PFLAG GENEVA/TRI-CITIES

LEADING WITH LOVE

November 2026 Newsletter

Welcome!

Greetings PFLAG Geneva/Tri-Cities!

November 2026 issue of Open Doors is here: https://tinyurl.com/pcni2611

If you open this link on a mobile device and OneDrive asks for permission to access all your photos, select "Later" to escape that request, and then select "Open in Browser." Do not sign in.

In this issue:

- Power of PFLAG 2026 Conference recap
- PCNY x Synchrony Scholarship winners
- Chapter news
- Poetry by Alyssa Fox
- Open Doors from over 23 years ago - PFLAG history

To find all Open Doors issues, please visit pflagil.org/newsletter

We welcome your contributions! If you'd like to share your stories, essays, photography, artwork, or other creative work for publication in Open Doors or our chapter newsletter, we'd love to hear from you! **Reach out to learn more!**

PFLAG Geneva/Tri-Cities Chapter News

Did you know that we have a Fundraising Coordinator?!

We do! Samantha has taken on the role, and we're excited to have her leading our fundraising efforts!

And speaking of fundraising… Have you heard that Our FIRST-EVER Fundraising Drive is underway!



Now through November 9, help support PFLAG Geneva/Tri-Cities, a 100% volunteer-run chapter dedicated to supporting, educating, and advocating for LGBTQIA+ people, their families, friends, and allies.

Your donations help fund:

- Educational resources, guest speakers, and community presentations
- Pride events, outreach, and advocacy
- Essential chapter operating costs

Every dollar helps us continue showing up, building connections, sharing resources, and reminding people they are not alone. **A huge shoutout to our friends who have already donated!**

Together, we keep showing up!

Donate today: https://givebutter.com/pflag-geneva-tri-cities-fundraising-drive-43n0md

Interested in Becoming a Chapter Sponsor?

Would your business or organization like to support PFLAG Geneva/Tri-Cities?

- Explore our Sponsorship Opportunities to learn about the different ways you can help us continue providing support, education, and advocacy in our community.
- Check out our Sponsorship Information & Opportunities for all the details!

Have questions? We'd love to hear from you! PFLAG Geneva/Tri-Cities Website

PFLAG Geneva/Tri-Cities November Meeting

11/9 from 6 - 8 PM: Join us in person or via Zoom for our monthly support meeting. Our guest speaker is Bryana Sergott (she/her), retired U.S. Army Staff Sergeant. Bryana will share her personal story and lived experiences, offering her perspective on "Freedom: What Does It Look Like and Feel Like?"

PFLAG Geneva/Tri-Cities Monthly Support Meeting - Monday, November 9th

Guest Speaker: Bryana Salene Sergott (she/her), Retired U.S. Army Staff Sergeant

Join us Monday, November 9th from 6-8 PM

We are looking forward to having Bryana share her story with us.

Freedom: What Does It Look Like and Feel Like?

- A Perspective Shaped by Lived Experience

Have you ever wanted to ask a transgender woman a question but hesitated because you weren't sure if it was appropriate?

Bryana welcomes your questions! Through an open and respectful conversation, she'll share her personal experiences and perspectives on identity, freedom, and life as a transgender woman.

Bring your curiosity, an open mind, and a willingness to listen and learn.

If you haven't joined us before, please contact us for our meeting details at pflaggenevatricities@gmail.com.

PFLAG GENEVA/TRI-CITIES

Meeting Details

- Our monthly meetings are held on the second Monday of each month from 6:00–8:00 p.m. in Geneva
- Meetings are hybrid, so you can join us either in person or via Zoom.
- If you haven't joined us before, please contact us for meeting details

Interested in Guest Speaking Opportunities?

Would you like to be a guest speaker, know someone who would, or have a topic you'd love to learn more about?

We welcome your ideas and suggestions! Reach out—we'd love to hear from you!

[PFLAG Geneva/Tri-Cities Website]

Save the Date! Saturday, November 14th

November 14 | More Than a Rainbow – Teen Workshop

DeKalb Public Library | 10 AM – 2 PM
309 Oak St, DeKalb, IL

Presented by Youth Outlook and the DeKalb County Mental Health Board
"Every stripe tells a story!"

- This free, hands-on workshop invites teens to explore the history and meaning behind LGBTQ+ flags and symbols through creative activities and interactive challenges.

PFLAG Geneva/Tri-Cities is excited to be part of this event!
We'll have a resource table and offer two presentations:

- **PFLAG: Building Community, Creating Change**
- **Beyond Acceptance: Allyship in Action**

****Presentation times are still being finalized, and we'll share them as soon as they're available!****

Additional Presentation:
Ann Shult from the DeKalb County History Center will present:
"**The Importance of the LGBTQ+ Community in History."**

Additional Event Details:

- All are welcome, including parents and allies!
- Lunch will be provided while supplies last.
- You don't need to attend the entire event. Stop by when you can!

Also at the DeKalb Public Library: The Legacy Wall Exhibit will be on display November 7–20.

The Legacy Wall is a one-of-a-kind, digitally interactive, traveling exhibit featuring mini biographies that celebrate LGBTQ+ individuals throughout history and their contributions to our world.

*The Legacy Wall and affiliated programs are made possible in partnership with the DeKalb Public Library, Ellwood House Museum, Youth Outlook, PFLAG, DeKalb County Community Foundation, and the DeKalb County Mental Health Department. *

This looks amazing and we are excited to explore the Legacy Wall as well!

PFLAG Connects Communities

PFLAG Connects: Communities (PCC) provide a safe, virtual, moderated space where people with shared experiences can connect each month.

PFLAG National's current communities gather people of Latino, Black/African American, Asian American and Pacific Islander backgrounds—as well as **Military Families, Families with Gender-Diverse Loved Ones, Grandparents, Dads** and the newest group - **Two-Spirit & Indigenous Circle** to gain support, ask questions, and learn from others who have been through similar experiences.

These meetings cater primarily to family members of LGBTQ+ people, and also welcome members of the LGBTQ+ community.
Click on the links to register for an upcoming meeting.

CHAPTER CONNECTIONS & UPDATES

New PFLAG Geneva/Tri-Cities Virtual Support Group!

Parent & Caregiver Connection

An Online Support Group for Parents & Caregivers of Transgender, Nonbinary & Gender-Nonconforming Children of All Ages

- Join other parents and caregivers in a welcoming, supportive space to connect, share experiences, ask questions, and learn from one another.

These meetings will offer a welcoming space to connect, share experiences, ask questions, and find resources. Whether you're new to this journey or have years of experience, you are welcome here.

Interested in joining us?
Please register using the link provided. **Parent & Caregiver Connection signup**

Join Us for Our First Virtual Support Meeting!

- **Date:** Tuesday, January 19, 2027
- **Time:** 6:30–8:00 PM
- **Location:** Online via Zoom

Future Meetings: Based on participant interest, we'll explore establishing a regular schedule, potentially meeting every other month on the third Tuesday.

Have questions or want to learn more? We'd love to hear from you! **pflaggenevatricities@gmail.com**

Get Involved! Volunteer Connection & Planning **Tuesday, November 17, 2026 | Via Zoom**

Have you already volunteered or are you interested in volunteering with PFLAG Geneva/Tri-Cities?
Whether you've volunteered before or are just curious about getting involved, we'd love for you to join us!
Let's connect, share ideas, and plan what's next!
During our meeting, we'll:

- Explore volunteer opportunities and ways to get involved.
- Brainstorm ideas for upcoming events and activities.
- Plan volunteer get-togethers, including button-making and preparing outreach materials.
- Discuss short training sessions to help volunteers feel comfortable and confident in different roles.

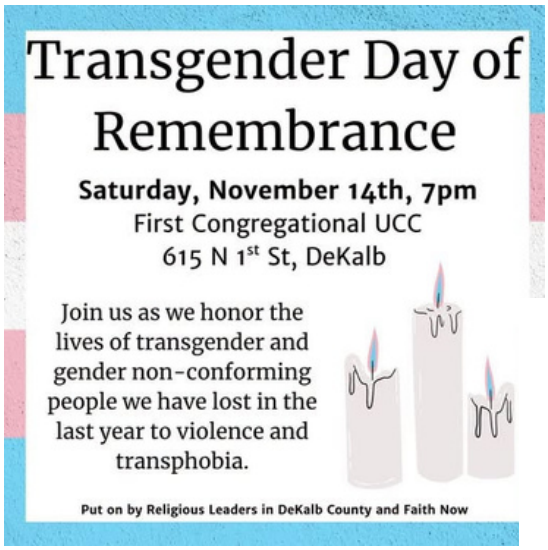
No previous volunteer experience or commitment required! Come learn more, share your ideas, and connect with others who want to make a difference.

Interested in joining us? Register to receive the Zoom link! **Virtual Volunteer Meeting Registration**

Together, we can keep showing up for our community!

Community Events

Transgender Day of Remembrance Events taking place in the suburbs



Join First Congregational United Church of Christ - DeKalb, IL on **Nov 14th** at 7pm to honor the lives of transgender and gender nonconforming individuals who were lost this last year due to violence and transphobia.

Transgender Day of Remembrance

Naper Pride is hosting a Trans Day of Remembrance Observance **11/15** from 3pm to 6pm at Community United Methodist Church at 20 N Center St in Naperville. The event is open to LGBTQ community members and allies.



Woodstock Pride

Woodstock City Hall
121 W Calhoun St, Woodstock, IL

Join Woodstock Pride in gathering together in remembrance of transgender individuals. We will begin with a candlelight vigil in front of Woodstock City Hall and then walk to the Woodstock Community Center for attendees to have the opportunity to share their experiences and speak at the event.

Feel free to prepare a few words, recite a poem, sing a song or speak if you are so moved.
Candles and light refreshments will be provided.

Local LGBTQ+ Organizations

- Belong Fox Valley's Monthly Events Here
- IL West Suburbs LGBT Community
- Aurora LGBTQ+ Advisory Board's Events on social media
- Elgin Pride Events
- Youth Outlook
- Naper Pride
- DeKalb Pride
- Joe Erbantraut "queering the burbs"

For a more comprehensive list of local organizations, please visit the Resources section on our website.

Outpatient Family Medicine Transformed





Our friends at Outpatient Family Medicine Transformed Ugly Sweater Dash is back!

100% of donations support the Patient Care Fund.

Event Details: December 6, 2026
Join us on December 6 at Bloomingdale Golf Club!

Whether you're running, walking, or just looking for a fun way to celebrate the season with family and friends, there's something for everyone! Enjoy a 3K or 6K walk/run, hot chocolate and cookies, festive activities, giveaways, and a silent auction.

Registration is OPEN!
https://runsignup.com/Race/IL/Bloomingdale/UglySweaterDash

Transgender Day of Remembrance (TDOR)

What is Transgender Day of Remembrance?



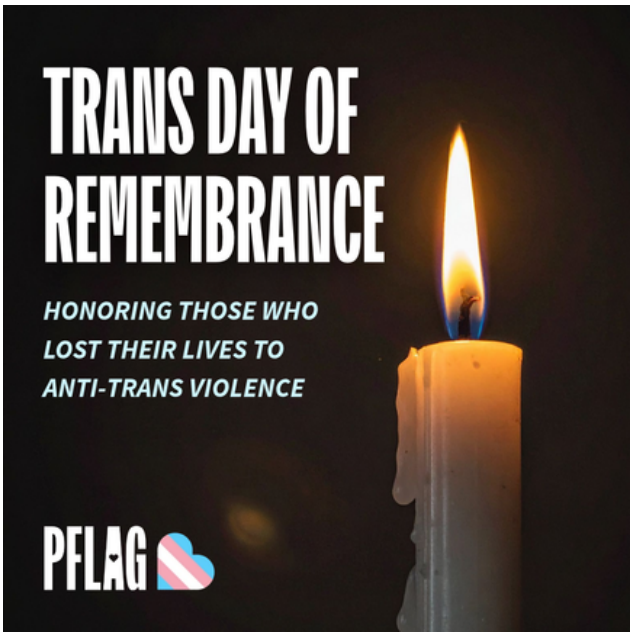
Transgender Day of Remembrance (TDOR) was started in 1999 by transgender advocate Gwendolyn Ann Smith as a vigil to honor the memory of Rita Hester, a transgender woman who was killed in 1998. The vigil commemorated all the transgender people lost to violence since Rita Hester's death, and began an important tradition that has become the annual Transgender Day of Remembrance.

Transgender Day of Remembrance (TDOR) is an annual observance on November 20 that honors the memory of the transgender people whose lives were lost in acts of anti-transgender violence.

"Transgender Day of Remembrance seeks to highlight the losses we face due to anti-transgender bigotry and violence. I am no stranger to the need to fight for our rights, and the right to simply exist is first and foremost. With so many seeking to erase transgender people — sometimes in the most brutal ways possible — it is vitally important that those we lose are remembered, and that we continue to fight for justice."
– **Transgender Day of Remembrance founder** [Gwendolyn Ann Smith]

From: [https://glaad.org/tdor/]

This ongoing and unslowing epidemic of violence committed against transgender and gender non-conforming people continues to climb and claim the lives of too many each year in the United States and across the globe. Many more incidences of murder and violence against transgender people go unreported, sometimes due to misgendering of the victim. For more stories of people who have lost their lives to anti-transgender hate violence, visit [https://tdor.translivesmatter.info/]. ***Website Trigger Warning*** Violence. Murder.
https://glaad.org/publications/tdorkit





Advocacy & Resources

Advocacy

Where Do We Start?

Figure Out What Works for You

Calls to Action

- Show Up - Get Involved
  - School Board Meetings
  - Library Board Meetings
- Mobilize - There's Power in Numbers
- Organize & Strategize
- Brainstorm
- Make Your Voice Heard
  - Lobbying
  - 5 Calls - Make your voice heard
- Share Your Story
  - Sharing personal experiences can shift perspectives and touch hearts.
- Join Rally's
- Protest Safely

HRC - *Tips for Preparedness, Peaceful Protesting, and Safety*

- Reach out to your State & Federal Representatives
  - Email
  - Call
  - Go in Person
- Action Steps
- PFLAG Votes

Advocacy Resources

- PFLAG National Advocacy Tools: Join the fight!
- Advocacy Video Training Series: Advocacy in 10 minutes or less!
- Advocacy at All Levels: Making Your PFLAG Voice Heard

PFLAG Geneva/Tri-Cities National and Local Resources and Organizations

Click on the links to take you to the websites

Resources

IL Pride Connect

IL PRIDE CONNECT LEGAL HOTLINE

Need Legal Help? Call the IL Pride Connect Legal Hotline Call: 855-805-9200
Hours: Monday – Thursday, 9 AM to 4 PM
Languages: English and Spanish - Free and confidential

More Resources

- PFLAG National Newsletter
- PFLAG Connects Communities
- A4TE - Trans Resource
- ACLU
  - Take Action
- Chase Strangio
  - Co-Director of the ACLU's LGBT & HIV Project
- Equality IL
- Erin In The Morning
  - Erin Reed, Trans Reporter - Excellent Resource
- GLESEN
- HRC
- Illinois State Board of Elections
- Find My Elected Officials
- Illinois Department of Human Rights
- Illinois Attorney General Kwame Raoul
  - *Civil Rights Immigration Rights*
- LambdaLegal
- Red Wine & Blue
- Sage Advocacy Services for LGBTQ+ Elders
- TJLP - Name & Gender change resource
- Transgender Law Center
- The Trevor Project
- Trans Youth for Equality Foundation (TYEF)
- Heather Cox Richardson
  - *Professor of American history*