solidarity and help!

[Donate now to help us save lives!](#)



All Out is running a fundraiser to help groups like us inside and outside of Ukraine providing emergency support to LGBT+ Ukrainians. With your help. Lambda Warsaw, together with our partners in the women's movement, will open a help center for Ukrainian LGBT+ refugees in Poland. It will provide accommodation, transportation, counseling and psychological support, phone and email help line, and legal aid.

Please donate urgently to help us protect and shelter LGBT+ Ukrainians in Poland.

Thank you for going All Out!

Miłosz Przepiórkowski

Board member at Lambda Warsaw

Editor: *When making charitable donations, please be careful to vet recipient organizations to avoid scams. My research shows that Lambda Warsaw is a legitimate and reputable organization helping LGBTQ+ people, standing for their rights, and currently actively helping Ukrainian war refugees in Poland.*



Dear Friend,

Transgender children deserve to be respected, loved, and supported; not attacked or threatened to be separated from their families. It's why, along with the ACLU of Texas, the national ACLU, and Texas-based law firm Baker Botts, [we sued Texas Governor Greg Abbott, the Texas Department of Family and Protective Services \(DFPS\), and other officials in the state of Texas](#) to stop them from harassing the families of transgender youth by launching intrusive investigations of parents who support their kids and help them access medically necessary and essential gender-affirming health care.

Last week, Texas Attorney General Ken Paxton issued an opinion stating that providing gender-affirming care for transgender youth could be considered a form of child abuse. This opinion flies in the face of the law, every major medical association's position that gender-affirming care is medically necessary care, and basic human dignity and respect. [DFPS has already begun showing up at the homes of transgender youth and their families](#), instilling fear that they will be separated from their parents or guardians because of who they are.

"For Governor Abbott and Attorney General Paxton, it seems the cruelty is the point," said Lambda Legal Senior Counsel Paul Castillo (He/Him). "Gender-affirming care for the treatment of gender dysphoria is medically necessary care, full stop. Criminalizing that care and threatening to tear children from their families is unconscionable and terrifying, and cannot stand."

We went to court to literally fight for the lives of transgender young people — and we need everyone to voice their outrage over these vicious attacks on their safety and well-being.

Thank you for your support, and please take care of yourselves during this difficult time.



Sharon McGowan, She/Her

Chief Strategy Officer and Legal Director



THE WAR ON ALL FRONTS

The War on All Fronts – a new book by **Kim Oclon**, the author of **MAN UP**

Publisher: Trism Books, Publication date: May 7, 2022

ISBN Paperback: 978-1-7363474-0-9, ISBN Ebook: 978-1-7363474-1-6

Category: Young Adult, Historical Fiction, Age range : 14-18, LGBTQ Price : \$12.95

Pre-order at your favorite local book store! [Indie Bound](#), [Barnes and Noble](#), [Amazon](#)

This excerpt from the book and archive photos have been provided to Open Doors by the author, Kim Oclon.

Anthony’s mom picked another full plate up off the counter. “You’re joining us again, Sam?” She raised an eyebrow, clearly already knowing the answer.

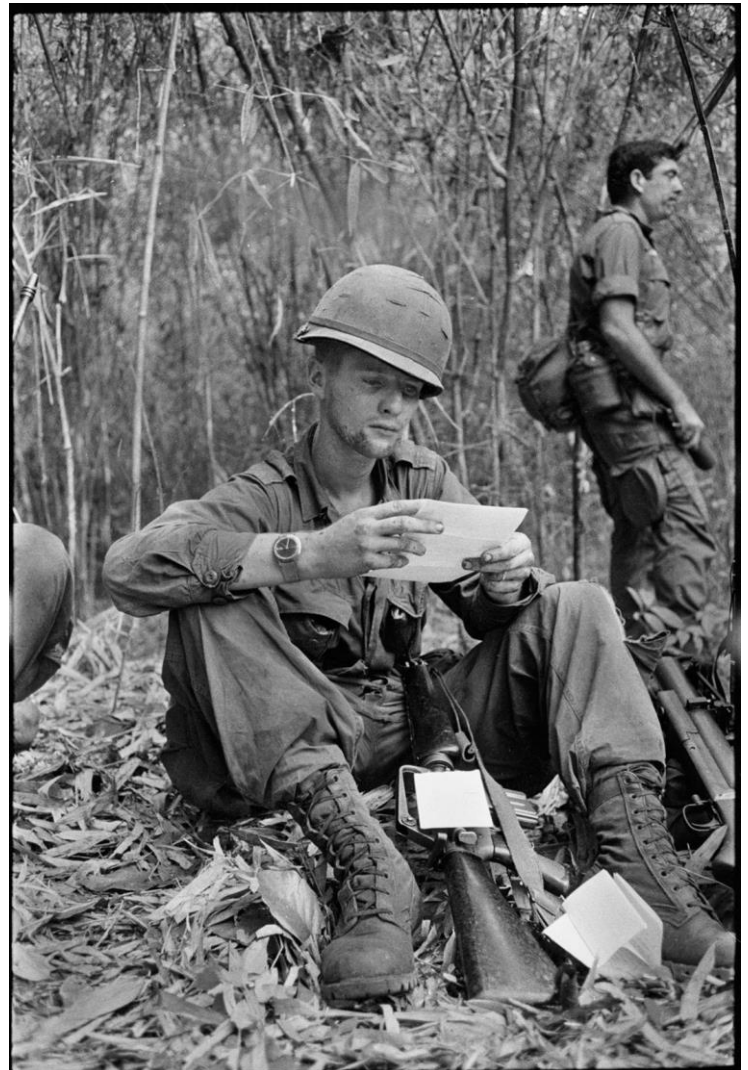
“I’ll never turn down an invitation to a dinner you made, Mrs. Lorenzo.” Sam sat and made a show of picking up his knife and fork like someone who hadn’t eaten all day. “My mom’s specialty has been TV dinners ever since Jimmy left. She says she doesn’t know how to cook for three people instead of four.”

Anthony’s mom sat between Anthony and his dad. She reached to her side and squeezed Anthony’s hand. “Tell your brother to keep an eye on my son.”

“Come on, Ma.” Anthony fought the urge to shake his hand from his mom’s grasp. “He’s in the Air Force. He doesn’t even spend any time on the ground.”

“He’s not going to need anyone to watch over him,” Anthony’s dad said.

“Can we say grace?” Anthony’s mom cut in.





since he was a boy, when he and his friends would play Americans and Nazis instead of cowboys and Indians. Plus, if he could show his dad he was just as tough and strong and brave as any soldier that killed the enemy and won, then maybe, when he got home, he could feel he was like any other man. The only difference was, he loved another man. Well, he'd never told Sam he loved him, but he was pretty sure he did. How could Anthony not love someone who allowed him to be his true self?

As everyone joined hands, they recited the prayer they had been saying for as long as Anthony could remember. Bless us, oh Lord, for these thy gifts... He didn't even think about the words or what they meant. They just tumbled out of his mouth.

Anthony ran a finger over Sam's knuckles. The best part of having Sam stay for dinner was saying grace beforehand. Anthony could hold his hand, in front of people, in front of his family, and no one would think twice about a boy holding hands with another boy.

No one thought it was sick and wrong. As everyone bowed their heads and closed their eyes, Sam turned over Anthony's hand to trace the calluses on his hand that came from working under a car at Politti's Garage for the past year.

What would his parents do if he leaned over to the chair next to him and kissed Sam? Full blown, on the lips, just like he did for over an hour in his room before dinner.

Probably send him away. Some place that would fix him. Make him normal by any means necessary. That was what everyone said would happen to the history teacher from Bowen who was fired after rumors started to fly around. Maybe his parents would say he wasn't their son. He wouldn't be going to Vietnam, that was for sure. It was pretty clear the Army didn't accept everybody, and not on an account of flat feet. But Anthony had wanted to go, ever

"Amen," the Lorenzo family and Sam chorused at the end of the prayer. They were about to let go of one another's hands when Anthony's mom continued.

She did this sometimes, added an extra request if she felt someone especially needed it.

"Dear heavenly Father, please be with my son." Anthony's mom kept her head bowed and her eyes closed as she gave his hand a long squeeze. "Keep him safe. I know there are so many of our boys over there, and all their mothers are asking you to watch over them and keep them safe, but please. Please bring my son home. Amen."

The "Amen" echoed around the table again.

Anthony held on to his mom's hand. "It's only a year, Ma. I'll be fine." ■





Save the date for **MBLGTACC**: October 21-23, 2022

The 30th annual Midwest Bisexual Lesbian Gay Transgender Asexual College Conference is coming to Columbus, Ohio; registration and workshop submissions will open in April 2022

MBLGTACC is America's largest and oldest continuously-held conference for queer and trans+ college students.

Upwards of 2,000 attendees—students, young adults, and higher education professionals—are expected to attend. “We want to make sure that attendees have a meaningful, realistic, and positive experience at the 2022 conference centering learning, laughter, and queer and trans joy!,” said TK Morton, the Institute’s director of equity and access and the staff lead on attendee experience for MBLGTACC.

Conference registration and a call for workshop proposals are tentatively scheduled to launch in April 2022, with announcements of speakers and entertainers to follow.

MBLGTACC is at mblgtacc.org, [Instagram](#), [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#)





PFLAG Cape Cod produces a podcast series: [Profiles in LGBTQ+ Courage](#).

There is a new episode every two weeks featuring an interview with a member or supporter of the LGBTQ+ community. An online library of over 24 episodes, **Profiles in LGBTQ+ Courage** forms a wonderful collection of empowering stories of coming out, acceptance, and love. Check it out on the [Podcasts](#) page or on any popular podcast platform. Here's a recent [e-blast](#) promoting an episode featuring someone who is non-binary and transmasculine. [Sign up for emails](#) to receive an e-blast informing you when a new episode is released.

Event to be held on the Transgender Day of Visibility, March 31st →

Phyllis Frye, a pioneer in the fight for transgender rights, will deliver the 2022 Kirschner Human Rights Memorial Lecture. Called the "grandmother" of the movement for legal rights of transgender individuals, she is the first openly transgender judge to be appointed in the U.S.

[Over 100 anti-transgender bills](#) were introduced in 34 states during the past three months. Frye will address how far we've come in the fight for transgender rights and where we still need to go.

Facebook Event: fb.me/e/1y5xNNHry

SPRING 2022 ROBERT H. KIRSCHNER, MD, HUMAN RIGHTS MEMORIAL LECTURE

PHYLLIS FRYE:

The Fight for TRANSGENDER RIGHTS

Phyllis Frye, the first openly transgender judge in the U.S., is the "grandmother" of the national, legal, and political movement for transgender rights.

THURSDAY, MARCH 31, 2022
6 PM
Ida Noyes Hall, 3rd Floor
1212 E. 59th St
Registration: tinyurl.com/FryeLecture

A background image for the Phyllis Frye lecture poster. It shows a group of people at a protest or rally, with some individuals holding flags and signs. The image is overlaid with a semi-transparent blue and pink filter.

CENTER
ON 2007-22
HALSTED

Sweet 15

oh how we've blossomed! CENTER ON HALSTED
HUMAN FIRST GALA 2022 - FRIDAY, MAY 6 - THE OLD POST OFFICE
433 W. VAN BUREN , CHICAGO - CO-CHAIRS : SOL FLORES & JOE
BETANCOURT - HUMAN FIRST AWARDEES : MARY MORTEN · JULIO
RODRIGUEZ · ROBERT & SUSAN SULLIVAN - COMMUNITY SPIRIT
AWARD : WILLIAM BLAIR - 5:30PM : COCKTAILS AND RECEPTION
7:00PM : AWARDS, DINNER AND DANCING - CREATIVE BLACK TIE
LIVE PERFORMANCE : CRYSTAL WATERS - FOR MORE INFO : VISIT
CENTERONHALSTED.ORG/HF - FOR LIVE SUPPORT : 773.472.6469

CREATIVE BY RICHARD CASSIS FOR SPARCINC.COM

HUMAN FIRST GALA 2022

Center on Halsted Human First
15th Anniversary Gala

Friday, May 6, 2022
Reception 5:30 pm • Dinner 7:00 pm

The Old Post Office
433 W. Van Buren Street

THEATER, MOVIES



Pride Arts
pridearts.org

Spring Film Festival –
 International Shorts:

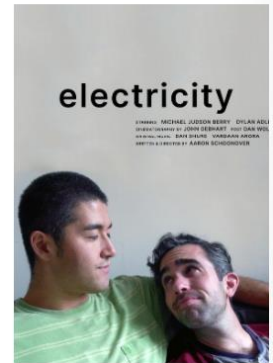
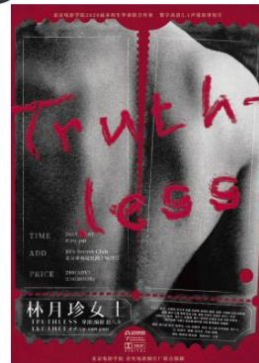
WEEK 3 TICKETS: March 28 - April 4

WEEK 4 TICKETS: April 4-11

Spring Film Fest Week 4 – International Shorts



[Buy tickets for Week 4 here](#)



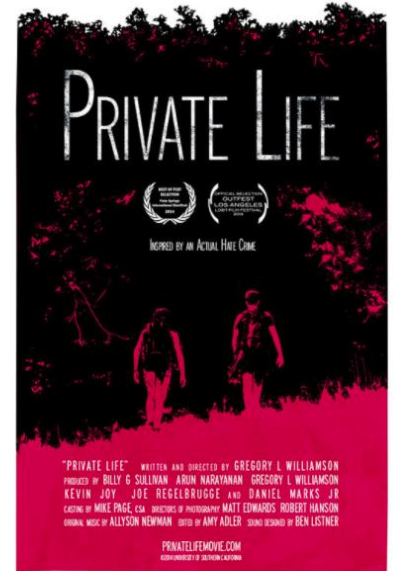
Spring Film Fest Week 3 – International Shorts



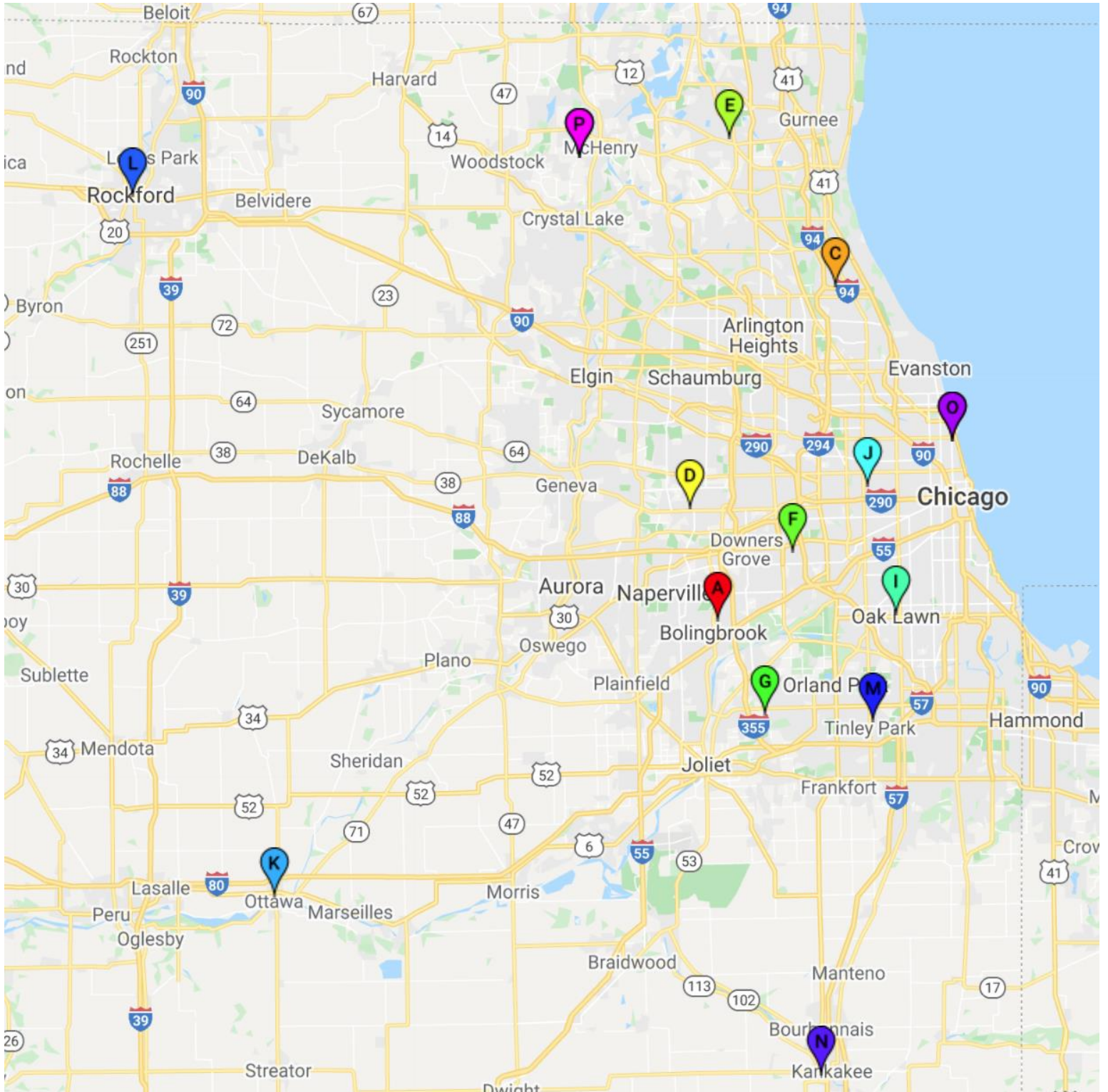
Spring Shorts Week 3 – March 28 – April 4, 2022



Spring Shorts Week 4 – Streaming April 4-11, 2022



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.

