

EMBRACING WELLNESS AT EVERY AGE



Healthy Aging

Welcome to the 3rd Quarter 2024 edition of the Open Door Health Center of Illinois Newsletter! This quarter, we're embracing wellness at every age with a focus on Healthy Aging. At Open Door, we believe everyone deserves to age gracefully and healthily, with access to comprehensive, patient-centered care.

In this edition, you'll find essential health tips for seniors, important information of preventative care and screenings, and ways to promote an active and healthy lifestyle. We'll also delve into the unique challenges and care strategies for older adults living with HIV, ensuring that everyone can age with dignity and support. Plus, we'll provide valuable resources for caregivers, who play a crucial role in the well-being of our senior community.

For over 45 years, Open Door has been a beacon of health and wellness in the Fox Valley region and beyond. We're committed to serving the LGBTQIA+ community

and reducing healthcare disparities. Our goal is to open doors to quality, culturally competent healthcare, and improving the overall health of our community.

Join us as we embrace wellness at every age, making sure our golden years are filled with vitality, joy, and well-being. Together, we can open new doors to wellness and enrich the lives of our seniors.

Thank you for being part of the Open Door family.



Upcoming Events

AIDS Walk & Run
September 28th from 9 AM - 12 PM
Soldier Field
1410 Special Olympics Drive, Chicago, IL 60605

2024 Chocolate Drop Drag Benefit Brunch
November 17th from 11 AM - 1:30 PM
The Highland Loft Event Venue
168 E Highland Ave, Elgin IL

CAB and Staff Picnic
Saturday, Aug 17th, 12:00-4:00 PM
Fabyan Japanese Garden, 1925 S. Batavia Ave/Route 31 Geneva, IL

For the events in bold, registration is required. To register, [please click HERE](#).

From the Executive Director

Greetings everyone.

Happy post Pride. It's hard to believe that June is over. The teams of Open Door were highly visible in the following locations: West to DeKalb, East to Streamwood, and South to Aurora.

There are so many shout outs to give that I don't know quite where to begin. I am truly thankful and proud of our Outreach Department and our volunteers. We endured the rain at and in the Elgin Pride Parade and welcomed the warmth of the Aurora Pride Parade. I had the pleasure of being at both parades. It was great to see familiar faces and long-term supporters of Open Door. We had a chance to work with the Aurora LGBTQ+ Commission at their events at the Paramount Theater in Aurora. A shout out to Lauren, Denika, and Karina for helping "woman" Open Door's table. It is great to see people stop by our table and spin the wheel for a prize, and then enjoy a movie for a dollar. It was great to catch up with Sally, Shannon, and Melody. Please check out the pictures of our "Status and Heels" event. We partnered with Casa Michoacan.

Speaking of partnerships....Marcos, Michelle, and Luis offered three different Walgreens for people to get tested for HIV and other Sexually Transmitted Infections on June 27th as part of Open Door's recognition of National HIV Testing Day. Thank you, Walgreens, for your commitment to community partnership. While these many activities occurred out in the community, we were still at our center location in Elgin, offering



*Perry Maier
Executive Director*

free testing. Many people walked through our Open Door that day.

The theme of this newsletter is Healthy Aging. One of the wonderful things of being with an organization for a long period of time is being able to age gracefully together. At least a couple times a week I bump into patients and/or clients that I met in 2002 or 2003. It is great to catch up with them and to hear their stories of life and living. I often laugh when people say, "I thought you were gone, and I look up and here you are." My response? "Yes, I may have left for a couple years, but the love for Open Door remained constant and that is why I get to hang out with a bunch of great people." (I apologize as I went off topic for a minute.)

Please check out the five tips for

healthy aging. All of these are doable. I challenge you to get moving and be active. Talk to people and live a little-- whether it be in person or through social media. (By the way, a fantastic opportunity to connect is our annual Picnic on August 17th, hosted by the Client Advisory Board.) See your medical provider to ensure you're getting age-appropriate care. Get your screenings done. If you have any questions about your health, reach out to one of our providers.

I think I've taken enough of your reading time. I have to say that despite the heat, July is my favorite month of the year. It is my birthday month and I share my birthday with Sandra Bullock and Mick Jagger. How lucky for them to share my birthday with me. Speaking of my birthday, please consider donating to Open Door Health Center as a meaningful way of supporting Open Door on my day. You do this by clicking [Happy Birthday Perry.](#)

Keep checking your emails for additional information on events. Did I say I love my staff? The secret word of the day is "Chocolate Drop."

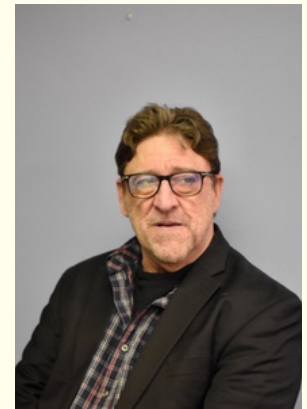
Perry Maier 

Board Talk

Louis joined Open Door's Board of Directors in November 2022, to represent the interests of the clients as the Client Advisory Board's representative on Open Door's Board of Directors. He supports Open Door because he relies on the organization for his health care, because of his commitment to persons living with HIV/AIDS, and most importantly, because he wants to help Open Door become a model of "recovery" for the non-profit community. His vision for the organization is that Open Door is thriving as a model for AIDS Service Organizations as well as for Non-Profit management.

He has dedicated his life to advocacy for disabled persons, especially those who are members of marginalized communities. Louis completed a legal internship with the Los Angeles HIV/ AIDS Legal Services Alliance, then worked as a staff attorney at Public Interest Law organizations. He did outreach on Los Angeles's Skid Row and developed Fair Housing cases for impact litigation. After moving to Woodstock in 2016, Louis volunteered with Open Door Clinic, an HIV/AIDS Service Organization, administered the McHenry County "A Way Out Program" where he enabled accessible

treatment for persons with Alcohol and Substance Use Disorder, became a member of Open Door's Client Advisory Board, and recently joined our Board of Directors. His wife Jackie Bulczak assisted him with his many LGBTQ and clients living with HIV/AIDS, until she passed in April 2022. At that time Circle of Hope's Board of Directors appointed Louis CEO and expanded the organization's mission to advocate for the rights of all disabled persons, especially those who are members of the LGBTQ community or recovering from Alcohol or Substance Use disorders. Louis currently resides in Woodstock, IL.



*Louis Rafti
Member at Large
Board of Directors*

Organization Spotlight

Did you know?

Established in 2022, The Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, and Queer Advisory Board represents the LGBTQ+ Community of



the City of Aurora, IL. Serving as an advisory board to the Aurora City Council, this board keeps the needs and issues facing the LGBTQ+ Community at the forefront and offers a perspective that is often overlooked by those in power.

Members include Frederick Yanos-Treasurer, Zachary Bishop-Chair, Pauline Spika, Kelly Waynauskas, Keri Davis, Sean Li, Ivan Quinones and Brittney Borowicz Keller.

The Aurora LGBTQ Advisory Board meets the last Thursday of every month at 6:00 p.m. The meetings take place at the Santori Library, located at 101 S. River St, Aurora, IL.

For more information on the Aurora LGBTQ+ Advisory Board, please call Aurora City Hall at 630-256-4636 or find them on Facebook- <https://www.facebook.com/COALGBTQAdvisoryBoard>

Employee Spotlight

Denika McMillen began working as a Licensed Clinical Social Work at Open Door Health Center in February, 2024. Denika offers and coordinates Behavior Health Services for our clients. She provides supportive counseling for the clients of Open Door and acknowledges that her role often changes "based upon the events of the day."



*Denika McMillen
Licensed Clinical
Social Worker*

Denika sees the best part of her job as having the ability to "be my authentic self with clients, staff, staff, and the world", and describes Open Door as feeling like "home." In describing trends related to Behavioral, Denika notes there have been more people seeking therapy to deal with multiple issues, including becoming "seasoned" (aging) and living with their health status. According to Denika, "The more we deal with our past, the more we change our future for the better."

The 3 words that best describe Denika are calm, supple and "A/great/dancer". On a personal note, Denika's hobbies include deejaying.

September is Healthy Aging Month

September is Healthy Aging Month, a perfect time to focus on improving health practices and embrace a vibrant lifestyle. As Carolyn Worthington, editor-in-chief of Healthy Aging Magazine, emphasizes, it's never too late to reinvent yourself. Whether it's pursuing a new career, sport, passion, or hobby, September provides the inspiration and practical ideas for adults aged 45 and older to enhance their physical, mental, social, and financial well-being.

With over 76 million baby boomers and 82.1 million Generation X-ers eager to stay active and vibrant, now is the time to take stock of where you've been and what you'd like to achieve. Use this month as motivation to explore new opportunities and make meaningful changes for a healthier, more fulfilling life. Remember, the only limits are the ones you set for yourself.



5 TIPS FOR HEALTHY AGING

CELEBRATE LIFE AND THE POSITIVE ASPECTS OF GROWING OLDER! TAKE CHARGE OF YOUR WELL-BEING WITH THESE TIPS:
Source: District Health Department #10. "September is Healthy Aging Month." dhd10.org

GET MOVING

Consult your doctor before starting any new exercise routine. Aim for at least 150 minutes of moderate-intensity physical activity each week. Begin with 10-15 minutes of walking, three to four days a week, and increase as you go. Make your physical activity fun and something you enjoy doing!

MAINTAIN A HEALTHY DIET

Watch portion sizes to avoid overeating, which can lead to obesity and increase the risk of diabetes and heart disease. Fill half your plate with a variety of fresh fruits and vegetables. Limit your intake of processed foods. Stay hydrated by drinking 10-16 cups of water daily, depending on gender, living environment, and activity level.

STAY SOCIAL

Try something new by attending online or socially distant in-person classes that interest you. Use technology like Zoom or Facetime to stay connected with friends and family.

BALANCE YOUR BODY AND MIND

Keep a positive attitude to maintain your mental well-being. Keep your mind active by reading or doing puzzles. Keep your body active through regular stretching and yoga.

BE PROACTIVE

Receive regular checkups, physicals, and medical tests, as many diseases can be prevented when caught early. Don't forget to schedule appointments with your dentist and optometrist. Take vitamins, supplements, and medications as prescribed by your healthcare provider.

The Aging HIV Population Is Growing

The global population of people over 50 living with HIV is growing, with UNAIDS estimating 4.2 million individuals in this age group, comprising 13% of all people living with HIV worldwide. In the US, over half of those aware of their HIV diagnosis are at least 50 years old. This shift highlights that many medical issues faced by people with HIV are increasingly related to aging rather than HIV itself.

Initially, HIV primarily affected young men in the US, but today, the epidemic

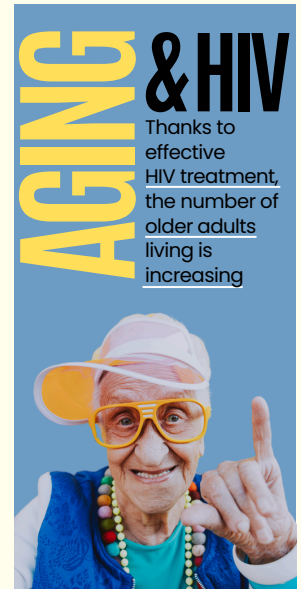
impacts both men and women of all ages, including older women. Organizations tracking health statistics often use 50 as the benchmark for "older" adults, leading to increased focus on aging with HIV.

There are two primary reasons for the growing number of older people living with HIV: advances in HIV medications that allow individuals to live longer, healthier lives, and a rising number of new HIV cases among people over 50. For more details on this trend,

refer to the fact sheet on [Older Women, Sex, and HIV](#).

Long-term survivors of HIV face unique physical and psychological challenges, while those who contracted HIV more recently often encounter similar issues to the general aging population. For insights on the experiences of long-term HIV survivors, see the fact sheet on [Long-Term Survivors of HIV](#).

Source: The Well Project. "Aging and HIV." thewellproject.org



Health Issues and Aging with HIV

People aging with HIV share many of the same health concerns as the general population aged 50 and older: multiple chronic diseases or conditions, the use of multiple medications, changes in physical and cognitive abilities, and increased vulnerability to stressors. In addition, while effective HIV treatment has decreased the likelihood of AIDS-defining illnesses among people aging with HIV, many HIV-associated non-AIDS conditions occur frequently in older persons with HIV, such as cardiovascular disease, diabetes, renal disease, and cancer. These conditions are likely related to a number of interacting factors, including chronic inflammation caused by HIV. Researchers are

working to better understand what causes chronic inflammation, even when people are being treated with ART.

HIV and its treatment can also have effects on the brain. Researchers estimate that between 25 and 50% of people with HIV have HIV-Associated Neurocognitive Disorder (HAND), a spectrum of cognitive, motor, and/or mood disorders categorized into three levels: asymptomatic, mild, and HIV-associated dementia. Researchers are studying how HIV and its treatment affect the brain, including the effects on older people living with HIV.

Source: HIV.gov. "Aging with HIV." hiv.gov

Community Resource

Resources for Caregivers

Caring for a loved one can be both rewarding and challenging. As a caregiver, it's crucial to have access to resources that can support you in providing the best care possible while also taking care of your own well-being. In Illinois, there are several organizations and services dedicated to assisting caregivers with various needs, from respite care and support groups to educational programs and financial assistance.

Illinois Caregiver Resources:

- Illinois Department on Aging: Offers programs and services to assist caregivers, including the National Family Caregiver Support Program. Visit their [website](#) for more information.

- [AgeOptions](#): Provides support for caregivers through various programs, including counseling, training, and respite care. [Learn more here.](#)
- [Alzheimer's Association Illinois Chapter](#): Provides extensive resources for caregivers of individuals with Alzheimer's and other dementias, including a 24/7 helpline, support groups, and educational materials. [Visit their site.](#)
- [Family Caregiver Alliance](#): Offers resources and advocacy for caregivers, including information on care strategies, wellness tips, and local support services. [Access their resources.](#)

- Catholic Charities of the Archdiocese of Chicago: Provides various services for caregivers, including support groups and respite care programs. [Learn more.](#)

Taking advantage of these resources can help alleviate some of the burdens of caregiving and ensure that both you and your loved one receive the support needed for a healthier, more balanced life.



FAQ Healthy Aging

QUESTION 01
What is considered healthy aging?

Healthy aging refers to the continuous process of making lifestyle improvements that keep a person physically and mentally fit, throughout life.

QUESTION 02
At what age do you start aging?

When it comes to skin, there's not much that can be done to stop the aging process completely. Signs of aging, such as wrinkles and spots result from an accumulation of defects in the cells and intracellular structures. Experts have found that skin aging typically starts around age 25.

QUESTION 03
What is the most attractive age?

A study in the United States showed that people that looked their best and were considered most attractive in their thirties.

SOURCE: NATIONAL TODAY. "HEALTHY AGING MONTH." NATIONALTODAY.COM

FAQ

Have Additional Questions?

Get In Touch!

Direct message us on Instagram
@ODHCIL

Or

Send us a text message
(331) 276-4510

PRIDE

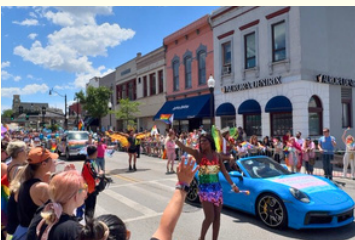
Recap for the month of June

June was an incredible month for Pride! Open Door Health Center participated in various community events, from parades to movie showings, celebrating with everyone. Although Pride Month is over, Open Door continues to celebrate and support the LGBTQIA+ community year-round. Check out some pictures from the events we attended, and we're excited for what Pride 2025 will bring!



OPEN DOOR ATTENDS THE AURORA AND ELGIN PRIDE PARADES!

2024 PRIDE EVENTS SPONSOR



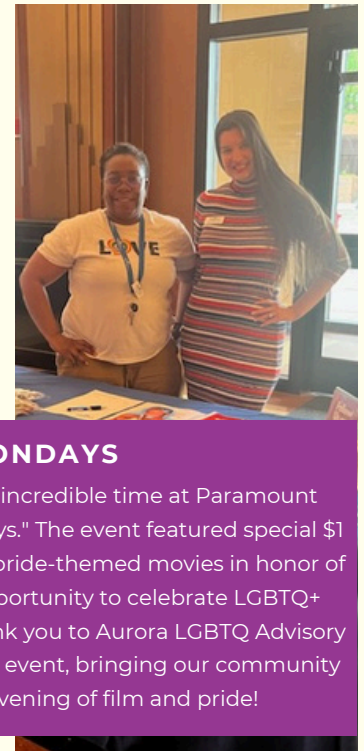
STATUS & HEELS

The Status and Heels event at Casa Michoacan in West Chicago was a huge success! Attendees enjoyed performances from two amazing entertainers, which added excitement and energy to the event. We also had a meaningful conversation about Open Door Health Center and the various services we offer. To top it off, we provided free HIV and STI testing services on-site, ensuring that everyone had access to vital health resources. It was a fantastic day of entertainment, education, and community support!



Drag Performer Pictured:
La Paca (Paco)

Drag Performer Pictured:
Marisol Trevino



MOVIE MONDAYS

Open Door Health Center had an incredible time at Paramount Theatre in Aurora for "Movie Mondays." The event featured special \$1 showings of "Rent" and "Luca," two pride-themed movies in honor of Pride Month. It was a fantastic opportunity to celebrate LGBTQ+ representation in cinema. A big thank you to Aurora LGBTQ Advisory Board for organizing this wonderful event, bringing our community together for a memorable evening of film and pride!

2024 AIDS RUN/WALK Chicago!

Open Door Health Center is excited to participate once again in the annual AIDS Run and Walk Chicago! Join Team Open Door and make a difference by volunteering, donating, or running/walking with us at Soldier Field on September 28th, 2024.

This year, our goal is to raise \$5,000, which will directly support Open Door's mission and programs. Your contribution helps us provide vital healthcare services to our community.

To Get Involved:

- Donate: Support our cause by donating [here](#).
- Run/Walk: Register for the event [here](#). Click on 'join a team' and select "Open Door" before choosing your 5K or 10K run/walk options.
- Volunteer: Sign up to volunteer at our table [here](#).

Event Details:

- When: September 28th, 2024
- Where: Soldier Field; 1410 Special Olympics Drive, Chicago, IL 60605

Why: By participating, you support the AIDS Foundation of Chicago (AFC)'s mission to end new cases of HIV by 2030. AFC has been a steadfast supporter of Open Door's mission, and a portion of all donations raised by our team will be reinvested into our programs.

Thank you for your continued support and generosity! Together, we can make a difference in our community and beyond.



2024 Participants

HOMAGE TO ALL THINGS CHOCOLATE (SWEETENED UP WITH SOME DRAG)

Remember the pre-CoVid days when we'd all get together at various galas and events? In our case, our gala was the famous (or rather infamous) All Things Chocolate Gala that featured fine dining, fine friends, fine art and refined silent and live auctions and raffle.

Well, we're not quite ready to bring back this fine full scale event...yet. Open Door Health Center of Illinois is pleased to announce our homage to ATC... "2024 Chocolate Drop Drag Benefit Brunch" featuring the Amazing Moana Lotte, the original Ms. Rainbow, as our mistress of ceremony and hostess.

Date: Sunday 11/17/2024
 Time: 11:00 AM-1:30 PM
 Location: The Loft on Highland (2nd Floor)
 166 Highland Avenue
 Elgin, IL 60120

We're planning now and your support is needed and welcome. We're looking for folks who like to put on a show, donors and event sponsors and volunteers for the day of the event.

For more information, please contact Danise Habun @ 847-754-8064 or dhabun@msn.com.

Save the date to savor some fine chocolate and drag.

(Additional details will be forthcoming) This is a once in a lifetime experience.



Pictured is Moana Lotte

CLIENT ADVISORY BOARD

The Client Advisory Board cordially invites clients & staff, friends & family to:

Social Events:

CAB and Staff Picnic
Saturday, Aug 17th, 12:00-4:00 PM
Fabyan Japanese Garden, 1925 S. Batavia Ave/Route 31 Geneva, IL

[Click here to register](#)

Need groceries? The Rx Mobile distribution can help. Food is free to all neighbors; no ID, proof of address or income is required. Food is distributed on a first come, first served basis, while supplies last.

Where:
Community Health Partnership
157 S. Lincoln Ave
Aurora, IL 60505
4:30 pm- 6:00 pm



CHP
Community Health Partnership of Illinois
HEALTH CENTERS

WWW.CHPOFIL.ORG

When:
Monday, August 5
Monday, September 9
Monday, October 7
Monday, November 4
Monday, December 2

Summertime with the Client Advisory Board (CAB)

by Louis Hobson
President - Client Advisory Board
Open Door Health Center of IL

Hello Everyone ! I hope that you are enjoying your summer. Open Door's CAB has been busy at work ! We are getting things ready for our Annual Picnic !

We are holding our Picnic August 17th at Fabian Japanese Garden at 1925 Batavia Ave, Route 25 Geneva, IL 60134. The Picnic will last from Noon until Four pm. We will be featuring food, games, prizes, and plenty of family fun !

Our Client Advisory Board is looking for new members. We are looking for people who are dedicated, have a willingness to work as a team, and enjoy working with people. We will have applications at the picnic !

**YOU ARE INVITED TO
OPEN DOOR'S
ANNUAL PICNIC**

**RELAX AND ENJOY
THE OUTDOORS!**

17th August | **12 - 4 p.m.**
Fabyan Japanese Garden
1925 S. BATAVIA AVE. / ROUTE 31
GENEVA, IL 60134

- Food & Drinks • Games and Activities
- Special Prizes

There is no fee for this event. However, registration is recommended. To register, please scan the QR Code

For more information please contact our Clinical Support Worker, Carmen Earsery, at 331-222-6062 or Carmen@opendoorclinic.org.

CLIENTS!

WE NEED YOUR

PARTICIPATION



Please complete a Client Participation Form after receiving service. Forms may be obtained at the front desk or through your Case Manager. Completed forms are placed in a monthly lottery. Winners will receive a \$25 gift card. Thank you!