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FROM THE PUBLISHER'S DESK

April Showers...



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"April Showers, Bring May Flowers," that's how the old saying goes. April is a time of transition and renewal. The start of something new, a time for blossoming. However, it seems for our queer youth they are struggling rather than thriving. In this month's **Pride Life Feature** (page 7-10) we look at a new study that show our LGBTQ+ youth is struggle with their mental health. The reason, the more than 400 anti-LGBTQ+ laws currently proposed all across the country. It is a deluge of hate that is causing our queer and transgender youth to drown.

In our **In The News** section we look at two local stories one on the recent theft of property at Courage MKE's apartment complex that is still in development, in *Courage MKE LGBTQ+ youth housing break-in, \$100K in damage* (page 3). Our other local feature looks at the Kathy Flores a tireless LGBTQ+ ad-

vocate who is stepping-down from her role as anti-violence program director for Diverse & Resilient in Appleton, in *Fearless' LGBTQ advocate, social justice activist stepping down from Diverse & Resilient* (pages 4-6).

In April International Asexuality Day is recognized and in our Spotlight On section we look at the struggle asexual men face in fitting in, *Being asexual can mean feeling like an outsider – even in the LGBTQ+ community* (page 11).

And when it rains it pours, and there is a down pour of events happening for arts and entertainment in Milwaukee. As always it leaves our own Micheal Johnston soaking wet in his monthly Cordially Yours, Again column.

Until next month, stay dry Milwaukee!
 - William S. Gooden,
 Publisher

THE OPINION EDITORIAL

I'm Exhausted, Aren't You?



By William S. Gooden, Publisher

Before I start writing this, I want to apologize before hand. For I want to keep this as concise as possible, but I fear this may just turn into a rant. If it does I am sorry.

As of late I find myself completely and utterly exhausted. Not just from day to day stuff like work, home, and social obligations. But just from the sheer amount of attack the LGBTQ+ community seems to be under as of late. Not that the hate from conservatives is anything new but the thrivent zeal that leaves small beads of foam in the corner of their mouths, is defiantly a new twist. Their extremeness has lead them to pass cruel laws attacking queer and transgender peoples, that are hopelessly vague, and will most likely lead to legal chaos. As of May 2, more than 540 anti-LGBTQ bills have been introduced in statehouses across the country, according to the Human Rights Campaign. Over 220 of those specifically restrict the rights of transgender and nonbinary people. While I know most of these laws are in southern states where anti-gay and anti-transgender rhetoric are the most common. But lately when one group of conservative Republicans

have a victory, others in other states tend to follow suit. And since Wisconsin's state government is currently Republican controlled in the Senate and House, its only a matter of time before the state getting ideas. They have already overturned the state ban on conversion thereby and have challenged the Pride flag flying at any public building during the month of June. All this have left many in the queer community in a constant stat of fear and stress.

To quote Fannie Lou Hamer (who was a lesbian, by the way), "I'm sick and tired of being sick and tired!" Only I'm "exhausted and disgusted" of not being able to call out right hate for what it is. Not to mention the amount of social stress that this puts those in the community under is waring on our physical and mental health. In fact recent surveys like the one talked about (on page 7), have found 71 % of queer youth are in a mental health crisis due to the recent anti-queer and transgender backlash.

For those living in those states please do your best to stay safe, and for those near and far we need to work together, now more than ever, and fight back.



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In The News

LOCAL & NATIONAL LGBTQ+ NEWS



Courage MKE LGBTQ+ Youth Housing Break-In, \$100k In Damage

By Ashley Sears

Courage MKE, a nonprofit that helps house LGBTQ+ youth suffered a major blow after someone broke into one of its facilities on Wednesday, April 12, 2023. The thieves got away with everything from small appliances to copper piping.

The organization said they caused close to \$100,000 in damage. One small business is stepping up to help.

Courage MKE has been working to renovate apartments at the C2 building near 21st and National on the south side. They said this is just a setback, and the community is wrapping its arms around them.

"I knew something was wrong," said Brad Schlaikowski. "I didn't know the extent of it until the police officers walked through."

Someone broke in and tore apart the building.

"You can see the cutting starts here," said Schlaikowski.

They stole everything from the copper piping to small appliances, ransacking the place and leaving behind a mess. Courage MKE had been renovating the building to help house displaced LGBTQ+ youth.

"This building is supposed to be a beacon of hope for some of these people in this community, and we're committed to making that happen still," said Schlaikowski.

As soon as word was posted on Courage MKE's Facebook page, community members took action to help.

"Hearing the news was like, really heartbreaking," said Gloria Ramirez, Artery Ink.



Gloria Ramirez and her wife, Mara Natkin, knew they wanted to help, immediately starting a fundraiser through their business Artery Ink.

"This is a design we've had before, and we thought it was perfect for this occasion," said Natkin.

They are selling their "Love is Love" Pride T-shirts, with \$10 from each sale going to Courage MKE.

"We think action is required to build community, so when these things happen, you have to act," said Ramirez.

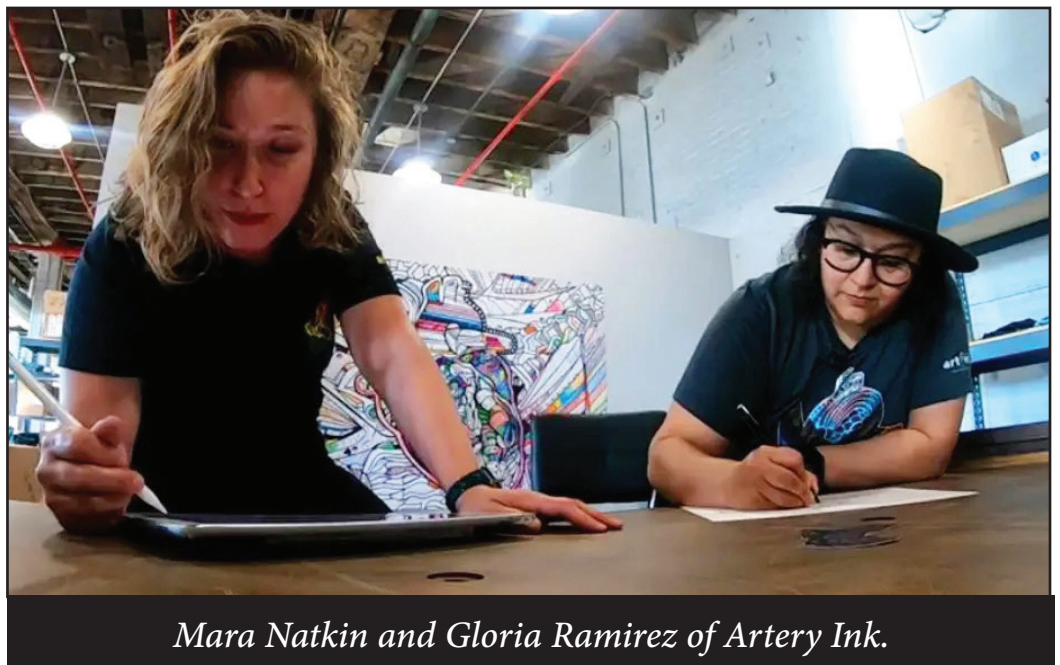
They are using art to help rebuild so that the mission here continues.

Courage MKE LGBTQ+ youth housing break-in, Amped karaoke fundraiser

A karaoke fundraiser was held Tuesday, April 18, 2023, to support Courage MKE after LGBTQ+ housing the nonprofit is renovating was broken into.

"The building is standing," said Schlaikowski. "Nobody is injured, and the only thing that's gone is stuff. That can be replaced."

Source: <https://www.fox6now.com/news/courage-mke-lgbtq-youth-housing-break-in-100k-in-damage>



Mara Natkin and Gloria Ramirez of Artery Ink.

Fearless' LGBTQ advocate, social justice activist stepping down from Diverse & Resilient

By: Natalie Eilbert

A year ahead of same-sex marriage becoming legal in the United States, Kathy Flores stood with a local reverend in the Outagamie County Clerk's office in "full protest mode."

A federal judge on June 6, 2014, briefly struck down the state's ban on same-sex marriage, which sent many gay couples in Wisconsin to their clerks' offices, marriage applications in hand.

Clerks in Madison and Milwaukee, along with clerks in Winnebago and Brown counties, kept their doors open late into Friday night to issue marriage licenses, waiving five-day waiting periods to expedite the process.

The Outagamie County Clerk refused to change her process.

"At the time, I organized conversations with the county executive, conversations with the county clerk. And they didn't go anywhere," said Flores, Appleton's diversity coordinator at the time.

Flores also wanted to get married to her partner, but in that chaotic week, she didn't have time to focus on her relationship. Instead, she and Rev. Roger Bertschausen, the then-senior pastor at Fox Valley Unitarian Universalist Fellowship, "helped a ton of people get married in the surrounding counties," Flores said.

As a social justice activist, opposition is nothing new for Flores, the anti-violence program director for Diverse & Resilient in Appleton, a Wisconsin-based LGBTQ organization devoted



to justice, health and safe community building.

As with many marginalized groups, opposition often comes with a long fight for change and, at 56, Flores is exhausted. On Feb. 24, Flores announced that she would be stepping back from her role with the organization to focus on rest and healing. Her last day will be April 28, 2023.

Flores has been many things: a teenage mother (and, by 21, a mother of three), a staunch diversity, equity and inclusion advocate, a sexual assault survivor, an intimate partner violence survivor, a social justice activist, a nonprofit founder and director, a grandmother, and a survivor of many medical crises, including cancer and an aneurysm. She also lives with the daily impacts of multiple sclerosis and Sjögrens syndrome, autoimmune diseases that each cause the immune system to mistakenly attack its

own cells and tissues.

A brush with influenza B in the early years of COVID-19 knocked Flores down with such force that she wondered if she could spring back from it. She did, but the severity of illness made her question the breadth of her stamina.

"It was almost a spiritual lesson to me of, 'Oh, I can't keep fighting,'" Flores said. "I have to put the sword down and figure out how to heal. That doesn't mean you can't heal with the sword in hand, though."

'She's fearless': Flores' impact across Wisconsin

Like many 17-year-olds, Flores didn't know what to do with her life. But intensifying this uncertainty was the fact that she also had recently given birth to her first child. After her divorce at 21, and three children later, she enrolled at Fox Valley Technical College to train as

an administrative assistant. By 25, her professional career started at Kimberly-Clark.

An opportunity at Kimberly-Clark would end up fundamentally changing her.

In 1993, she volunteered to take part in Kimberly-Clark's African American Employee Network as its secretary. At her first meeting, she realized right away that every participant besides her was Black. Then, she understood: trust in marginalized spaces is a precious commodity.

"I have walked into a space where, while I know what my intentions are, they don't know me. And they don't trust me," Flores said. "I had just a peek of a window of what it must have been like for Black folks to walk into every single boardroom at Kimberly-Clark, every single conference room."

So began her anti-racism journey.

Flores started volunteering with African Heritage in Appleton more than 23 years ago, recalled Bola Delano-Oriaran, dean of St. Norbert College's division of social sciences. But even before those volunteering efforts, Flores was hitting the streets, protesting the racial profiling and police brutality against Black people living in northeast Wisconsin.

"She started over 28 years ago. Kathy is an activist, mobilizer, co-conspirator, advocate and citizen who is unequivocally dedicated and committed to eradicating social injustice," Delano-Oriaran said.

At each new job, Flores brought along everyone she worked with, whether people like Delano-Oriaran from African Heritage or "all the queer kids and

Black kids who felt they didn't fit in anywhere" whom she met while working at Harmony Cafe in 2000. She understood the power of intersectional care — ensuring that multiple marginalized communities are being considered in community action.

Flores, who identifies as Latinx, said that being able to "pass" as white is something she takes very seriously: She knows this gives her many privileges, among them the opportunity to advocate for equal seats at the table for queer, Black, Indigenous and other people of color in the community.

Beth Schnorr, who served as the executive director of Harbor House for 30 years before retiring, called Flores "fearless" in this way. When Flores began working with the Appleton-based domestic violence shelter in 2002, Schnorr recognized the passion and care Flores brought to the organization.

Flores got to work coordinating and developing a LGBTQ task force at Harbor House, Schnorr said, because Flores saw dangerous gaps in that world when it came to intimate partner violence.

"She realized that there were a lot of LGBT folks who really weren't being served in a way that they needed to be, and so she developed a community task force at a time when that was not talked about as much as it is now," Schnorr said. "In our community, we talk about it much more now, and that's all because of Kathy's work."

Schnorr would ultimately be the person Flores felt most comfortable coming out to after she started dating her nonbinary partner, whom she would eventually marry. Flores distinctly remembered Schnorr telling her, "Congratulations. Enjoy the journey."

"When anybody makes a deeper discovery about who they are, they become a better advocate. And, of course, Kathy became a better advocate," Schnorr said.

Schnorr has described Flores as alert, selfless and hyper-aware of her environments. There was the time Flores was driving a client from the Outagamie County Courthouse in the Harbor House van when she witnessed an argument between a couple taking place. It looked like it was about to get ugly.

Flores stopped the van, pointed to the person being yelled at and said, "Come over here." The person stepped into the van and broke down. It turned out, the person was in trouble.

"That's Kathy," Schnorr said. "She's fearless."

Building a new space for LGBTQ people in northeast Wisconsin

Kathy Flores recognizes students during the 'Breaking the Chains of Injustice' event Jan. 18, 2016, at the Lawrence University Memorial Chapel in Appleton.

Flores always toggled between activism and her various jobs over the years, but that line never felt thinner than when she worked as the city of Appleton's diversity coordinator. Too often, she would take time off to protest with her community, whether in response to same-sex marriage or the first wave of Black Lives Matter events at Lawrence University.

She would eventually understand that working for the city as a diversity coordinator didn't equate to anti-racism work.

"A lot of the work we were doing, it felt like it was to check a box and to

make white people feel good. That's not what I'm about," Flores said.

During her tenure in the role from 2009 to 2016, the city tried unsuccessfully to dissolve the position three times.

Diverse & Resilient hired Flores in 2016 as a coordinator to start a state-wide LGBTQ call center for survivors. She would travel the state, finding pockets of LGBTQ folks organizing in unexpected parts of Wisconsin, or "unicorns in the woods" as she referred to them.

At the time, Diverse & Resilient's only office was in Milwaukee. Flores saw additional need in the state, and decided to change that.

By the end of 2019, Flores was able to use grant money to open a Diverse & Resilient office in Appleton — the second one in the state — focused on anti-violence. Today, the anti-violence program budget is closer to \$700,000, and is used to serve hundreds of survivors a year.

Helen Boyd, a writer, gender studies professor and diversity worker at Lawrence University, said Diverse & Resilient's Appleton office is so "uniquely Kathy" for the ways it brings services directly to the LGBTQ community. The presence of Diverse & Resilient has helped make the general population "more aware and more sympathetic" of the needs of the LGBTQ community, Boyd said.

Kathy Flores listens during a Diverse + Resilient staff meeting June 9, 2022, in Appleton.

Three of their former students at Lawrence University have gone on to work for Diverse & Resilient, which is a powerful testament to the organization being a safe and enduring place for LGBTQ folks to thrive and grow in.



"It's very nice to have queer students who want to do nonprofit work. They have jobs because Kathy created this. That's not something I could help students get when I first got here just because it didn't exist," Boyd said.

Having faith in fiery times

Kathy Flores, from left, Nick Ross, Keira Kowal Jett and Reiko Ramos work during a Diverse + Resilient staff meeting June 9, 2022, in Appleton.

Flores is leaving at a dangerous time for LGBTQ people across the country.

Three months into 2023, 471 anti-trans bills have been introduced across 44 states, including Wisconsin. So far, 15 bills have passed; 39 have failed. In 2022, 23 states, including Wisconsin, introduced anti-LGBTQ bills, with 13 states signing bills into law. At the same time, anti-LGBTQ violence is on the rise, as are rates of suicide, depression and anxiety for LGBTQ youth.

And three Black transgender women were murdered over a recent nine-month span in Milwaukee.

Boyd said the political stage has pushed her and Flores to have interest-

ing conversations about what it means to be an elder in community activism. That could mean many things, but for Flores, it's about prioritizing her needs to rest, and pass the baton to the younger generations.

Flores doesn't think she'll ever quiet her activism, not when there are laws out there working to oppress and eradicate LGBTQ people, she said. The stakes, she knows, are high.

Still, Flores is optimistic in her community.

"I have so much more hope, because I know where I was in my 20s. The activism today blows me away, the level of awareness," Flores said. "I have a lot of faith in young, queer, trans and BIPOC folks right now. I really do."

Source: <https://www.greenbaypressgazette.com/story/news/2023/03/21/appleton-lgbtq-activist-kathy-flores-stepping-down/69949803007/?fbclid=IwAR3F34IZ00BTL8u7UF0KiPryw2XK70NC283uRQP7nmP7vzWjNUKxWw32Idk>

Pride Life Features

THE EVENTS AND PEOPLE THAT ARE SHAPING LGBTQ+ MILWAUKEE

Seventy-one Percent of LGBTQ Youth Say Their Mental Health Is Declining Due to Restrictive State Laws

By Brian Mastroianni

As of May 2, more than 540 anti-LGBTQ bills have been introduced in statehouses across the country, according to the Human Rights Campaign. Over 220 of those specifically restrict the rights of transgender and nonbinary people.

These policies themselves — and the dangerous rhetoric that surrounds them — are taking a toll on LGBTQ youth across the country.

In a recent poll, The Trevor Project sheds light on how these proposals and legislation that directly target LGBTQ youth are having a tangible effect.

Among the findings, 86% of transgender and nonbinary youth report that debates around anti-trans bills, specifically, have had negative effects on their mental health.

Due to 2022 debates that swirled around these policies, and fears over what will happen if they are enacted, 45% of transgender youth reported experiencing cyberbullying, while nearly 1 in 3 reported “not feeling safe to go to the doctor or hospital when they were sick or injured,” according to the poll.

These data are just a snapshot of the wider picture of how anti-LGBTQ legislation and rhetoric are filtering from political forums through tv and laptop



screens and directly into the day-to-day lives of queer young people in the United States.

“The bulk of these harmful bills target transgender and nonbinary youth in particular,” said Kasey Suffredini, VP of Advocacy and Government Affairs at The Trevor Project. “These youth continue to hear dangerous rhetoric that distorts who they are and puts their personal welfare up for public debate. That can have an especially damaging impact on their mental health and sense of self.”

The poll sheds light on the reality of being an LGBTQ adolescent or young adult against the backdrop of potentially damaging and discriminatory legislation, and experts say, offers a glimpse at how we can best help and support our

nation’s LGBTQ young people.

How anti-LGBTQ legislation is impacting youth

This new poll was conducted by Morning Consult between October 23 and November 2, 2022. It took a national sample of 716 LGBTQ young people who were between 13 and 24 years old. The poll also examined the emotional responses these young people had to anti-LGBTQ policies in addition to registering the modern social issues that are predominantly causing stress and anxiety among LGBTQ youth.

The poll revealed that 71% of LGBTQ youth overall reported that state laws that restrict the rights of LGBTQ young people “have negatively impacted their

mental health.”

(Continued on next page)

Zeroing in further, the number is 86% for trans and nonbinary young people.

Additionally, 75% of LGBTQ youth, which includes 82% of trans and nonbinary youth, reported that “threats of violence against LGBTQ spaces” (think Pride events, drag shows, community centers, and even hospitals and clinics) that primarily serve transgender people give them stress or anxiety.

The poll shows that 48% of these LGBTQ young people reported that this gave them stress or anxiety “very often.”

When asked how big of a challenge it is for a young person to no longer feel like their safe spaces are no longer, well, safe, Suffredini told Healthline that it can be a major challenge.

“The Trevor Project’s research has consistently shown that access to safe and affirming spaces can be life-saving for LGBTQ young people. Many of the anti-LGBTQ bills that are being considered in state legislatures right now directly aim to eliminate those spaces and supports for the young people just when they may need them most,” he said. “We urge lawmakers to support LGBTQ youth in their communities and increase access to affirming spaces, not restrict it further.”

These policies and the discussions and debates they generate have had a negative cascade in these young people’s lives.

The poll found that:

- 45% of transgender and nonbinary youth reported they experienced cyberbullying and online harassment
- 42% stopped speaking to a relative or family member



- 29% no longer felt safe going to their doctor or a hospital when they were sick or injured
- 29% reported a friend stopped speaking to them
- 24% said they experienced bullying at school
- 15% reported their school removed LGBTQ-affirming symbols like Pride flags
- 10% experienced physical assault as a result of these policies and their associated fervor

In addition to this, 1 in 3 LGBTQ youth overall said they experienced online harassment and cyberbullying, 1 in 4 said they stopped speaking to a family member or a relative, and 1 in 5 reported bullying overall.

When asked how simply seeing information about these anti-LGBTQ bills can have on a queer person, Heather Zayde, LCSW, a Brooklyn-based clinical social worker and psychotherapist, told Healthline that this isn’t unique to teens and young adults.

It can have “a detrimental effect on people of all ages,” she said.

“When there is an attempt to criminalize such integral and basic needs like using the bathroom, having romantic relationships, or getting appropriate identification documents it sends the message that LGBTQ people are wrong for simply existing,” said Zayde, who is unaffiliated with the new poll.

“The impact on health and well-being can be staggering. People can develop symptoms of anxiety and depression or have issues with eating and sleeping because of the fear that comes with not knowing if one’s rights will be taken away,” Zayde added.

An analysis of the policies themselves is troubling. The Trevor Project reported that a record of over 220 anti-LGBTQ bills were introduced last year. Most of them targeted transgender people.

They found that proposals that would ban doctors from providing gender-affirming medical care to trans and non-

binary youth made 74% of transgender and nonbinary youth feel angry.

The poll also showed that these policies made 59% feel stressed, 56% feel sad, 48% feel hopeless, 47% feel scared, 46% feel hopeless, and 45% feel nervous.

For one specific example, the poll showed that policies that would ban transgender girls from playing on girls' sports teams and trans boys from playing on boys' sports teams made 64% of transgender and nonbinary young people feel angry, 44% feel sad, 39% feel stressed, and 30% feel hopeless.

Challenges facing LGBTQ kids in schools

The Trevor Project specifically highlighted how American schools have become a particular landmine for LGBTQ young people right now, with many of the proposals and legislation filtering directly into the classroom and schoolyards.

The poll shows that policies that would require schools to tell a student's guardian or parent "if they request to use a different name/pronoun, or if they identify as LGBTQ" while at school made 67% of trans and nonbinary young people feel angry.

Additionally, 54% reported feeling stressed, 51% felt scared, 46% felt nervous, and 43% felt sad.

Among the respondents, 58% of these young people (including 71% of trans and nonbinary youth) reported feeling angry about new policies that ban teachers from discussing LGBTQ topics in their classrooms. Within the cohort of trans respondents, 59% said they feel sad, while 41% said they feel stressed.

When it comes to policies and proposals aimed at banning books in school libraries that discuss LGBTQ topics, 66% (which includes 80% of trans and nonbinary youth) reported feeling angry.

The poll also shows that almost half of all LGBTQ young people overall, and 54% of trans youth specifically, felt sad about bans on these books.

"Unfortunately, instead of being places for learning and exploration, schools have increasingly become places of censorship and exclusion. This poll found that policies around topics such as respecting students' identities, LGBTQ inclusive curriculums, and book banning make many LGBTQ youth – and trans and nonbinary youth in particular – feel angry, stressed, scared, and sad," Suffredini explained. "All young people deserve to feel safe, accepted, and able to thrive at school."

He added that educators and school officials should ensure their LGBTQ students are supported and that they

"remain in their corner no matter what rhetoric their state lawmakers may espouse."

"Young people need this support now as much as ever," Suffredini said.

What issues are on the minds of America's LGBTQ youth?

When conducting the poll, Morning Consult asked participants an open-ended question — "What social issue impacting our country/world is the most important to you?"

The results?

They found 23% cited LGBTQ rights, 17% said abortion, 15% said racism, and 11% pointed to climate change.

The respondents were also given a list of issues in order to measure their sources of stress and anxiety. Out of the total respondents, 60% cited mental health, 57% said "not having enough money," 52% said "efforts to restrict access to abortion," as issues that gave them stress and anxiety "very often."

Underneath these concerns, 48% named threats of violence against LGBTQ spaces, 47% cited anti-LGBTQ hate crimes, 46% cited homophobia, 44% pointed to gun violence, and 42% cited racism.

More than 65% of all LGBTQ youth surveyed said that "both climate change



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and police brutality often give them stress and anxiety,” according to the poll.

When looking deeper at the participants surveyed, Black LGBTQ young people reported higher rates of racism at +22%, +19% said police brutality, +12% cited doing poorly in school, +9% said gun violence gave them “stress or anxiety ‘very often,’” when compared to their white peers.

For trans and nonbinary young people, 41% cited disproportionately higher rates of transphobia, 22% cited losing their healthcare, 21% cited anti-LGBTQ hate crimes, and 20% said threats of violence in LGBTQ spaces gave them “stress or anxiety ‘very often’ ” when compared to cisgender LGBTQ peers.

Zayde pointed to the overwhelming challenge of how anti-LGBTQ rhetoric and political policies can feed into discrimination and anti-LGBTQ sentiments within these young people’s communities.

“A major issue is that when people see our government acting cruelly toward a minority community, it can feel like that gives permission on a micro level for people to do that in their daily lives too,” she stressed. “If a congressperson, for example, berates the use of correct pronouns, an individual might use that as fodder to do the same, thus enacting a maelstrom of bigoted behavior.”

Essentially, these larger discussions coursing through the nation at large can seep into communities and schools, creating an oppressive, triggering atmosphere for young people, especially those who find themselves at vulnerable ages to begin with.

How to support LGBTQ youth

How can a young person in the greater LGBTQIA+ community protect themselves from this onslaught of legislation and cable news debates?

“Reading or hearing about the wave of anti-LGBTQ legislation that we are experiencing right now can be over-



whelming. We encourage LGBTQ young people to take breaks from watching or reading this news as they need to. It’s also important that they know there are many advocates, organizations, and lawmakers who are working hard to protect them, and we have often found success in doing so,” Suffredini suggested. “Last year, LGBTQ advocates and allies defeated nearly 90% of the anti-LGBTQ bills that were considered.”

“This type of news is often difficult to process – and if LGBTQ youth ever need someone to talk to, The Trevor Project’s counselors are here for them 24/7,” he added.

Zayde said it’s all about taking care of yourself.

“Strategies that can help may include being among supportive and loving people, engaging in protests or letter-writing when legislation comes up that negatively impacts the community, limiting media so one isn’t constantly bombarded with the news, joining an LGBT+ support group either online or in person, and talking to a loved one or therapist about how this feels,” Zayde said.

“Stress and anxiety can also be managed by talking to oneself kindly and engaging in things that bring a person joy, whether that’s reading, sports, funny movies, or being with friends. It’s im-

portant to balance fighting back against this absurd legislation with self and community care,” Zayde added.

There’s also a clear role family, loved ones, and allies can play.

When asked what parents and guardians can do to support the LGBTQ young people in their lives, Suffredini said “we can all do our part to support the LGBTQ young people in our lives on an individual level.”

“Research has found that LGBTQ youth feel supported when parents and caregivers talk respectfully about their LGBTQ identities, act welcoming and kind toward their LGBTQ friends or partners, and educate themselves about LGBTQ issues. It cannot be overstated how impactful adults can be in the lives of LGBTQ young people – especially in this current, politically hostile moment,” he said.

“A small sign of support from an adult can truly be life-saving – having at least one accepting adult can reduce the risk of a suicide attempt among LGBTQ young people by 40 percent,” Suffredini added.

Source: <https://www.healthline.com/health-news/71-of-lgbtq-youth-say->

In The Spotlight

SPOTLIGHTING MILWAUKEE'S AMAZING PRIDE COMMUNITY

Being asexual can mean feeling like an outsider – even in the LGBTQ+ community

By Felix Steel

As much as I wish to forget the occasion, I can still remember the way my hands wouldn't stop shaking when I first came out as asexual.

I was barely 19 and the world was just opening up in front of me, but internally I had already gone on a rollercoaster of life events.

My identity, specifically who I was attracted to, had bounced around for almost half a decade, as I discovered new terms and new ways to attempt to describe what was going on. It was messy, to say the least. But I was young and trying to find my footing, and there is never anything wrong with figuring it out and making a few mistakes along the way.

I thought I was bisexual, then pansexual, then a lesbian, then bisexual again and a lesbian again. It was like swerving round a roundabout and taking every single wrong exit.

Finally, I found the right one – asexuality. It turns out that I was the textbook definition of asexual. I was equally attracted to everyone, with that attraction being... nothing at all. No sexual attraction to anyone. Nothing. Zilch. I had that clichéd lightbulb moment that so many of us crave, where my identity and my life up until that point burst into clarity and it all made sense.

But this life-altering moment didn't calm my nerves for the next step: telling people.

It was easy telling people about being bisexual or being a lesbian, because I



Felix Steel

was thankfully surrounded by a group of mostly-LGBTQ+ friends who supported me. So the words came out just fine, and I wasn't left with a lump in my throat quite like when I tried to get out the sentence: "By the way, I'm ace."

I was met with incredulous looks, with quiet laughter, and with a few questioning stares that made me want to play it off as a joke. So I proceeded to give them what was essentially a TED Talk, a masterclass in being asexual, in the hopes that they'd understand. But the robot and alien jokes kept on coming, so I gave up, retreated and lost a few friends in the process.

Being asexual in the LGBTQ+ community feels a bit like sticking out like a sore thumb. 'Love is love' is paraded around so often that I think there's a misconception of what that 'love' might

look like for some of us. To me, love is felt the most when I'm with my found family, my pets, my favourite songs and favourite stories. I am not 'basically straight' nor am I 'inhuman', but even within the LGBTQ+ community those are more common talking points than some would think.

On this year's International Asexuality Day, I want every ace person to know that their experiences are real and true and valid, no matter what society thinks, no matter what our wider community thinks. There is so much joy to be found in being asexual, so much shared connection that I haven't been able to see anywhere else. Almost all of my current friends are on the asexual spectrum, and those that aren't are willing to listen and understand. As much as I was sure back in 2020 that there was no hope of that happening, I am so glad to have been proven wrong.

Despite the bleak patches and the ongoing battle against misinformation, I've never been more proud to be asexual. It is an integral part of my identity, and I will continue to uplift the voices of the people in my community for as long as I am able to.

Felix Steel is an ambassador for the LGBTQ+ young people's charity Just Like Us at <https://www.justlikeus.org/>.

Source: <https://www.thepinknews.com/2023/04/06/come-out-as-asexual/>

Cordially Yours, Again!

OUR MONTHLY DOSE OF WHO'S WHO AND WHAT'S HAPPENING



Spring Break-ing or Spring Broke ?

Well, the first Quarter of the year is in, and now we're dealing with the spoils of March Madness. Interesting, how March Madness and the St. Patrick's Day Holiday seems to "grow" every year! Pretty soon it will be two months in length LOL.

Sunday, April 02nd Palm Sunday

Milwaukee County Board Supervisor, Peter Burgelis, District 15, made history and a difference! Thursday, March 23, the Milwaukee County Board declares official opposition to Conversion "Therapy". The Board adopted a resolution authored by Supervisor, Peter Burgelis, declaring Milwaukee County's Opposition to Conversion "Therapy". Supervisor Burgelis made the following statement:

"Milwaukee County has finally taken action to protect the rights and well-being of its LGBTQ+ community by adopting a ban on conversion 'therapy'. My thanks go out to my colleagues who supported the resolution. This abusive practice has no place in our society, and it is our responsibility to protect Milwaukee County's LGBTQ+ community. Studies show that conversion 'therapy' leads to increased rates of depression, anxiety, and even suicide, and we must take a stand against it. Lives depend on it." said Supervisor Burgelis. "Milwaukee County has a responsibility to promote the mental health and well-being of all its residents. Today Milwaukee County sends a strong message that our community is one where hate isn't tolerated. Milwaukee County is a safe and welcoming place for all, regardless of sexual orientation or gender identity. I was disappointed to watch Supervisors Alexander, Logsdon, and Steve Taylor vote against the LGBTQ+ community



By: *Michael Johnston*

and against the ban. However, this does not detract from today's victory. It only serves to highlight the ongoing need for education and advocacy surrounding LGBTQ+ issues and the harmful effects of conversion 'therapy'."

Conversion "therapy" is a harmful and discredited practice that aims to change an individual's sexual orientation or gender identity. The American Psychological Association has condemned conversion "therapy" as ineffective, unethical, and potentially harmful.

The resolution also calls on the Milwaukee County Mental Health Board to adopt a formal policy to condemn conversion "therapy" that would prevent any County funds from being allocated towards the practice. The resolution was adopted by the Board [14-3] during their March meeting and will now head to the desk of County Executive David Crowley.

Monday, April 03rd Milwaukee Brewers' Opening Day for Baseball VS. The Mets

Thursday, April 06th Passover

Friday, April 07th Good Friday

Sunday, April 09th Easter

I never realized we have so many Holidays this time of the year, and this early part of the month. Even though COVID is still out there, people are once again socializing and celebrating. Instead of spending all your time in the kitchen, or prep time, shopping, cooking, cleaning, tidying up, and serving ... take it to the road! Dine out, support your restaurants, dining rooms, and places that excel in providing the best for you and your guests. Recently I had the pleasure, the distinct pleasure of a dining experience simply beyond! Potawatomi's Dream Dance, a royally regal repast like no other in this state! Dream Dance has returned to what they do best – High End Dining Service Steak House. Hidden away in Milwaukee's premiere casino, trust me it's no gamble – it's a sure bet in dining at Dream Dance. It is a total "Dream" of an experience. Our devoted Server, Colette, was a unique combination of comfortable formality. No question was too stupid, and she was confident in the menu and knowledgeable about what they had to offer and how pleasing it is! Mr. Rohit Nambiar, The General Manager, dropped by my table a few times to welcome me, to make sure I was satisfied, making suggestions when it came to an accompanying wine for the perfect pairing for my entrée and dessert and helpful hints in taking my meal even more memorable. Again, with the impeccable manners of European trained, very old-school. Replies were, "you are welcome, not "no problem" or "oh sure" LOL. A definite sense of class and style,

which haven't been used in so long they aren't missed, they are forgotten! So, for service above A+, ambiance so comfortable, seating, lighting, temperature, music – timeless American Songbook, you could hear and enjoy, yet carry on a conversation. Finally, the bill of fare – the food - the most important to all. The bread-and-butter plate – a taste of something else - the bread had hint of lemon, the butter a taste of black salt, appetizer calamari and meat balls Dream Dance style! Quality and quantity! The balls looked like meatloaves! The Steak Slab salad – was the Wedge Salad on Steroids! A meal in itself! With bacon and bleu cheese prepping my tastebuds for what was ahead... My dinner companion, Rona, was equally amazed with the Caesar Salad. The Tomahawk steak, filet mignon and lobster, creamed spinach, brussel sprouts, tower of onion rings, washed down with Jackson the Bartender's extraordinary filthy Vodka Martinis with bleu cheese olives. And to end this fabulous feast, sweets for the sweet, Hazelnut Chocolate Cake and Cannoli's and black coffee! You deserve the best, and Dream Dance is here offering you just that! See what Mike Christensen, CEC of Potawatomi has cooking up for You! Make a reservation now 414-847-7883. My only regret is that their new chef was starting the next evening ... I can't imagine him topping what I experienced, but I aim to find out! Bon Appetit, Enjoy!

It's April, the fourth month, hoping for sun, fun, and warmth, and still you could say we're frozen ... Disney's "Frozen". This HIT Broadway Musical avalanches on us, Thursday April 06th – Sunday April 16th. Now who wouldn't want their Easter baskets and bonnets stuffed with tickets to this fantasy? Personally, I'm not too familiar with this show – but have been informed this one is more female-empowered as the women save themselves! I can't let this topic leave without sharing the universally raving last Produc-

tion, "SIX, The Musical". Everyone, I mean everyone, I spoke with or overheard simply raved about this Show!

Some other shows coming to The Cream City to entrance us this month, "Dixie's Tupperware Party" a group favorite, Thursday, April 13 – Sunday, April 16. Starring the glam-gal Dixie Longate whose Tupperware parties are legendary and not to be missed! She is from Alabama, with a banjo on her knee, fast-talking, gum chewing, ginger haired, and a laugh riot! This is a return visit, I had the pleasure of meeting her, and she is not to be missed!

Kandace Springs will spring into BrewTown Thursday, April 20th. A world-renowned artist, whose latest Album "The Women Who Raised Me" is a loving tribute to the Women of Jazz, The Blues, Soul, women who did not sell out, were true to their own selves: Ella Fitzgerald, Nina Simone, Dusty Springfield, Carmen McRae, Lady Day Billie Holiday, Sade, and Lauryn Hill. Come hear the next, cutting edge ...

Nrityagram will be Marcus-ing Friday, April 28 7:30 pm. This is a dance ensemble regarded as one of the foremost dance companies of India! And if you're not completely bowled and impressed ... The 2023–2024 Broadway Season at The Marcus has been announced! Congratulations, Lory, Megan, Ken, Katie, Jared, Jennifer, John, Bev, and everyone for bringing this astounding collection of Tony Award Winning, Theatre Pieces, truly pearl clutch-ers to Water Street! In alpha order they are Disney's "Aladdin", "Clue, a new Comedy", "Funny Girl", "Mama Mia!", "Moulin Rouge!", "Tina" and Harper Lee's "To Kill A Mockingbird". Seven - count them seven - hits!!! Subscribe yesterday so you don't miss any applause!

Saturday, April 15th, Maple Veneer and Karen Valentine return to La Cage with their monthly effort "Bosom Buddies" 5 pm sharp, doors open at 4 pm. Special Guests: Wisconsin's Prince of Theatre Doug Clemons and Miss Judi Bones.

Check out what's popping up in their garden.

Renaissance Theater is commemorating 30 years of outstanding Theater by Women for Everyone closes out their Landmark Season with Kristin Idaszak's "Tidy" running now through Sunday, April 16th. This opus is directed by Elizabeth Margolius, a World Premiere. A terrifying mystery where this lady uncovers a series of clues and solves a puzzle – will it be in time to save the planet? Who and what will survive? And will it spark joy?

Sunday, April 16th Orthodox Easter Sunday

Sun Day Fun Day Show Tunes with Bradley Fell and Karen Valentine is slated for Club Charlies in The Historic Third Ward for Sunday, April 16th. Bradley kicks it off about 2 pm, The Valentine takes root around three bells and they carry on as if they were in their right minds until about 7:00 pm or they run out of power!

Karen Valentine report: what a great time she had at the newly debuted "Monthly Variety Show" at Woody's. Kudos to Alan and Goldie Adams for offering alternatives.

The Milwaukee Art Museum (MAM) turns into Floral Fantasy this month ... the weekend of April 20 – April 23 "Art In Bloom" pops up and brightens up MAM like a flock of new subscribers! Thursday, April 20th the later afternoon- this will be where the well-dressed gardens to view and sniff are on display mimicking the Master Art Pieces. On the topic of well-dressed floral, Fashion Party is Friday the 21st 7 – 10 pm, This is where I first cast my eyes on the breath-taking Dita Von as he modeled buds and blossoms ALA Eden a few Seasons back and everything, including the Roses were coming up! I love seeing all the florists, their creations modeled after the Works of Art at MAM, the vendors, the guests, and everyone catching and giving and

Celebrating Spring Fever ! What a way to go ...

Milwaukee Chamber Theatre closes out their season with Katori Hall's "The Mountaintop" in the Cabot Theatre Friday, April 21st – Sunday, May 07th. Featuring Cereyna Bougouneau and Dimonte Henning, this play received the 2010 Olivier Award for Best New Play. The Broadway Complex, the Historic Third Ward.

Old-Time Hollywood is resurrected once again and is ready for their close-up starting Friday, April 21 – Sunday, May 07. The Studio Theatre in The Broadway Complex as Bombshell Theatre Company brings the far west/Left Coast to the Midwest. Once again, the tempest of the silver, silent screen - Miss Norma Desmond - will mesmerize you with one look! Eric and Tim will bring us a Perfect Year and it will be As If We Never Said Goodbye. Due to the Herculean task it takes to do such an intricate production, Sir Andrew Lloyd Webber's salute to Swanson is rarely if ever done ... Please don't miss your golden opportunity to experience the grandeur once more. Bombshell has already announced that they will be mounting "Gentlemen Prefer Blondes" at the Sunset in January, 2024! This vehicle skyrocketed the careers of both Miss Carol Channing and Miss Marilyn Monroe !!!

Saturday, April 22nd Earth Day

Friday, April 28th Arbor Day

Arbor Evening can be celebrated Broadway-Style with Mr. Broadway himself, Brian Stokes Mitchell! One Night Only! The Star of "Ragtime" and "Man of La Mancha" makes this Friday fierce at 7:30 pm with the Milwaukee Symphony Orchestra. To hear Music History in the making call 414-291-7605, get your reservation, see and hear, not only Mr. Stokes Mitchell – BUT the truly grand, epic, luxe, sophisticated, chic, stylish Grand Theatre. Make Wisconsin Avenue, Grand once again!

The Milwaukee Repertory Theatre's

third and final PRIDE Night for this Season will be: Wednesday, April 19. You get the choice of seeing "God of Carnage" or "The Greatest Love for Whitney – A Whitney Houston Tribute". For the Password PRIDE, you'll get the special promotional price of \$30! Included will be a PRIDE Reception before the Show with complimentary refreshments! And adding a bit of glamor and glitz, Dear Ruthie Keester and B.J. Daniels will be on hand as Ambassadors for the Arts. Karen Valentine who usually joins the other legendary ladies will be excused, as she will be the Keynote Speaker at The University of Wisconsin Green Bay Lavender Graduation, for the Students of LGBTQ identification.

The Stackner Cabaret has a loving Musical Memorial for Ms. Whitney Houston with "The Greatest Love for Whitney" now through Sunday, May 28th. Known as "The Voice" in such a short period, so many timeless classics have been kissed with her song styling – our generation's Patsy Cline!

It's all fun and games until the grown-up get hurt! So says the promos for Yasmin Reza' "God of Carnage" in the Quadracci Powerhouse. This Winner of the tony Award for Best Play graces The Rep through Sunday, May 14th. 414-224-9490.

Milwaukee Rep will be Celebrating 70 years in the business, come the 2023/2024 Season, 1953 – 2023. There are twelve terrific theater pleasing productions not to be missed: "Country Sunshine: The Legendary Ladies of Nashville with Katie Deal", "Run Bambi Run", about the Brew City's favorite dear, Lawrence Bembenek, "Parental Advisory: a breakbeat play", "Nuncrackers", "Dial M for Murder", "A Christmas Carol", "Guys on Ice", "Little Women", "What the Constitution Means to Me", "The Chosen", "Piano Men 2", and "Nina Simone: Four Women".

To be a part of this Historic Event, call The Rep and/or subscribe to their sensational 70th Season at 414-224-9490/ www.MilwaukeeRep.com.

Closing out the month of April, The Domes will host "Art in the Green" Saturday, April 29 – Sunday April 30th. This weekend will provide you the chance to see nature, plants, flowers, art, paintings, sculptures, and all the beauty of Mother Nature and the applied arts. Plan on supporting The Domes, the Arts, Artists, and your Community!

The Golden Girls, Mother's Day Spring Spectacular will be running Tuesday, May 2 – Sunday, May 14. Purse String Productions is planning some upcoming fabulous events to look forward to, and this is just one of them.

Skylight Music Theatre will empower us as no one can with "SuperYou" Rise Up Blast Through Friday, May 26th – Sunday, June 18th. Leave it to The Skylight for new, cutting edge, new angle Theatre, and you will be apart of it all! In other Skylight news, congratulations and a brazen Brava to Susan Varella for being Named Executive Direct-ress of Skylight effective immediately! From Broadway to The Board Room! Morgan Pankratz is Director of Communications and Digital Marketing, Mr. Kendall Judy is Director of Marketing and Susan Heymann is the Dean, as Communications Consultant.

And so, ends another effort, Thank You for reading and getting caught up with me. April showers, bring May flowers and remember, it's the glamour, not the grammar as I remain Still Cordially Yours, again!



Resource Guide

A SHORT GUIDE TO LGBTQ + MILWAUKEE



354 E. National Ave.
Milwaukee, WI 53204
(414) 272-5789
<https://www.facebook.com/kruz.kruzbar>

La Cage Niteclub ♦
Gay Dance Club
801 S. 2nd St.
Milwaukee, WI 53204
(414) 383-8330
<https://www.facebook.com/LaCageNiteclub>

This Is It! ♦
Gay Bar with Drag Shows
418 E. Wells St.
Milwaukee, WI 53202
(414) 278-9192
<https://www.thisisitbar.com>

Walker's Pint ♦
Lesbian Bar
818 S. 2nd St.
Milwaukee, WI 53204
(414) 643-7468
<https://walkerspint.com>

Woody's Sports Bar ♦
Gay Sports Bar
1579 S. 2nd St.
Milwaukee, WI 53204
(414) 672-0806
<https://www.facebook.com/woodys.mke>

Zócolo Food Park ♦
Bar with food trucks, gay friendly
636 S. 6th St.
Milwaukee, WI 53204
(414) 433-9747
<https://www.zocalomke.com>

C 3 Designs ♦
Custom Jewelry designer in South



Businesses
Milwaukee, Wisconsin
2110 10th Ave.
South Milwaukee, WI 53172
(414) 764-3892
<http://c3designs.rocks/>

Oun Kine Grindz ♦
Hawaiian Cafe, caterer and store
7215 W. North Ave.
Wauwatosa, WI 53213
(414) 778-0727
<http://www.okgrindz.com>

Kilwins Milwaukee
LGBTQ-owned candy and ice cream shop in Bayshore Mall
5756 N. Bayshore Dr., Q101
Glendale, WI 53217
(414) 967-4803
<https://www.kilwins.com/stores/kilwins-milwaukee-bayshore>

Outwards Books Gifts & Coffee ♦
LGBTQ+ books, movies and gifts
2710 N. Murray Ave. #3645,
Milwaukee, WI 53211
(414) 963-9089
<https://outwardsbooks.com>

Purple Door Ice Cream ♦
LGBTQ-owned ice cream parlor with unique flavors and treats
205 S. 2nd St.
Milwaukee, WI 53204
(414) 988-2521
<https://www.purpledooricecream.com>

Sherman Perk Cafe ♦
Local coffee shop in the Sherman Park Neighborhood

Art Bar ♦
Mixed bar with college-age crowd
722 E. Burleigh St.
Milwaukee, WI 53212
(414) 372-7880
<https://www.facebook.com/artbarmke>

DIX Milwaukee ♦
Southern Style Video/Dance Bar
739 S. 1st St.
Milwaukee, WI 53204
(414) 231-9085
<https://dixmke.com>

Fluid Milwaukee ♦
Gay Bar
819 S. 2nd St.
Milwaukee, WI 53204
414-Oh-Fluid/(414) 643-5843
<https://fluidmke.com>

Harbor Room ♦
Levis' & Leather Bar
117 E. Greenfield Ave.
Milwaukee, WI 53204
(414) 672-7988
<https://www.facebook.com/Harbor-Room-117-E-Greenfield-Ave-Milwaukee-WI-151982704821436/>

Hunty's Social Club ♦
Drag Bar inside Hamburger Marys
734 S. 5th St.
Milwaukee, WI 53204
(414) 488-2555
<https://huntyismke.com>

Kruz ♦
Levis' & Leather Bar

Resource Guide

A SHORT GUIDE TO LGBTQ + MILWAUKEE



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Milwaukee, WI 53216
(414) 875-7375
<https://shermanperkcoffeeshop.com/>

La Finca Coffeeshop ♦
Women owned coffee shop with unique coffees and eats.
3558 E Sivyer Ave.
St Francis, WI 53235
(414) 394-0722
<https://www.lafinca.cafe>

Todo Postres LLC. ♦
Gay-owned and operated bakery and dessert shop. Specializes in unique cakes for quinceañeras, weddings and pride events.
958 W. Oklahoma Ave.
Milwaukee, WI 53215
(414) 988-2149
<https://www.facebook.com/ToDoPostresOfficial/>



Sixteenth Street Community Health Centers
Community health center provides discounted or free health programs
2906 S. 20th St.
Milwaukee, WI 53215
(414) 672-1353
<https://sschc.org>

BESTD Clinic
Free STI testing Clinic
1240 E. Brady St.
Milwaukee, WI 53202
(414) 272-2144
<https://www.bestd.org>

Community Health Systems, Inc. ♦
A federally qualified Health Center that operates a medical, dental, and behavioral health clinic in Beloit, Wisconsin
74 Eclipse Center,
Beloit, WI 53511
tel: (608) 361-0311
www.chsofwi.org

Compassionate Clinical Services
Provides private therapy and counseling services by Ryan Larkey, LCSW, SAC
985 W. Oklahoma Ave.
Milwaukee, WI 53204

Planned Parenthood
(414) 839-1821
<https://www.compassionateclinicalservices.com>

Vivent Health (formally ARCW)
HIV/AIDS health center that provides medical, dental, counseling and social service help
820 N. Plankinton Ave.
Milwaukee, WI 53203
(414) 273-1991
<https://viventhealth.org>



Cream City Foundation
Not-for-profit that funds LGBTQ+ outreach organizations
PO Box 511099
Milwaukee, WI 53202
(414) 225-0244
<https://creamcityfoundation.org>

Diverse & Resilient ♦

LGBTQ+ health and advocacy group
2439 N. Holton St.
Milwaukee, WI 53212
(414) 390-0444
<https://www.diverseandresilient.org>

LGBT Center of SE Wisconsin
Community center with many programs for LGBTQ+ groups
1456 Junction Ave.
Racine, WI 53403
(262) 664-4100
<https://www.lgbtsewi.org>

Milwaukee LGBT Community Center ♦
Community center with many programs for LGBTQ+ groups
315 W. Court St.
Milwaukee, WI 53212
(414) 271-2656
<https://www.mkelgbt.org>

Wisconsin LGBT Chamber of Commerce
Networking and resources for LGBTQ+ business
5027 W. North Ave.
Milwaukee, WI 53208
(414) 678-9275
<https://wislgbtchamber.com>



Central Library ♦
The main branch of The Milwaukee County Library system has books, movies, periodicals available for lending.
814 W. Wisconsin Ave., Milwaukee, WI 53233
(414) 286-3000

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