JOIN US!

The Power of Advocacy:
2022 Conference
of the PFLAG Council
of Northern Illinois

October 8, 2022 @ 9:30 AM Water Tower Place, Chicago

September 2022 | PFLAG Council of Northern Illinois Newsletter

opendoors@pflagillinois.org

Open Doors

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In celebration of community

In recent months, we have all begun to experience community like we used to, cherishing more than ever the opportunity to come together with those who share our interests, our values, our priorities. At PFLAG, we know too well the value of community to our LGBTQ+ friends, loved ones and allies, and the toll it takes when it is compromised, when it is fractured ... and we take seriously our mission to help others find that space where acceptance, affirmation, understanding and support thrive. It takes drive and creativity to make this happen and we are especially convinced of it now.

Feeling part of an affirming community is a treasure.

PFLAG chapter meetings represent a community of people who understand our journey, have relevant life experience and resources to share and a welcoming spirit to extend. An environment where a listening ear and compassionate heart are our hallmark, and the opportunity to share without being judged is a guarantee. Creating that kind of community is a gift, something that we must thankfully recognize and that PFLAG leaders consider an honor to provide.

As the school year opens, we count on our youth finding similar supportive learning environments, and we thank those educators who foster a community of universal respect in their classrooms, support effective GSAs and insure safe space to help our youth feel heard, affirmed and celebrated. Outside of

school, we are fortunate that they can find the welcome embrace of community in such outstanding local organizations as Youth Outlook, the LGBTQ+ Center at the Kenneth Young Center, Young: Equal, The Liam Foundation, the Center on Halstead, to name only a few.

The PFLAG Council of Northern Illinois offers an exceptional opportunity to find community at its fall conference - The Power of **Advocacy** – on October 8 at the Water Tower Place in Chicago. Please consider attending as we bring together an outstanding group of speakers and panelists to explore how we can become more effective advocates and learn about strides that our ally organizations are making in his area today. We will enjoy the company of other PFLAG supporters as we share best practices in building a better future for the LGBTQ+ family we support and love. We promise an engaging agenda, a good dose of PFLAG togetherness and the hospitality of a great venue. Look for specifics on how to register later in this issue.

And, while you are here, I know you will enjoy the community within the pages of Open Doors. Welcome! Come on in!

With gratitude for all you do to provide community for others,

Don Donahue

President,
PFLAG Council of Northern Illinois





Join us on Saturday, October 8th -The Fall Conference is back!

Planning is in full swing. It's a big year. Just as we come off the high of Pride Month, we announce the Fall Conference has returned!

We are thrilled to be partnering with Howard Brown Health and FashionBar Chicago to bring you an amazing one-day educational seminar on:

The Power of Advocacy

These are uncertain times. This timely conference will focus on ways we can show up as allies to advocate for our LGBTQ+ loved ones; and for the LGBTQ+ community at large.

Here's a preview of the coming attractions...

There will be a keynote speaker, two more presentations, and an inclusive panel discussion. The panel will include people of various ages and experiences, as well as representatives from a variety of organizations. Plus, we will be hosting a very special event with FashionBar Chicago – a **Fashion Show** featuring transgender and nonbinary models! This event will celebrate and showcase the beauty, power, and presence of the LGBTQ+ community.

Date: Saturday, October 8th, 2022

Place: Water Tower Place, Level 3, 835 Michigan Avenue, Chicago, Illinois

Time: 9:30 am until 4:30 pm

Price: \$10. Continental Breakfast and Lunch will be included courtesy of PCNI

Register now: https://pflagil2022chicago.rsvpify.com

We look forward to you joining us for this uplifting day as we move forward with our Partners in Pride... Howard Brown Health, FashionBar Chicago and PFLAG Council of Northern IL (PCNI).

PFLAG: Support, Education, Advocacy – doing what we do best! You won't want to miss it!

Questions? Suggestions? Please reach out to your PCNI Planning Committee members:

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The Power of Advocacy

Keynote Presentation:

The Power of Advocacy and Allyship in a Time of Rising Intolerance



The keynote speaker **Shui Sherard** is a Chicagoland computer professional who -- completely without evidence -- claims to have single-handedly made it safe for women with facial hair to work in IT in the Chicagoland area. She uses she/her pronouns, but is in the process of transitioning to they/them pronouns, having learned -- at 50 -- that that was even an option.

Shui was raised by homophobic parents who would have been transphobic too, if they had known that was an option.

Their keynote talk at the Conference will be about the power of -- and the need for -- advocacy in an age of rising intolerance.

Speakers:

Julio Flores, Associate Director of Youth Development, Howard Brown Health

Mike Ziri, Director of Public Policy, Equality Illinois

Discussion Panel:

Panel Moderator: **Toni Weaver** – one of the most dedicated PFLAG leaders in Illinois, past president of PCNI, who led the PFLAG McHenry chapter for nearly 18 years until recently.

Panelists:

- Jay Diaz Manager of VOICES Team at Broadway Youth Center, Howard Brown Health
- **Carolyn Pinta** teacher, mother of the founding family of Buffalo Grove Pride
- Nancy Mullen Executive Director, Youth Outlook
- **Stephanie Clark** speaker, LGBTQ+ rights activist
- Pastor Anderson Voinovich the associate pastor at Downers Grove First United Methodist Church
- **Heather Hester** Coming Out Coach, Podcaster, Speaker Chrysalis Mama
- TBA
- TBA









The Power of Advocacy

Program:

Time	Description
09:30 AM	Registration, continental breakfast
10:00 AM	Opening words
10:10 AM	Keynote Presentation: Shui Sherard (they/them)
11:10 AM	Break, networking
11:30 AM	Presentation: Julio Flores, Associate Director of Youth Development, Howard Brown Health
12:15 PM	Lunch
01:00 PM	Fashion Show organized by FashionBar Chicago
01:40 PM	Break, networking
02:00 PM	Presentation: Mike Ziri, Equality Illinois
02:45 PM	Break, networking
03:00 PM	Discussion Panel
04:15 PM	Final words, conference closes
05:00 PM	FashionBar Chicago cordially invites Conference attendees to stay for a fashion show event "Designer Preview" to be held in the same space.

Volunteers:

We are very grateful to everyone who has already signed up as a volunteer to organize the Conference! If you are interested in helping, please <u>register here</u>.



Co-Organizers:

See more information about our Conference co-organizers FashionBar Chicago and Howard Brown Health on the following pages.

In the weeks leading to the Conference day (October 8th) we will post updates on **Facebook**, on the **Conference page** on our web site, send by email, and publish in the next issue of Open Doors that will arrive in your inbox a few days before the Conference.

Please <u>register for the Conference</u> <u>now</u>, while there are tickets left!



The Power of Advocacy FashionBar Chicago

FashionBar Chicago is a premier fashion strategy and consulting firm and runway promotions company helping local fashion designers, boutique owners and retailers to launch their creations and product lines.

FashionBar has been producing *Trans Media Fashion* shows for over 5 years in a relationship with Broadway Youth Center and Howard Brown Health. Open Doors has covered several of the shows in past issues:

- <u>June 2022</u> cover and pages 15-19
- <u>November 2019</u> pages 25-32
- <u>May 2019</u> cover and pages 11-22

Attending these shows is always a celebration of creativity, identity, and love! The emotional impact may be compared to participating in a Pride Parade.

Our Conference on October 8th will open a week of events: the *Chicago Fashion Week* powered by FashionBar LLC.

Visit <u>www.fashionbarchicago.com</u> for more details about the Chicago Fashion Week. Don't miss the groundbreaking runway experience on October 20th when Transgender and Non-Binary models will walk the runway.





Open Doors interviewed FashionBar founder and CEO Tony Long in its July 2020 issue (cover and pages 15-17). **Inviting PFLAG Council of** Northern Illinois to create an LGBTQ+ supportive event together was Tony's initiative, which led to organizing this Conference. We are very grateful to Tony for hosting the Conference at FashionBar's beautiful space in the Water Tower Place and for all his help with the Conference planning.



The Power of Advocacy Howard Brown Health

Community in Action: Broadway Youth Center

by Ann McAuliffe, PFLAG Deerfield

I recently had the opportunity to tour Howard Brown Health's Broadway Youth Center in its new permanent location at 1023 W. Irving Park Road in Chicago. The HBH team extended the invitation to the PFLAG team planning the upcoming Fall Conference. It was nothing short of amazing!

First, a little background. The Broadway Youth Center (BYC) in Uptown is a welcoming space for LGBTQ youth and young people experiencing homelessness or housing instability. Anyone ages 12 to 24 can find community, as well as medical, social, and mental wellness services, regardless of ability to pay.

Broadway Youth Center is here to improve the health

and well-being of LGBTQ+ youth experiencing homelessness and other underserved youth by providing youth-centered, integrated healthcare and social services. BYC sees anyone, regardless of ability to pay. BYC provides basic needs assistance, resource advocacy, mental wellness supports, and education/vocational services. They consider themselves a one-stop shop and try to meet as many needs as possible for the people that they serve.

The building is impressive. It is 5 stories of light, bright, welcoming and well-designed spaces to include: gathering spaces, exam rooms, social services spaces, a full-service kitchen, quiet rooms for napping, a studio for dance, movement and yoga, a classroom,

shower and laundry facilities, personal lockers, as well as meeting rooms. It feels safe, caring, accepting and respectful of the whole person. It is a beautiful refuge for every person who walks through their doors.

The people who work there are even more remarkable. They are committed, compassionate professionals who offer a wholistic approach to caring for their clients' health physically, mentally, and emotionally. They are masterful at connecting their clients with the widest array of youth-centered integrated healthcare and social services. We are fortunate to have such a valuable resource in our backyard. I've included a link from the Howard Brown Health organization so you can learn more: Explore Ways to Support Howard Brown Health.

Please join us on October 8th, 2022 at the PCNI Fall Conference at Water Tower Place. You will get to meet young people from the Broadway Youth Center as well as other Howard Brown Health representatives.



From PFLAG National

COURT

Three civil rights groups file lawsuit against "Don't Say Gay" law in Florida. Lambda Legal, the Southern Poverty Law Center, and Southern Legal Counsel filed a lawsuit on behalf of LGBTQ+ students and families, arguing that the vague language and large scope of the law leave room for any parents who oppose any discussion of LGBTQ+ people to sue schools.

FEDERAL

Biden Administration declares monkeypox a national public health emergency. The designation will free up emergency funds and lift some bureaucratic hurdles to combat the outbreak of the disease, which has primarily impacted men who have sex with men. Read PFLAG National Executive Director Brian Bond's statement on the monkeypox outbreak.

New poll finds about 60 percent of Americans favor marriage equality legislation. According to a recent Politico and Morning Consult poll, 58 percent of registered voters support a law protecting marriage for queer couples. Tell your senators to vote YES on the Respect for Marriage Act.

STATE

Oklahoma - <u>Public schools require "biological sex</u> <u>affidavits" for school sports.</u> Governor Kevin Scott signed a bill in March banning transgender athletes from participating in public school sports that do not match the gender assigned at birth. Oklahoma is the only state currently requiring an affidavit as proof of a student's assigned sex.

Pennsylvania - Philadelphia enacts change to nondiscrimination code to protect transgender children. The changes apply to public schools, charter schools, daycares, recreation centers, sports leagues, and other youth programs throughout the city of Philadelphia and require organizations and schools to allow children to use bathrooms and locker rooms and participate in activities according to their stated gender identity, and to permit them to use their used names and pronouns.

MEDIA

Twitter confirms anti-LGBTQ+ slur "groomer" violates its user policies. The social media company has suspended accounts for violating its rule against hateful conduct, following the lead of other social media companies, including Reddit and Meta.

<u>Billy Porter makes directorial debut with</u>
<u>"Anything's Possible" LGBTQ+ teen romance.</u>

The movie centers on Kelsa, a Black transgender teenager, and her experience coming of age in the current times.

OutWrite's annual LGBTQ+ Literary Festival coming in August. The festival will take place virtually from August 5th-7th on the DC Center for the LGBT Community's YouTube page and will feature 70 LGBTQ+ authors.

New study finds so-called "social contagion" not the cause of more young people coming out as transgender. The study, published in the journal Pediatrics, also found that the proportion of adolescents who were assigned female at birth and identify as transgender has not increased, countering claims that AFAB individuals are more susceptible to this so-called "social contagion."

Queer representation in film and TV for the month of August. From They/Them, a campy slasher to the Game of Thrones prequel House of the Dragon, to the new TV series adaptation of A League of Their Own, here is a list of queer stories to watch this month.

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 Hinsdale

by Suellen Cook

At our August 2022 chapter meeting, PFLAG Hinsdale gathered at the Unitarian Church of Hinsdale. Our guest speaker was **Reyna Ortiz**, author of the book **T Stands for Truth: In Search of the Queen**.



Reyna provided a compelling and transparent story of her decades-long journey as a trans/two-spirited woman navigating family life, junior high and high school challenges, and life as a sex worker in Chicago. Reyna is an outspoken advocate and activist fighting for the rights of the trans and gender non-conforming community. She now works with *Brave Space Alliance*, a Black-led, Trans-led LGBTQ+ center on the south side of Chicago providing affirming and culturally-competent resources.

Reyna's presentation stressed that "Regardless of how the whole world perceives me, I'm not ashamed to be a Transsexual, I'm not! All the shame associated with being Trans is gone. I live unapologetically." Our chapter was fortunate to share time with Reyna and learn about her life and experiences as a trans/two-spirited woman.

Our September meeting will be hybrid. Please join us either online via Zoom or at the Unitarian Church of Hinsdale on Sunday, September 4 at 2PM!

News from PFLAG DuPage

by Dan Hemmer

Our educational presentation this month was the Something to Talk About Live about Jeanne Manford. The two guests were Rob Sanders, author of a new children's book "The Mother of a Movement: Jeanne Manford – Ally, Activist, and Co-Founder of PFLAG" and Eric Marcus, author of the book "Making Gay History" and host of podcast a podcast of the same name. Learning about Jeanne and how she started PFLAG was inspirational and affirming to see someone just like us have such a great impact on our world, by standing up for her child. Her story is reminder to us all, at the perfect time, that we can all change our world by standing up for what we believe in.

The "Making Gay History" podcast is also one of our recommendations to members this month. Most of the episodes contain recordings of the interviews that Mr. Marcus did when researching his book. It is fascinating to hear about these prominent figures in LGTBQ history in their own voices.

On August 27th is the Youth Outlook/PFLAG DuPage Family Picnic. This will be the first time the picnic has happened since before the pandemic, so we are really looking forward to gathering with our community again, enjoying some great food and fun together.

PFLAG DuPage will also be at Naper Pride's 2022
Pride Fest on September 10th (Noon to 10PM) at
Naper Settlement. There will be music, food,
children's activities, photo opportunities, and a
variety of LGBTQ+ supportive vendors from
Naperville and the surrounding area. Please join us
for a day of fun for the whole family!

"All the shame associated with being Trans is gone. I live unapologetically."



News from PTI Chicago

by Bill Guilfoile (he/him)

Our August 11th Zoom meeting began welcoming four new families, with children ranging in age from 15 to 26, to our support group with a total of twenty-one members in attendance. Andrew Zanevsky from PFLAG Council of Northern Illinois joined the meeting to announce an exciting conference which will be held on 08-Oct-2022 at the Water Tower Place on Michigan Avenue in Downtown Chicago. More information will be released in the coming weeks to the membership, the PCNI website and in Open Doors.

All members attending gave short introductions of their families and children. We then proceeded with our Book Club discussion. Twenty-eight members had requested and received the August Book Club selection. Books are provided to PTI Chicago members at no charge.

The selected book was *How to They/Them*, written by Stuart Getty, a genderqueer author and filmmaker, with illustrations by Brooke Thyng. This little hardcover is a smart, sweet, entertaining guide to the concept of the singular they, as well as a surprising history of non-binary gender identities.

Everyone greatly enjoyed the book and found it be

extremely helpful in understanding nonbinary pronouns and the world of gender fluidity. Comments included:

- the book clearly presented an accessible and nonconfrontational way for people to understand nonbinary pronouns
- the history associated with gender was very informative, it provided useful tools for discussing gender with our families
- the term Gender Queer (GQ) was highlighted and better understood, it clarified the difference between gender and sex.
- There was also significant discussion regarding ideas of how to share pronouns or appropriately ask another what their pronouns are in a safe and respectful manner. Several participants want to continue discussion of the book's concepts in future meetings. Many are buying additional copies to share with friends and family in their efforts to help educate others.

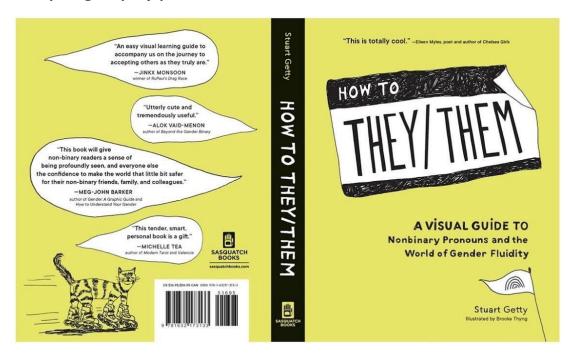
We then continued with sharing until the end of the meeting.

Please join our next meeting! PTI Chicago gathers via Zoom on the second Thursday of each month, so our next meeting is Thursday, September 12, 2022 from 7 pm to 9 pm. Members will receive an email with the

link and password to enter the meeting.

(We hope to begin a hybrid of Zoom and face- to-face in November.)

Parents, 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 Oak Park

by Tara Chavez

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

During our July Meeting, we were fortunate to hear from two speakers from the organization *Life is Work*. Speakers included Zahara Bassett, Founder and CEO of Life is Work, and Rev. Lamont.

Life is Work is a Trans-led social service resource center on a mission to support and uplift trans people of color through direct services, activism, and advocacy. A key part of their message was to reiterate and remind us that every human being has a story. The story has to be seen, it has to be heard, and it has to be understood. The disconnect with society is the UNDERSTANDING. It is important not to let anyone shape your vision of you.





They accept volunteers and donations. If you would like to learn more and/or are able to help out, here is the link to their website: lifeisworks.org/home

Then on August 10, 2022, PFLAG Oak Park Chapter President, Phil Kroker, attended and participated in a panel discussion on LGBTQ diversity awareness at the Nineteenth Century Charitable Association. Other speakers were a member of **OPALGA** and a college student (who was a recipient of an OPALGA scholarship). Panelists provided the audience better insight into the LGBTQ+ community in the Chicagoland area including topics on pronoun definitions, triumphs, and challenges, as well as learning how to Ally and Advocate during the ever-changing cultural and political landscape.

We will once again offer the hybrid option at our next meeting, held every fourth Sunday at First United Church of Oak Park, 848 Lake St, Oak Park, IL 60301. We plan to make buttons and discuss upcoming events including PFLAG's **Annual Bake Sale** at the Oak Park Farmer's Market, which will be held on **Saturday**, **September 3rd** from 7 am to sell out (typically 11:30 am), and **Barrie Fest**, which will be held on **September 10th**.

Our next Hybrid (in person and via Zoom) meeting will be on August 28th from 3 - 5 pm. Mark your calendars!



News from PFLAG McHenry

by Cate Becker

On August 9th, we met in person and watched Ben Greene's TEDx talk.

Ben is a trans man, a dynamic public speaker and educational consultant for the LGBTQ+ community. We enjoyed his TEDx talk, and enjoyed sharing our ideas about what Ben had to say.

Mary Genzler is retiring to Elgin. Which is good news for the Genzlers and Elgin but sad news for PFLAG McHenry!

Mary and Marya Flynn started McHenry PTI in 2012 and were Co-Leaders until 2018. The group started with 4 members and grew to 20 members. Mary was also Co-President of PFLAG McHenry from May to August of this year.

We will miss Mary's gentle thoughtfulness, creativity and knowledge. She inspired us with her transgender daughter's story and the story of Mary's fierce love and support for her.

Karen Graham and Toni Weaver staffed a PFLAG resource table at the Behavioral Health Resource Fair for School Professionals hosted by the McHenry County Mental Health Board on August 9. As a result of this event, PFLAG has received several invitations to provide trainings and lead discussions on ways local service organizations including mental health and school professionals can better serve their clients and students.



News from PFLAG Deerfield by Jodi

Deerfield is now regularly holding hybrid meetings. Although still a work in progress, our meetings keep improving thanks to the marvelous tech team of Jim, Ann and Steve; and the numerous people who pitch in to help!

This month's meeting focused on advocacy and support. Sue put forth numerous ways we can get involved in current affairs and ongoing research studies. Please reach out to her if you'd like any ideas. We then talked openly and honestly about the various struggles we and our loved ones face, including mental health. We listened attentively and tried to help each other. We shared experiences and found hope in each other's journeys. There is power in witnessing each other's stories. There is power in PFLAG!

PFLAG parents always notice signs of LGBTQ+ support wherever they go.



Jodi took this photo at Elia Beach in Mykonos Greece last month.

If you happen to take interesting LGBTQ+ themed photos, even if not directly related to PFLAG, please share them with Open Doors:



opendoors@pflagillinois.org



Center on 3656 N. Halsted, Chicago











Bookworm Global

Bookworm Global is an outreach project collecting and distributing books (130,000+ so far) to underserved communities in the Los Angeles area. Given what's been happening regarding the banning of books (especially LGBTQIA+ themed books), they are shifting their short-term focus on collecting LGBTQIA+ themed books for distribution to kids in shelters and/or on the streets in LA. Hopefully, others across the country (especially, for example, in Florida) will join in and help youth in their communities.

https://bookwormglobal.com/

IDENTITY RESOURCES at LGBTQnation

- A guide to what it means to identify outside the gender binary
- What does it mean to be transfeminine?
- What does 'AMAB' & 'AFAB' mean?

BG Pride is so proud to host...



The Sex Ed Team @ Lurie Adolescent Medicine!

Parent LGBTQIA inclusive Sex Ed Convo... for Caregivers!

Thursday, October 13th 7-8:30pm on zoom

Lurie experts Adam Davies, Dawn Ravine & Jesse Holzman will talk about:
 *inclusive language about bodies & relationships

*real young people and their supportive adults to inspire your own home convos (www.luriechildren.org/NeverFearTalks)

*answers to questions often skipped in school based sex ed that we get from our LGBTQ students

RSVP- thepintaprideproject@gmail.com



THEATER, MOVIES

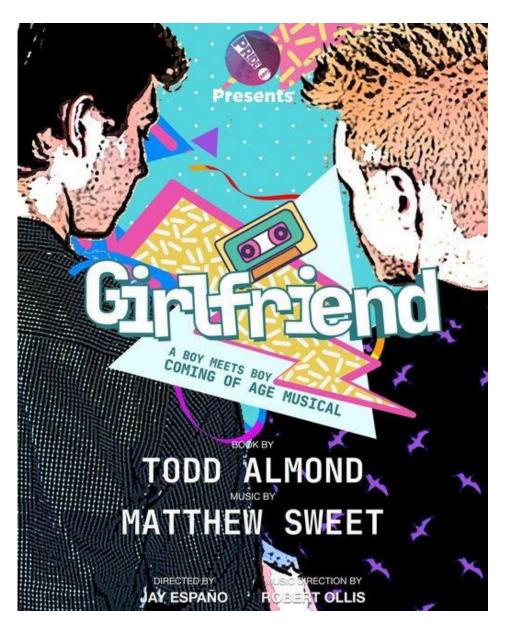


Pride Arts pridearts.org

PrideArts' season-opening production is the Chicago PREMIERE of the musical **GIRLFRIEND**, by Todd Almond and Matthew Sweet, based on Sweet's album of the same name. Set in Nebraska in the 1990s, this heartwarming coming-of-age story is a celebration of friendship, love, and, of course, music. Will, a bit of a social outcast, and Mike, the popular baseball player, start to explore their relationship days after graduation, experiencing the awkwardness and intensity of first love.

This romantic musical has been a hit in New York City, Los Angeles, Washington, D.C. and elsewhere since its premiere in Berkeley, CA in 2010. GIRLFRIEND will open to the press on Monday, August 29, 2022, following previews from August 25-28, and will play through September 25th.

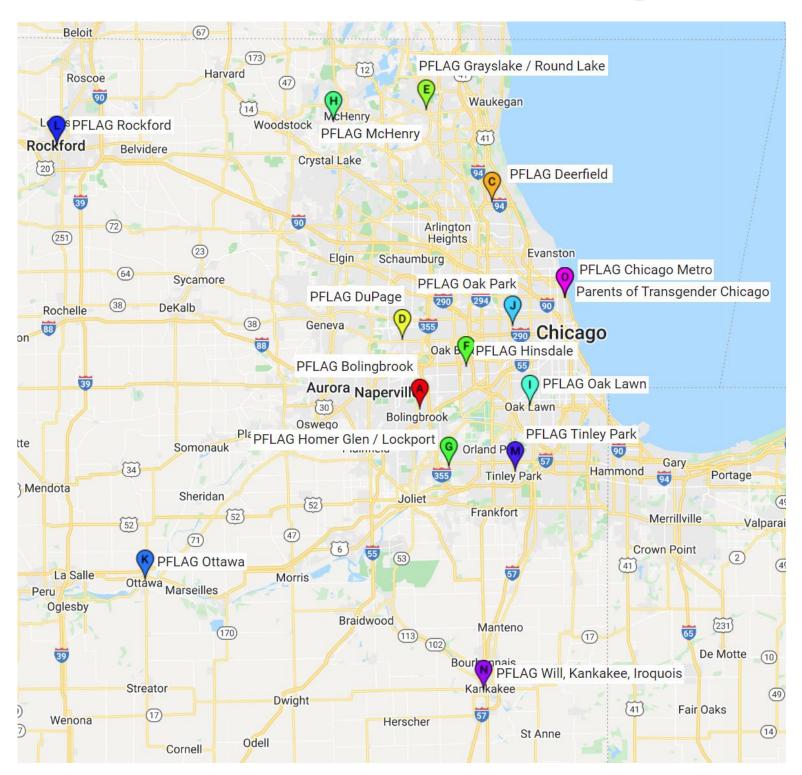
The cast for GIRLFRIEND includes Joe Lewis (Will), Peter Stielstra (Mike), Michael Radford (U/S Will) and Elijah Warfield (U/S Mike).



GIRLFRIEND, book by Todd Almond Music and Lyrics by Matthew Sweet Directed by Jay Españo Music Direction by Robert Ollis



PFLAG Northern Illinois Chapters



Click/tap anywhere on the map to open it online and find meeting dates/ times/locations. Some chapters are meeting online on Zoom, and some are returning to in-person meetings. Contact the chapter for details before your very first meeting and watch for chapter announcements if you are a member.

