

TO BE perfectly **QUEER**

NEWS OF THE LGBT CENTER OF SE WISCONSIN

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Make A Donation

A MESSAGE FROM OUR EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR Get your outfit ready!



Pride month is right around the corner, so clear your calendar and get ready to be outside and celebrate with friends – new and old! The Pride Prom, on June 11th, 2022 will be one of our best events ever, so get your tickets now. What makes this event so exciting is the blending of two different events – a youth prom and an adult prom with a drag show and DJ in between! Most LGBTQ+ people haven't experienced a Pride Prom like this before...where they can be themselves, bring whomever they want, and feel like they truly belong. Yes, supportive allies are always welcome at our events.

The Pride Prom will also be our largest fundraiser of the year which will support all of the programs we host like Support groups, Safe Zone Training, Advocacy, Youth Programming, and Community Building Activities. We are actively seeking people and businesses that would like to sponsor our event.

To learn more about Pride Prom and **how to be a sponsor go [here](#)**.

Help us continue to be a resource for youth and their families, fight for legislation that protects us, and to educate our community so they can see the beauty in being LGBTQIA+.

Peace,
Barb

ADVOCACY

Join RAISE

In our last newsletter, we said we'd give more information on how to join the new advocacy committee RAISE!

RAISE is a project that is growing from the ground up. We want to identify people in the community that are ready to help advocate for our rights whether that is publicly or privately. RAISE will be a group of people who have the inside knowledge of what is happening in the LGBTQ+ community and are ready to take action when needed.



If you are interested in any type of LGBTQ+ advocacy work, whether short-term, ongoing, or just for one or two events. Go [here](#) to signup.

We are excited to take this next step with you! If you have any questions, please feel free to contact us at advocacy@lgbtsewi.org.

Sincerely,

Esther Roberts
Board Member
LGBT Center of SE Wisconsin

QUEER BOOK CLUB

May's Read: *The Vanishing Half* by Brit Bennett

The Vignes twin sisters will always be identical. But after growing up together in a small, southern black community and running away at age sixteen, it's not just the shape of their daily lives that is different as adults, it's everything: their families, their communities, their racial identities. Many years later, one sister lives with her black daughter in the same southern town she once tried to escape. The other secretly passes for white, and her white husband knows nothing of her past. Still, even separated by so many miles and just as many lies, the fates of the twins remain intertwined. What will happen to the next generation, when their own daughters' storylines intersect?

To read more about the [Vanishing Half](#).

The Queer Book Club will select a new book monthly and meet virtually the last Tuesday of every month from 6:00 to 7:30 p.m. for a facilitated discussion. Email queerbookclubwi@gmail.com to join!



There is no meeting in April, but join us on May 31st.

ADVOCACY

Safe Zone Training

After two Wisconsin National Guard members attended a free Safe Zone training this fall, we were invited to train the top generals at their Madison headquarters in December. That led to an invitation to give a keynote at a regional conference for the National Guard, where we advised 40 leaders from 10 states on the rollout of Biden's policy for transgender service members.



Now we're getting invitations for more training and it's all because of a free Safe Zone we offered on Zoom.



Olympia Brown Unitarian Universalist Transgender Day of Visibility

Olympia Brown Unitarian Universalist Church recently performed a service for the Transgender Day of Visibility. Members of the church, Alex Reilly and Stephan Hawk made the service possible alongside Reverend Danielle Lindstrom.

We came together to lift up trans voices as well as discuss the difficult topics that keep transgender and other communities from being visible. It was our hope that this service called attention to discriminatory legislation moving through Wisconsin and across the nation. From the service "This is about liberation. This is about none are free until all are free. This is about dismantling oppression in all its forms, all the isms that divide us. If this feels daunting, if this feels impossible, please remember that the system of oppression is designed and invested in you seeing it that way. If you look around and feel overwhelmed into complacency then the system is working as intended, if you look around and see that you are being erased, the system is working exactly as intended. If there can be a successful mobilization based on fear, and division, and power, then I have to believe that we can mobilize based on beloved community, deep care, equality, and unrelenting love."

We have a lot of work to do, and it is going to take all of us to make it. By listening to stories that are different from our own, we can lower the boundaries that separate us from creating a beloved community.

You can watch the service in its entirety [here](#).

LOOKING AHEAD

Community Safe Zone Training

MONDAY, April 11th, 5:30 – 7:00 PM CST



Community Safe Zone Trainings are public events that help educate you on the LGBTQ+ community, the issues we face, and the resources available near you. These events are held over Zoom on the second Monday of every month. They are FREE to attend! Click [here](#) to register.

For customized training for your workplace or organization send inquiries to [David Ulrich](#).

Save the Date - PRIDE PROM

SATURDAY, June 11th, 2022

A Night For the Stars!

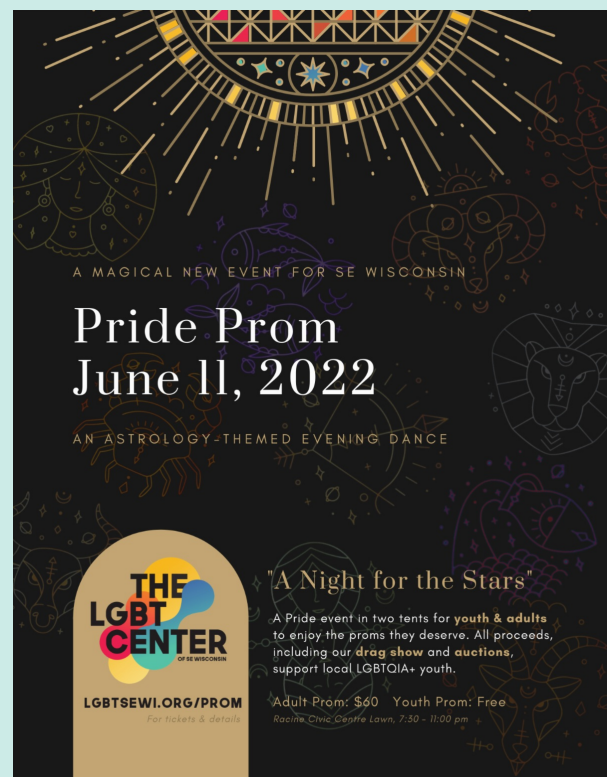
An astrology-themed prom in support of LGBTQIA+ youth. Bring the date you want, wear the clothes you want. Featuring a drag show to crown our Prom Queen. Held on the lakefront in two Covid-safer tents, one for adults and one for grades 7-12.

For Youth

Sip mocktails while you dance with other queer youth. Enter raffles to win binders, makeup, queer books, and more. Receive guidance from a tarot reader. Take pictures with your prom date.

Adult Prom

Enjoy cocktails, small plates, and a dance floor. Give back to our community through auctions and drag tips. Consult the cards with a professional tarot reading. Take cheesy pictures with your prom date. It's the Prom you never had...



Pride Prom Volunteers Needed

Thursday, April 21st, 5:00 – 7:00 PM CST Youth

Thursday, April 28th, 5:00 – 7:00 PM CST Adults



It takes a village to put on Pride Prom and we are looking for volunteers of all stripes.

For the next 2 Thursdays, we need help making origami stars for Pride Prom decorations. We love "craft volunteering." Youth are invited to the Center this week and adults next week.

If you would like to get more information about making origami

or volunteering for the Pride Prom event, contact [David Ulrich](#). There are lots of ways for you to participate.

Virtual Support Groups

<p>m</p> <p>Spirituality Group 7 to 8 p.m.</p>	<p>t</p> <p>Parenting with Pride 5 to 6 p.m.</p>	<p>w</p> <p>Queer Social Group 10 to 11 a.m.</p> <p>Trans & Enby Support 5 to 6 p.m.</p>
<p><i>support at your fingertips.</i></p>		
<p>t</p> <p>Youth Group 4:30 to 5:30 p.m.</p>	<p>f</p>	<p>sat</p> <p>Seniors Group 2 to 3 p.m.</p> 

our (virtual) group calendar

Are you okay? Do you need anything? We're here to support you if you do—like through the support of our virtual groups. Sign up for groups [here](#)

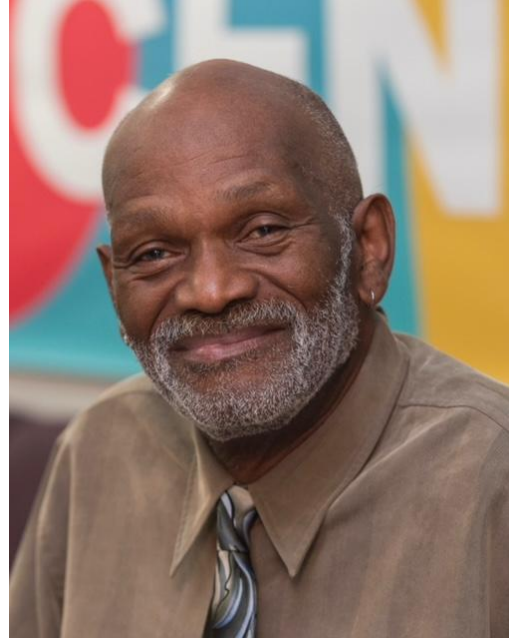


Dale Estes

Dale spent many years fighting for the rights of youth in the criminal justice system in Chicago. He was also an employee of the Center for over 4 years and is currently an active volunteer who co-facilitates our 50+ group. That group meets the 1st and 3rd Saturdays from 1:00 - 2:30 PM. He touches the heart of everyone he meets.

What does the LGBTQ community mean to me?

The LGBTQ community, for me, is a place where where I can be truly who I am. Where I am free to be who I am... after many years of being in the closet. I felt a sense of acceptance and I eventually felt that I didn't need to fear judgement or shame because I am a gay man.



Community means a safe harbor where I do not have to fit in. Community means I can choose who my family is, when often we are rejected by the family we are born into. I must acknowledge though, not all of us are rejected by the family, whom we are born into. Community is a place where I don't have to hide. I don't have to play a role in order to feel comfortable. Some of us have denied who we are in an effort to not make waves. As one gets older and more comfortable with oneself, that has become less important.

Community is a place of safety for me, where I don't need to put on airs. I am free to love who I love without fear of rejection. I have developed a sense of family in my community that has sustained me through the years. During some good and bad times, and this continues since I came out of the closet some 40 years ago.

Community provides a space where one can feel empowered, after they have come to terms with who they are, and see others at peace with themselves. It can be a place of hope where there once was none. This is my experience.

What is the one thing we can do that will have a positive impact on our community?

I am sad to say, but I don't think there is just one positive thing we can do. We need to strengthen our community through empowerment and validation. Currently, the LGBTQ community is under attack right now. There is literally a war being waged against us, to silence and minimize us, and move this country back to a time so many of us fought against. We must do our best to diligently oppose those who are attempting to suppress us. We need to become politically aware and active and stand up for our rights as human beings.

We need to empower the youth of our community, because they are the future of the LGBTQ community. They need to carry on the work that that so many of us have fought for. Help them know the history of our community and of the many others who fought before them. Help them to understand they have power to change the future. That they have power even in the face of adversity

by voting. Keep developing a stronger connection with allies who will walk and and fight and walk with them.

And stand up for the transgender community, who are literally being murdered every day for being who they are. What impacts the transgender community impacts the rest of the community too.



Olympia Brown Unitarian Universalist Church continues to be one of the Center's strongest supporters.

As a Unitarian Universalist congregation, we believe that our work as a faith is to lift up voices, support one another, listen, and act in ways that will bring about a community where all are welcome, where all have a seat at the table. If we are to do this work authentically, it means being

in relationship with our community and doing the work needed to understand that welcome.

In the 1990s, the Unitarian Universalist Association created the Welcoming Congregation program, where all of our churches were invited into intentional programming for the LGB community. Olympia Brown Unitarian Universalist Church went through that program early on and understands that becoming a welcoming congregation is not a once and done thing. We are now doing the work to reflect the evolving state of the art, or knowledge surrounding LGBTQIA+ issues, including a focus on TQIA+ identities. This includes worship services, trainings, and more on what it means to continue to be, and to be even more, inclusive.



The LGBT Center of SE Wisconsin

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