



Open Doors

Winter Thorn (C) Tiggy Thorn -
photography by Jean Ranobrac

PFLAG celebrates the work of Equality Illinois

PFLAG is very fortunate to have the allyship of Equality Illinois in our mutual quest to defend the rights of, and fight for the inclusivity and affirmation of, LGBTQ+ Illinoisans. In particular, we enjoy the opportunity to work closely with Mike Ziri, Director of Public Policy for Equality Illinois. Mike is a regular guest at the quarterly meetings of the PFLAG Council of Northern Illinois, where he provides us with a critical perspective on their current work, keeping us informed so that we can better support and advocate for their initiatives.

I had an opportunity to spend a few minutes with Mike on the phone this week. We spoke on the occasion of the passage of SB 818, the Keeping Youth Safe and Healthy Act, an important piece of legislation that, per Equality Illinois, "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). This alignment with science and public health best practices guarantees health education in Illinois is inclusive and affirming of communities who have historically been stigmatized or excluded, including the HIV community and LGBTQIA youth."

Equality Illinois' track record of advancing critical pieces of legislation over time is an impressive one and the past year has certainly been no exception. Most recently, Governor Pritzker signed SB 655 into law, repealing our HIV criminal laws and distinguishing Illinois as the second state in the country to do so. The Chicago Tribune recently recognized the bill's importance, citing the unfairness of "singl[ing] out HIV — an illness that disproportionately affects LGBTQ, Black and Latino people — for criminal penalties, while other contagious illnesses (including COVID-19) are treated as public health issues." The new law strikes down bad policy that criminalized people for their health status. Eliminating it, Mike offers, "further enables people to live authentically in public".

I asked Mike about the challenges of navigating the current governmental landscape and, legislative progress aside, what makes him hopeful about further success. He is quick to say that he is most energized by the many advocates that he has met over time and their relentless commitment to

effect change. "In Illinois, when a bad bill gets introduced", he says, "we've developed great partnerships with people not afraid to raise their voice". To them he gives credit for the successful passage of many legislative initiatives.

But Mike is not one to dwell on the past for long, but rather to focus on what is next on our plate ... and he recently brought us up to speed on the current work to advance HB2542. You will see on the next page information on our support for HB 2542, a bill that eliminates a lot of the barriers for effecting name changes, a process which for many has been hurtful and demeaning. HB 2542 brings Illinois law in line with the majority of other states and helps trans and gender-expansive people and survivors of human trafficking live safer and more authentic lives.

So ... how can we best help? Where does PFLAG's emphasis need to be? Where can we make our mark? According to Mike, there are "no better advocates than parents of queer kids". He hailed the effectiveness of PFLAGers to tell their stories and encourages us to feel confident in doing so. "You are the expert of your own story", he says, and reminds us that our stories are powerful tools in the ears of a local legislator, school board representative or city council member. Across the state and regardless of the district, Mike is continually impressed by advocates willing to sit down and tell their stories. And isn't that PFLAG's forte?

We are fortunate to have someone with such passion and drive to advance protections for the LGBTQ+ community, and I'm inspired by Mike's command of the issues, positive approach and relentless energy. PFLAG champions the efforts of Equality Illinois and celebrates its many successes ... and we thank you Mike!

In grateful appreciation of all your efforts,

Don Donahue

President,
PFLAG Council of Northern Illinois



Hello
my name is

HB 2542

SUPPORT HB 2542: Remove The Bar For Name Changes

Sponsors: Peters, Cunningham, and Fine

ILLINOIS'S NAME CHANGE LAW IS HARMING VULNERABLE POPULATIONS.

Illinois's name change law is one of the most restrictive in the nation. Illinois is one of only 12 states prohibiting name changes for people on registries and one of only two states prohibiting name changes for people with identity theft convictions. Illinoisans with felony convictions cannot change their name until ten years after the end of their sentence. Illinois is one of only eight states with this kind of restriction.

HB2542 brings IL law in line with the majority of other states and helps trans and gender-expansive people and survivors of human trafficking live safer and more authentic lives by:

- Removing the ten-year waiting period for people with felony convictions
- Removing the lifetime ban for people with identity theft convictions
- Adding a judicial discretion exception for people seeking a name change due to gender-related identity, marriage, religion, and status as a human trafficking survivor to the registration period ban in the Sex Offender, Arsonist and Murderer and Violent Offender Against Youth Registration Acts
- Improving efficiency by focusing the grounds for State's Attorney Objections on petitions filed by people with pending charges, a conviction of identity theft or aggravated identity theft or a conviction requiring registration with the Sex Offender Registry
- Increasing transparency by requiring notice of objections served on petitioners
- Removing the outdated third-party affidavit requirement
- Expands access to publication waiver and streamlines waiver process
- Streamlining procedure with a statewide, standardized petition

For more information contact:

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ainzano@chicagobarfoundation.org

Call to Action:

Please call 1-866-584-3906 to get the information on who your Illinois State Senator is and leave them a message that you fully support HB2542. It is important that we get as many people as possible to call by their next legislative session in October!



CHICAGO PRIDE PARADE

OCTOBER 3, 2021



Photography from past Pride Parades by Mary Ann Hickey

Update on our participation in the Chicago Pride Parade 2021, abridged from the letter to chapter leaders from PCNI President:

A few thoughts as we ramp up organizing for a great day on October 3. We'll keep you posted periodically with parade status, guidelines for gathering and marching, etc. And always appeals for help where needed!

It's going to be a great day!!!

What we know:

1. The parade will kick off at 12:00 on October 3rd, following the same parade route and assuming the same length as in past.
2. Parade organizers are hoping to maintain the look and feel of the past parades and duplicate logistics as much as possible.
3. The PFLAG Council and chapters are registered and have secured a trolley for parade day. We hope to gather and march in much the same way as the past as well and will be sharing more details about how we will congregate soon.

What we don't know:

We expect to get more guidance from the parade committee about additional guidelines that may be in place relative to status of the virus variants. We are getting lots of questions about safeguards and requirements, etc. We don't know. But we are listening closely and will keep you up to date.

Join us as a volunteer!!

1. Parade planners - we could use some creative ideas and organizing skills to help get, and keep, our ducks in a row. Please let me know if you would like to be a part of our small planning committee.
2. Day of parade volunteers - we need folks to help decorate the trolley, to be parade marshals, to assist guests on the trolley, to bring and organize refreshments, etc. Join the fun and let us know if you can help in any way come Parade Day!

Thank you all -- your feedback is very much appreciated!

Don Donahue



From PFLAG National

PFLAG National is proud to launch **PFLAG Connects: Communities!** These virtual support meetings – part of our successful [PFLAG Connects program](#) – are for all parents and family members of LGBTQ+ people who are part of the Latino, Black/African-American, and AAPI communities.

COMING SOON

NATIONAL MEETINGS TO SUPPORT AAPI, BLACK, AND LATINO COMMUNITIES

PFLAG.ORG/PFLAGCONNECTS/COMMUNITIES



PFLAG  **CONNECTS:**
Communities



From PFLAG National

FEDERAL

LGBTQ+ Community much more likely to be vaccinated than general population. The Human Rights Campaign Foundation found in a report released on August 12th that 92 per cent of LGBTQ+ adults surveyed in the US have received at least one jab for COVID. This is compared to 72% of American adults overall who had received at least one COVID vaccine dose. PFLAG National is a partner in the White House COVID-19 Community Corps, which works with the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) to boost vaccination numbers. PFLAG National urges all its members to get vaccinated.

GLOBAL

Israel - Israel lifts blood donation restrictions for gay men. Israel's health minister made the announcement, saying the longstanding blood donation limitation was discriminatory and denigrating. This decision follows similar easing of blood donation restrictions by gay and bisexual men in the UK and the US.

Afghanistan - LGBTQ+ Afghans fear persecution from the Taliban. The Taliban harshly persecuted gay and other LGBTQ+ Afghans when they were last in power, including executions. No executions of LGBTQ+ people have been reported by international media since the fall of Kabul on Sunday, but the BBC Afghan service says that Sharia punishments have already been reinstated in many regions and many LGBTQ+ Afghans and others are fleeing the country.

Hungary - Budapest Pride march challenges recent anti-LGBTQ+ legislation. Harmful, anti-LGBTQ+ legislation being considered in Hungary encouraged many LGBTQ+ people and allies to march in Budapest's pride parade. For more information on this story, please check out PFLAG National's "Something To Talk About Live" from July 29th.

MEDIA

Jamie Lee Curtis's child comes out as transgender. Jamie Lee Curtis opened up about her family and her 24-year-old transgender daughter, Ruby. Curtis explains that she is filled with pride for her daughter and will even be officiating her wedding next year.

Olympic boxer dedicates medal to LGBTQ+ community. Openly lesbian Filipina silver medalist Nesthy Petecio dedicated her medal to the LGBTQ+ community saying her win is a win for them and encouraged them to keep fighting. She won her medal in boxing and was the first Filipino boxer to win a medal at the Olympic Games in almost 25 years.

180+ out LGBTQ athletes participated in 2021 Olympics. The 2021 Olympics show an increase in participation of publicly out LGBTQ+ athletes. This includes first openly transgender woman Laurel Hubbard participating in weightlifting, openly gay Gold medalist Tom Daley, and nonbinary Canadian women's soccer player, Quinn. [If LGBTQ+ athletes were competing together under one flag, they'd rank 14th in medals won.](#)

Pray Away, a new documentary about so-called conversion therapy, premieres on Netflix. This dangerous and discredited practice is banned in 20 U.S. states, but remains legal in the remaining 30 and is a persistent issue for LGBTQ+ youth. PFLAG National was proud to partner on this important project, and will host a conversation with subjects of the film on the Thursday, August 26th episode of Something to Talk About Live. Learn more, and find links to watch, at straightforequality.org/something-talk-about-live-august-26-2021.

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

PFLAG Hinsdale had the pleasure of meeting in person (although outdoors) for our August 2021 meeting. We were also thrilled to have Mike Ziri, Director of Public Policy for Equality Illinois, as our guest speaker! Mike shared with our chapter current legislation happening in the State of Illinois.

He began by explaining that **House Bill (HB) 1063** was signed into law by Gov. JB Pritzker on July 27, 2021 at the Center on Halsted. The new law repealed a current discriminatory and archaic HIV transmission law with a new law that decriminalizes HIV exposure. The Governor repealed a law that allowed people living with HIV to be arrested, prosecuted, and incarcerated because of their health status.

Mike pointed out that the repealed law criminalized people for knowing their HIV status and also inhibited testing and good public health policy. With this new law, Illinoisans can no longer face criminal charges for not disclosing their HIV status before having unprotected sex. HB 1063 passed with bipartisan support in both the Illinois House and Senate.

Mike also shared information on three other bills signed by Gov. JB Pritzker on July 27 that advance the rights of the LGBTQIA+ community in Illinois.

The specific bills signed into law included:

- **HB 3709** - Updates the state's current law on infertility insurance to include LGBTQIA+ families and single parents, and also reduces the wait time for women over 35;
- **Senate Bill (SB) 139** - Sets out a procedure where people can correct gendered language on their marriage certificates;

- **HB 2590** - Sets up rules to which county clerks must adhere for name changes on marriage certificates.

Mike also explained important legislation that is currently pending in the Illinois General Assembly that PFLAG members and LGBTQIA+ allies should pay attention to and reach out to your appropriate representatives and senators to share your support of these bills:

- **SB 818**, Keeping Youth Safe and Healthy Act - Creates guidelines for teaching age-appropriate, inclusive, and comprehensive personal health and safety education and sexual health education in Illinois public schools. This bill has passed the Illinois General Assembly.
- **HB 9**, Birth certificate modernization - Permits self-attestation in order to correct the gender marker on a birth certificate; thus, removing the requirement for a healthcare provider's note. This bill has already passed the Illinois House and is pending in the Illinois Senate.

News from PFLAG Deerfield

by Jodi

This month we saw many new, and also many familiar faces on Zoom. They joined us from near and far! We did not have a speaker. Instead, we opted to stay together as a group to share our stories, offer support and shed some tears. As often happens at PFLAG, some of us started off as strangers and ended up friends. The power of just showing up for each other never ceases to amaze. We continue to meet on Zoom and although we had hoped to be in person for our September meeting, that plan is currently on hold due to COVID 19. **Wishing everyone health and peace.**



News from PFLAG DuPage

by Kristin Shulman

At our July Executive Committee meeting, we decided that PFLAG DuPage meetings will continue via Zoom for a bit longer. We have a few opportunities coming up to meet in person, and we felt that the risk of in-person chapter meetings was still greater than we are willing to take. Our August Zoom chapter meeting was attended by twenty-four people including a few new people. It is always so exciting to see new people reaching out and supporting their family and friends or even supporting themselves.

Our guest speaker at our August meeting was Margie Wolf a long-time resident of Naperville who, along with their wife, co-founded Naper Pride in 2018. They founded Naper Pride out of a desire to host a Pride event that was consistent with Naperville's family friendly community. On September 11 and 12 their desire will come true, Naper Pride is hosting the first Naper Pride Fest at the Naperville Settlement. Margie told us about some of the special features of this event including a special Sunday morning program for people who experience sensory overload and a special baby changing area. PFLAG DuPage will staff the hospitality tent during the festival and will hand out PFLAG information as well as answer questions regarding the event. Interested in going? Ticket and information are available at <https://www.naperpride.org/>

Because we recognize that not everyone can make a Sunday afternoon PFLAG meeting, PFLAG DuPage began trialing a week night support only Zoom meeting in August. While our first session had only limited attendance, we did have one new person join us and participate. We are going to try this again on Tuesday, September 7th at 7:00 PM. If you are interested in joining us, drop an email to

PFLAGDuPage@gmail.com for the Zoom link and passcode.

Because we are all missing in-person get togethers, PFLAG DuPage is hosting a "Do it Yourself" picnic on Saturday, September 25th at the church, St. Paul's Lutheran in Wheaton, that graciously hosts our in-person meetings. We will gather on the church grounds from 3 to 5 PM and everyone is asked to bring their own food, drink and chair/blanket. We miss everyone and hope our members and friends will join us.

At our next chapter meeting, on Sunday, September 17th at 2 pm CT, we are delighted to announce that Anthony Lopez will be joining us to speak about his career in stage and film as an openly gay actor with a disability.

News from PFLAG McHenry

by Toni Weaver

All is still quiet here in McHenry although we do field inquiries from schools for resources and information. Our educational outreach remains strong. Covid certainly put a damper on our work, but we hold out hope that in-person training will be able to resume.

We did not hold a meeting in August. With an affiliated PTI group, I sometimes think we're superfluous. PTI parents can attend both PTI McHenry and PTI Chicago, so their needs are being met. PFLAG McHenry is striving to remain relevant. Stay tuned!

Get published! Email your essays, photography, artworks to Open Doors: opendoors@pflagillinois.org



News from PTI Chicago

by Christine Peters

PTI Chicago hosted 23 participants during our August meeting as we welcomed Ari Groner, Licensed Clinical Social Worker and Assistant Director of The Juniper Center. The Center's website states, "...Ariel has a focus within the LGBTQ+ population. Her advanced training working with this population gives her the tools to help queer people obtain wholeness in their lives. Ariel has a passion for guiding individuals through their journey, whether it be a young person exploring their sexuality, an adult discovering their gender, or parents navigating a child through transitioning."

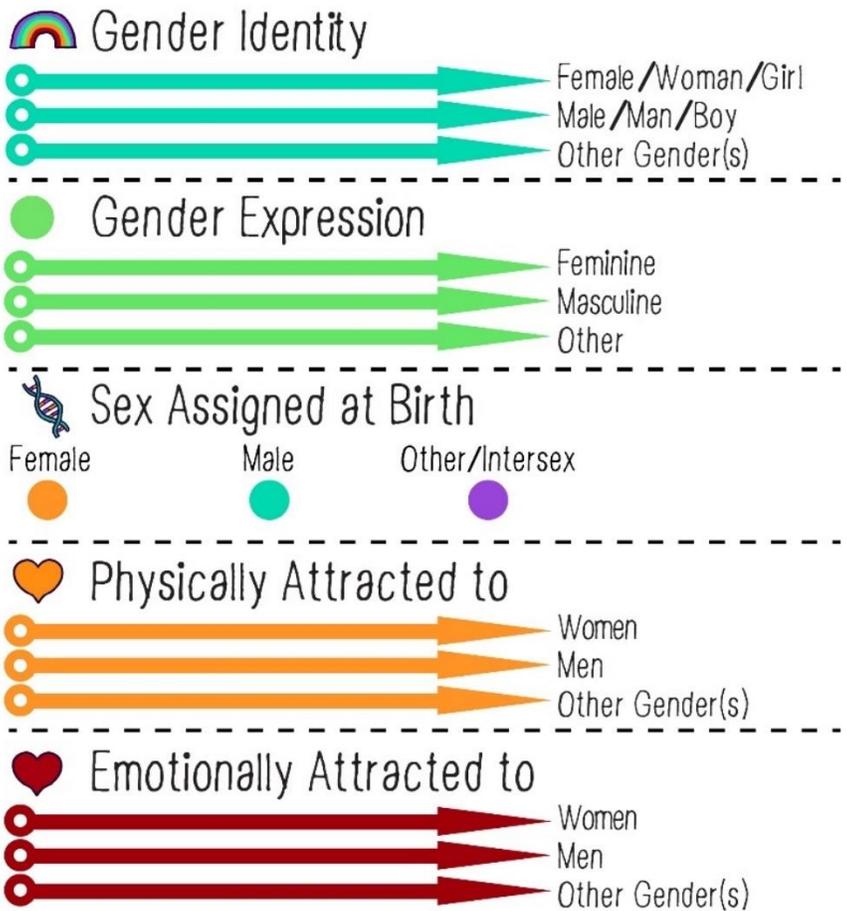
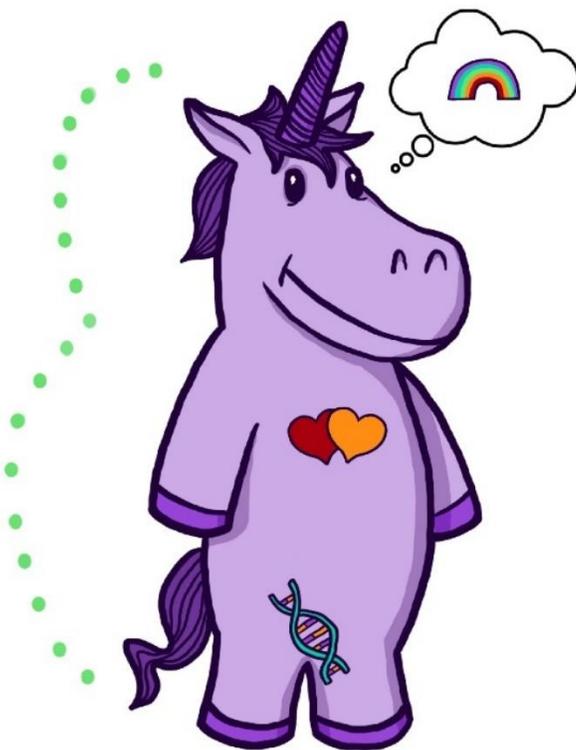
We appreciated Ari's expertise in the area of mental health as she spoke to our group about how parents and youth are on different journeys. She described a "Trans Train Station" metaphor: young people explore their identity internally and when ready, they come out to parents. The trans, non-binary, or genderqueer person is already on the train ready to go full speed ahead, while parents are left on the train behind, often in shock and full of future-oriented questions. Ari emphasized that parents providing unconditional love and support is statistically significant, even if they do not fully understand their offspring's experience.

Among her other contributions, Ari created The List <https://www.thelistforus.com> which is a resource document created for trans and GNC

The Gender Unicorn

Graphic by:

TSER
Trans Student Educational Resources



To learn more, go to:
www.transstudent.org/gender

Design by Landyn Pan and Anna Moore

folx in Chicagoland. This valuable site offers “... support groups and other services, referrals to other medical professionals, family sessions, guidance in the name change process with letters to amend gender marker, letter of readiness for HRT, and letter for gender affirming surgeries.” Parents will find it of great assistance as well. Ari highlighted The Gender Unicorn as a graphic that makes the complexity of gender more accessible.

At our next gathering, we invite you to join us on September 9th when we discuss **I Have Always Been Me: A Memoir by Precious Brady-Davis, an award-winning trans advocate and former outreach coordinator at Center on Halsted.** Those who requested the book received a copy of it courtesy of PTI Chicago. Even if you haven't read the book, we hope you will find the discussion of interest.

We gather via Zoom on the second Thursday of each month. **Next meeting is Thursday, September 9th, 2021 from 7:00 p.m. - 9:00 p.m.** 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

RESOURCE:

<https://www.cpydcoalition.org/>

The Communities for Positive Youth Development (CPYD) is a collaboration of community partners who share the common goal of positive youth development, including a lifestyle that is free of alcohol, drugs and other substances and promotes diverse recovery support services across the lifespan. CPYD is located in Schaumburg, IL.

(847) 496-5939, CPYD.coalition@gmail.com



News from PTI McHenry

by Andrew Zanevsky

At our August meeting, we welcomed regulars, several new members, and one guest from PTI Chicago.

Helping new parents to find answers, resources, and peer support is the most emotionally rewarding part of this volunteering work for me! It is not important how long someone has been on this journey, because everyone shares their life experiences, parenting wisdom, and their love. I learn so much from new members, even if they do not always have all the knowledge of an experienced ally.

During the meeting, one of our members used an analogy that I want to share with all our newsletter readers. She said that terminology and etiquette of discussions of gender identity issues for someone who is not LGBTQ+ is like traveling in a foreign country. A polite person should respect the local culture, language, and customs, and learn to adapt.

It appears that we will continue meeting online for the time being. If you miss face-to-face interactions with the community, please consider joining us for the Chicago Pride Parade on October 3rd. See page 4 of this issue for more information.

All parents and other family members of transgender, non-binary, and gender diverse individuals are welcome to join our Zoom meetings on the **4th Wednesday of every month, at 7-9 pm.** The next meeting date is September 22nd. If you are *not* on the PTI McHenry mailing list, please email opendoors@pflagillinois.org to receive a meeting link and password several days before each meeting.

Web site review by Jodi

The following is a brief overview of **Gender Spectrum**, an organization that works to create gender sensitive and inclusive environments for all children and teens. The information is taken directly from their website, www.genderspectrum.org. I highly recommend checking them out.

Gender Spectrum takes critical areas of children's lives and works to bring greater gender understanding and inclusion. They start with the child and radiate out to work with the adults and institutions that affect all children. Connections with family is central to their work. They also provide professional development and training services.

Gender Spectrum can help a young person who needs to connect; parents and caregivers in need of support; professionals interested in learning best practices; faith leaders seeking resources; and anyone who wants current and accurate information about gender and youth. On this website, you will find personal stories, resources on gender, support for your gender-

expansive child, parent and family groups, and online programming. There are a variety of free online groups for pre-teens aged 10-12 and teens 13-19 years old. There is a group for black, trans, non-binary and gender-expansive teens; and a group for POC, trans, non-binary and gender-expansive teens. There is a national parent support group, topic-based discussion groups for parents and other adult family members, and an API/Parents/Caregiver support group which is housed with PFLAG NYC. There is also a support group for facilitators.

The impact of Gender Spectrum is widespread. Their professional development and training programs have reached educators who work with more than 3.2 million children. Their online groups and programs for youth and adults have reached 20 countries and all 50 states. Annually, they support hundreds of families and youth.

Gender Spectrum hosted a Professional Symposium in July 2021. Their **Family Conference is on September 25 and 26, 2021** and is the nation's oldest gathering dedicated to caregivers with transgender, non-binary and otherwise gender-expansive children and youth.



Transgender Law Center

Join [SPARK Virtual Celebration](#) on Thursday, 10/14 at 7 PM CDT.

This event is free. It will bring together 400+ supporters virtually for a powerful evening of joy and togetherness.

Please register for exclusive event details.





📅 Begins Sept. 13

🕒 Varied Times

Now Enrolling! Fall Virtual Therapy Groups

Fall Virtual Therapy Groups are here! Enrollment begins now, groups begin the week of Sept. 13.

To schedule your intake assessment or for questions please call 773-472-6469 ext. 460 or email behavioralhealth@centeronhalsted.org.

📍 Virtual Groups

[LEARN MORE >](#)



📅 Friday, Sept. 24

🕒 9:00 am - 4:00 pm

Mental Health First AID Virtual Training Courses

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

📍 Virtual/Zoom

[RSVP HERE >](#)

CENTER ON 3656 N. HALSTED

SILVERFORK

CULINARY ARTS + JOB READINESS TRAINING

Orientation Workshop Dates
September 15th and 16th
10 am - 4 pm

Silver Fork is a FREE short-term culinary arts and job readiness program hosted by Center on Halsted. It is ideal for adults who want to enter or re-enter the hospitality industry and experience a fresh outlook on their career potential. Participants experience intensive culinary training coupled with personal and professional development, job readiness and career counseling.

Call 773-472-6469 and ask for Silver Fork or email silverfork@centeronhalsted.org



STACKS of LAUGHTER

A Night of LGBTQ Standup Comedy

The Gerber/Hart Library and Archives Fall Benefit

Presented by GCM Grosvenor

September 18 2021, 7pm

Tickets on sale at gerberhart.org



MIDWEST LGBTQ HEALTH SYMPOSIUM 2021

This year's theme:
Community Informed Care is a Radical Act

Wednesday 9.29.21
Thursday 9.30.21

Virtual

For more information, visit howardbrown.org/mlhs

Saturday, September 18, 7:00 p.m.
at Gerber/Hart Library and Archives
6500 N. Clark St., Chicago

Featuring the Talents of Archy Jamjun, Rop Popp,
and Amy Nico Schwartz



Space is limited, so [buy your tickets today!](#)

Howard Brown Health invites you to the **2021 Midwest LGBTQ Health Symposium** on September 29-30. These two days will be filled with innovative sessions such as:

- **"Successful Aging in the LGBTQIA+ Community: Leveraging Queer Resilience,"** presented by Michele Battle-Fisher (she/her), MPHS, MA of Equitas Health. This presentation examines "successful aging" in the LGBTQIA+ community using both aging research and LGBTQIA+ specific aging initiatives as exemplars.
- **"Safety Optimization (Harm Reduction) for Sexual and Gender Diverse People who Participate in Chemsex,"** presented by Jona Tanguay (they/them), MMSc, PA-C, AAHIVS of Whitman-Walker Health. This session will contextualize Chemsex in queer communities and apply safety optimization strategies to support the health of people who participate in Chemsex with a healing-focused approach.

Please invite your teams, peers, colleagues, friends, advocates and allies of LGBTQ health best practices. Go to the MLHS2021 website to register and for the most up-to-date information.

THEATER

[Pride Arts \(pridearts.org\)](http://pridearts.org)

Now through September 19 –
the American Premiere of the Australian
musical:

THE THINGS I COULD NEVER TELL STEVEN

tells interlocking stories of four people -
mother, father, wife, and lover - who all
love the same man.

Thursdays - Saturdays at 7:30 pm
Sundays at 3 pm

[BUY TICKETS HERE](#)



