

PFLAG BUFFALO/NIAGARA

Parents, Families, Friends, And Allies United with LGBTQ People

We will not be holding Sharing Meetings in July and August. Until then, reach out using our Helpline (883-0384) or info@pflagbuffalo.org. We are still here for you!



Sharing Meetings are held at Kenilworth United Church of Christ, 45 Dalton Drive, Tonawanda 14223 from 2:30 to 4:30 on the third Sunday of most months. We meet in the library; please use the parking lot entrance. The building is handicapped accessible. If requested, newcomers can meet privately with a PFLAG parent instead of joining the sharing group.

In addition, outside of our monthly meetings, if need be, New Parent Meetings can be scheduled at a convenient location. Call our helpline to request a meeting.

PFLAG Buffalo/Niagara
P.O. Box 617
Buffalo, New York 14207

Helpline-883-0384
info@pflagbuffalo.org
www.pflagbuffalo.org
www.facebook.com/pflag.niagara

We meet because we have learned someone very close to us is gay, lesbian, bisexual, or transgender. We try to help one another deal with this information in a positive manner. Although we do not always agree, we try to be understanding. We offer help to those who seek it, but do not force ourselves on others. We strive to maintain anonymity while sharing on a level that is comfortable for us.

BREAKING NEWS

HISTORY MADE ON JUNE 15, 2020

SUPREME COURT DECIDES EMPLOYMENT PROTECTIONS APPLY TO LGBTQ PERSONS

Please follow this link (or cut and paste) to read from Huffington Post about this momentous decision and day.

https://www.huffpost.com/entry/scotus-lgbtq-transgender-decision_n_5ebefe48c5b6299362046713

Halfway through Pride Month, this decision makes federal protections cover LGBT individuals!

A LETTER FROM PFLAG NATIONAL'S EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

June 9, 2020

Please visit pflag.org for more information or if the links do not direct you to pages.

Dear PFLAG Family:

June is usually a time to celebrate, honor, and hold up our LGBTQ+ loved ones with marches, parades, and PFLAG hugs. But this year, the idea of celebrating Pride feels impossible.

What feels right is to go back to Pride's beginnings, which were centered in a battle for recognition of basic human dignity, equality, and justice.

Led by pioneers like Marsha P. Johnson, a Black transgender woman; Sylvia Rivera, a Latinx gay liberation and transgender rights activist and sex worker; and Miss Major, a transgender elder and activist, LGBTQ+ activists rose up against injustice, brutality, disparate treatment, and violence at the hands of law enforcement.

And in 1972, Jeanne Manford, a mother and ally, joined in, raised her voice, and lent her privilege to the fight.

PFLAG's history is deeply connected to Pride's history--and that history is embedded in allyship.

The murders of George Floyd, Tony McDade, McKinsley LaKeith Lincoln, Ahmaud Arbery, Breonna Taylor, and more than a dozen LGBTQ+ people of color this year, are emblematic of the brutal truths of violence, systemic and social racism, and white supremacy to which Black people have been subjected--and have been all too aware of--for hundreds of years, and to which many white people are just starting to open their eyes.

Watching George Floyd's Homegoing today reminds me, too, that even the best-intentioned people--including me--have much to learn.

On top of this, the COVID-19 pandemic--which has claimed hundreds of thousands of lives--has disproportionately affected communities of color in deaths, unemployment, poverty, food scarcity, housing insecurity, education disruption, reduced access to healthcare, and increased acts of violence and racism.

I know many of you feel powerless to change what is currently happening in this country. It's understandable.

But it's not acceptable. We must continue to draw on our strong history of allyship and invest deeply in this fight for justice. As PFLAGers, we must be part of the catalyst and mechanism to produce systematic changes to institutionalized racism in all forms.

[PFLAG National has signed onto a letter of unity](#), committing us to embracing anti-racism work and ending white supremacy.

I signed us on to this letter because I knew that for PFLAG, this would not be performative activism: PFLAG National has, in fact, been in a years-long transformative process on these issues, including diversifying our staff and board, and investing and spending more money with African-American and minority-owned businesses and institutions; **[I invite you to learn more about our work here.](#)**

PFLAG National will continue this intentional work. As PFLAG members and supporters, we know you will, too.

It is not uncommon for me to hear from parents and families in Black, Indigenous, and People of Color (BIPOC) communities that they live in fear for their kids more because of the color of their skin than because of their sexual orientation or gender identity and expression.

If we aren't doing the work to support all families in the face of these fears--their worst fears--then we aren't doing our job as PFLAG.

It is imperative that PFLAGers take meaningful action in support of racial justice, and against systemic racism, white supremacy, and police brutality.

Let's center the needs and voices of BIPOC communities in this work; anti-racist work is pro-LGBTQ+ work. As an organization that has been disproportionately underpopulated by BIPOC families, let's start as allies, grow into partners, and build community.

And to our BIPOC loved ones in our PFLAG family: We love you, we hear you, we want to CONTINUE hearing from you, and we will continue doing the critical work of checking our implicit biases, examining our internal structures and operations, and centering anti-racism work as part of our mission to become not just an inclusive organization, but one where all families belong.

PFLAGers, whether your work is done in the streets, in the digital space, in your home, or a combination of all of these, the work must be done.

Let us hear from you. We want to know what you are doing--as individuals, chapter members, and chapter leaders--to take action in the face of these many fights and challenges.

Shortly, a survey will go out to chapter leaders; this will be a tool for you to be heard, to share the work that you're doing, and to answer vital questions to help us continue this work. These issues have been centuries in the making, and they will not be resolved overnight.

But, as members of an organization born out of pain and love, we are well positioned to rise to meet this moment and become the allies our history demands of us.

Yours in PFLAG Pride and power,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Brian". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large, stylized initial "B" and a trailing flourish.

Brian K. Bond, Executive Director
PFLAG National

THREE SCHOLARS/ SUPPORTERS ARE SELECTED FOR \$500.00 AWARDS

We are proud to announce that PFLAG Buffalo/Niagara has awarded scholarships to three very deserving high school seniors. Each scholarship is worth \$500.00.

The Marvin J. Henchbarger Scholarship winner graduated from Williamsville East High School and will be attending Michigan State University.

The Mary J. Hewitt Scholarship winner attended Cheektowaga Central High School, and is on her way to SUNY Buffalo to pursue a degree in nursing.

This year, with funding from The Buffalo Bears, we were able to award a third scholarship. The winner of this award attended Byron-Bergen High School and will be attending SUNY Fredonia for political science and education.

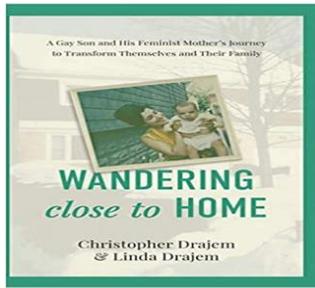
All recipients demonstrated a commitment to LGBTQ advocacy in high school and plan to continue this support as they move to higher education.

BOOK CORNER



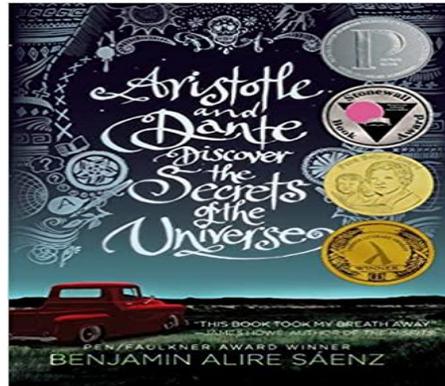
We are adding a new section to our newsletter. Each month we will feature LGBTQ+ themed books that have much to offer children, youth, and/or adults. In these trying times, books may be the answer for many, and some books may have some answers! Keep in mind, libraries are open for curbside pick-up!

Set in Buffalo for much of the memoir, longtime PFLAG mom Linda Drajem, has co-written an excellent book along with her son, Christopher. You may remember from previous newsletters that Linda Drajem, was scheduled to speak at one of our meetings, but that had to be cancelled.



We hope to be able to have Linda at a Sharing Meeting in the future. If you care to read in preparation for her visit, or if you simply want an exceptional read about a mother and son discussing their journey and self-discoveries, we highly recommend *Wandering Close to Home*, available locally or online.

Our next selection is a young adult novel, entitled *Dante and Aristotle Discover Secrets of the Universe* by Benjamin Alire Saenz and comes highly recommended by our board's Lisbeth Ball.



Amazon's description:

This Printz Honor Book is a "tender, honest exploration of identity" (*Publishers Weekly*) that distills lyrical truths about family and friendship.

Aristotle is an angry teen with a brother in prison. Dante is a know-it-all who has an unusual way of looking at the world. When the two meet at the swimming pool, they seem to have nothing in common. But as the loners start spending time together, they discover that they share a special friendship—the kind that changes lives and lasts a lifetime. And it is through this friendship that Ari and Dante will learn the most important truths about themselves and the kind of people they want to be.

Please grab a book, an e-book to do self-care while managing this challenging time.

To keep current in between newsletters, visit these PFLAG online locations.

VISIT PFLAG NATIONAL'S WEBPAGE www.pflag.org

VISIT OUR WEBPAGE www.pflagbuffalo.org

VISIT OUR FACEBOOK PAGE <https://www.facebook.com/pflag.niagara>

PFLAG Buffalo/Niagara Board of Directors

Officers

Julie Christiano, President Lisbeth Ball, Secretary David Barrett,
Treasurer

Directors

Sharon Barrett and Kathy Klopp