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Against Title X Gag Rule

Collision of Gays, Gentrification and Race  
Explored in Michigan Premier Drama

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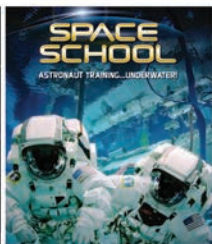
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## What is BIKTARVY®?

BIKTARVY is a complete, 1-pill, once-a-day prescription medicine used to treat HIV-1 in adults. It can either be used in people who have never taken HIV-1 medicines before, or people who are replacing their current HIV-1 medicines and whose healthcare provider determines they meet certain requirements.

**BIKTARVY does not cure HIV-1 or AIDS.** HIV-1 is the virus that causes AIDS.

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#### BIKTARVY may cause serious side effects:

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### Who should not take BIKTARVY?

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- ▶ dofetilide
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- ▶ any other medicines to treat HIV-1

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- ▶ **Severe liver problems,** which in rare cases can lead to death. Tell your healthcare provider right away if you get these symptoms: skin or the white part of your eyes turns yellow, dark “tea-colored” urine, light-colored stools, loss of appetite for several days or longer, nausea, or stomach-area pain.

**The most common side effects** of BIKTARVY in clinical studies were diarrhea (6%), nausea (5%), and headache (5%). Tell your healthcare provider if you have any side effects that bother you or don't go away.

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- ▶ **All your health problems.** Be sure to tell your healthcare provider if you have or have had any kidney or liver problems, including hepatitis virus infection.
- ▶ **All the medicines you take,** including prescription and over-the-counter medicines, antacids, laxatives, vitamins, and herbal supplements. BIKTARVY and other medicines may affect each other. Keep a list of all your medicines and show it to your healthcare provider and pharmacist, and ask if it is safe to take BIKTARVY with all of your other medicines.
- ▶ **If you are pregnant** or plan to become pregnant. It is not known if BIKTARVY can harm your unborn baby. Tell your healthcare provider if you become pregnant while taking BIKTARVY.
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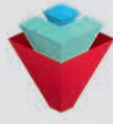
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## MOST IMPORTANT INFORMATION ABOUT BIKTARVY

**BIKTARVY may cause serious side effects, including:**

- **Worsening of hepatitis B (HBV) infection.** If you have both HIV-1 and HBV, your HBV may suddenly get worse if you stop taking BIKTARVY. Do not stop taking BIKTARVY without first talking to your healthcare provider, as they will need to check your health regularly for several months.

## ABOUT BIKTARVY

BIKTARVY is a complete, 1-pill, once-a-day prescription medicine used to treat HIV-1 in adults. It can either be used in people who have never taken HIV-1 medicines before, or people who are replacing their current HIV-1 medicines and whose healthcare provider determines they meet certain requirements.

**BIKTARVY does not cure HIV-1 or AIDS.** HIV-1 is the virus that causes AIDS.

**Do NOT take BIKTARVY if you also take a medicine that contains:**

- dofetilide
- rifampin
- any other medicines to treat HIV-1

## BEFORE TAKING BIKTARVY

**Tell your healthcare provider all your medical conditions, including if you:**

- Have or have had any kidney or liver problems, including hepatitis infection.
- Are pregnant or plan to become pregnant.
- Are breastfeeding (nursing) or plan to breastfeed. Do not breastfeed if you have HIV-1 because of the risk of passing HIV-1 to your baby.

**Tell your healthcare provider about all the medicines you take:**

- Keep a list that includes all prescription and over-the-counter medicines, antacids, laxatives, vitamins, and herbal supplements, and show it to your healthcare provider and pharmacist.
- Ask your healthcare provider or pharmacist about medicines that interact with BIKTARVY.

## IMPORTANT FACTS

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## POSSIBLE SIDE EFFECTS OF BIKTARVY

**BIKTARVY can cause serious side effects, including:**

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- Changes in your immune system.
- New or worse kidney problems, including kidney failure.
- Too much lactic acid in your blood (lactic acidosis), which is a serious but rare medical emergency that can lead to death. Tell your healthcare provider right away if you get these symptoms: weakness or being more tired than usual, unusual muscle pain, being short of breath or fast breathing, stomach pain with nausea and vomiting, cold or blue hands and feet, feel dizzy or lightheaded, or a fast or abnormal heartbeat.
- Severe liver problems, which in rare cases can lead to death. Tell your healthcare provider right away if you get these symptoms: skin or the white part of your eyes turns yellow, dark “tea-colored” urine, light-colored stools, loss of appetite for several days or longer, nausea, or stomach-area pain.
- **The most common side effects of BIKTARVY** in clinical studies were diarrhea (6%), nausea (5%), and headache (5%).

These are not all the possible side effects of BIKTARVY. Tell your healthcare provider right away if you have any new symptoms while taking BIKTARVY.

**Your healthcare provider will need to do tests to monitor your health before and during treatment with BIKTARVY.**

## HOW TO TAKE BIKTARVY

Take BIKTARVY 1 time each day with or without food.

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- Go to BIKTARVY.com or call 1-800-GILEAD-5.
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# Planned Parenthood Takes Stand Against Title X Gag Rule

BY EVE KUCHARSKI

On Friday, June 15, Birmingham residents likely heard the chant, “Hey, hey, ho, ho, Schuette, Pence have got to go!” That was just one of many rallying calls that protestors shouted as they marched up Henrietta Street outside of the Townsend Hotel — the location of Attorney General Bill Schuette’s private gubernatorial fundraiser, attended by Vice President Mike Pence. More than two dozen picketers were among the crowd, and the event was well-represented by a variety of groups and organizations: Clean Water Action, Progress Michigan, the Michigan Regional Council of Carpenters and Millwrights, Flint Rising and the Human Rights Campaign. Among the protestors were also representatives from Planned Parenthood, currently standing in opposition to the Trump administration’s proposed reinstatement of a Reagan-era gag rule for Title X funding.

“I am out here today standing up and giving voice to our patients who depend on Planned Parenthood for life-saving, accessible, inclusive care for important services like cancer screenings, STI testing, birth control and yes, even abortions,” said Emily Clancy, Planned Parenthood’s East Michigan community organizer. “We’re out here today because Attorney General Bill Schuette has stood against Planned Parenthood in every position of government he’s held in Michigan legislature. And with no doubt he will support the extreme restriction the Trump-Pence administration will pass to block patients who access Title X from coming to Planned Parenthood.”

Title X is the nation’s only federal grant program that provides the public with contraceptives and family planning services. The proposed reinstatement would stop funding for organizations like Planned Parenthood that provide abortion services, regardless of their other offerings.

Planned Parenthood of Michigan Director of Media and Communications Ruth Lednicer said that what many who support the Trump administration’s push to end Title X funding might not understand is that there are already processes in place that prevent public funding from being used for abortion services.

“There is a law in place called the Hyde Amendment which prohibits federal funds to be used to pay for abortion. So, whether you’re on Medicaid, Title X or privately insured, you’re going to be paying out of pocket for that. What federal funds do pay for is all the things that President Nixon put in place, which is for people to have control over reproduction and to have access to family planning,” Lednicer said. “We actually see 70 percent of the Title X patients in the state of Michigan. So, without us here there’s nowhere



Attorney General Bill Schuette’s private gubernatorial fundraiser, attended by Vice President Mike Pence, attracted protestors to the front of the Townsend Hotel in Birmingham on June 15. BTL photo: Eve Kucharski.

else they can go.”

And in Michigan, that 70 percent statistic translated into just over 40,000 people in 2017. Lednicer said that if passed, the budget cut will gouge out a chunk of about \$4.4 million received from national Title X funding — a third of the organization’s \$12 million annual service price tag across its 19 Michigan health care centers. Lednicer said that the majority of the services Planned Parenthood provides are not abortion-related, calling the proposal, “Bad law, designed to prevent women from getting all their options.”

“Abortion is less than 5 percent of what we do. The number one thing that people come to us for is birth control followed very closely thereafter by STI testing and treatment. We also do cancer screenings and pap smears, breast exams, HIV testing,” Lednicer said. “We do all the things that people need for reproductive health and well-being. I said to someone recently, ‘Can you imagine, as a man, going to see a doctor for treatment and there’s three options for treatment and you’re only told two?’ That says so much about how we value women.”

And though Planned Parenthood doesn’t collect statistics on the sexual orientation of any of its patients, officials at Corktown Health Center — and LGBTQ-oriented health organization — said that this budget slash could have far-reaching affects for many

people in the LGBTQ community, too.

“Here at Corktown, we recognize that Planned Parenthood has been a close ally and friend for many years, going back to the earliest days of the HIV crisis in the U.S.,” said Corktown Health Chief Development Officer Patrick Yankee. “Recently, Planned Parenthood began operating two Pop Up

**For now, however, the gag rule is simply a proposal on which the public can comment through July 31. It’s at that point that those comments will be reviewed and Lednicer said that if the proposed change were to take hold, that various organizations would sue to repeal them. Lednicer said that even if the changes were to take hold, Planned Parenthood would not stop providing its abortion services.**

Clinics each month here at Corktown Center, making it easier for women in LGBTQ communities to access important screening and related services. This attack on even the most basic health care services by this current administration renews our commitment to build Michigan’s first medical home to address the longstanding health disparities in our community.”

For now, however, the gag rule is simply a proposal on which the public can comment through July 31. It’s at that point that those comments will be reviewed and Lednicer said that if the proposed change were to take hold, that various organizations would sue to repeal them. Lednicer added that whatever the outcome, Planned Parenthood would not stop providing its abortion services.

“We’re not going to stop because it is something that is part of reproductive health care if that’s what someone chooses, and we’re not going to stop trying to service as many people as we can and in all the ways we can,” she said. “Planned parenthood was started with the idea that every child should be a wanted child, so that people can have the ability to decide if and when they want to be parents.”

For more information about the gag rule and how it will potentially affect Planned Parenthood and its services, go to [plannedparenthood.org](http://plannedparenthood.org) or [weareplannedparenthoodaction.org](http://weareplannedparenthoodaction.org).





## Flint Hosts 8th Annual Pride Festival June 23

LGBTQ and allied Flint Residents are gearing up for a day in the sun on Saturday, June 23, for the eighth annual Flint Pride. The festival will be held from 2 to 8 p.m. in the city's Riverbank Park in the city's downtown. The event will be held between Saginaw and Garland Streets, feature a variety of local drag and musical performances, many different food stalls and vendors from organizations across Michigan. This year, the event is also being sponsored by 15 organizations like PFLAG, Equality Michigan, The University of Michigan-Flint and even Between The Lines. Organizers say the event is "a positive stance against discrimination and violence toward the LGBTQ+ community."

Additionally, organizers described the intent of the event as a celebration of the "diversity in our city" and a way to, "Affirm gay and transgender individuals, increase visibility and to build a sense of community."

And, for those who want to get an even bigger taste of Flint's pride spirit, they can attend the event's pre-pride party on Thursday, June 21. The free event will be held at the Unitarian Universalist Congregation of Flint from 6 to 9 p.m. and will include food, games, music and a raffle for party-exclusive prizes.

*More information about the pre-pride event can be found online at [wellnessaids.org](http://wellnessaids.org), and about Flint Pride on the [Flint Pride Festival Facebook page](#).*

Here is Flint Pride's 2018 Entertainment Schedule:

|   |   |
|---|---|
| <b>1:45 to 2 p.m.</b><br>New Revolution Dance Team  | Alise King  |
| <b>2 to 3 p.m.</b><br>DJ Matt Holiday<br>Speakers<br>Dedication for Deon Jackson  | <b>5 to 5:30 p.m.</b><br>PhZD   |
| <b>3 to 4 p.m. (1st Set)</b><br>Diana Paradise<br>Perry Dox<br>A'Stara Love<br>Paris Wilson<br>J Dior<br>Monica Devereaux | <b>5:30 to 5:45 p.m.</b><br>Final Destination   |
| <b>4 to 4:30 p.m.</b><br>Furrillostar   | <b>5:45 to 6 p.m.</b><br>Marc Wayne   |
| <b>4:30 to 5 p.m.</b>   | <b>6 to 7 p.m. (2nd Set)</b><br>A'Stara Love<br>Diana Paradise<br>Paris Wilson<br>Perry Dox<br>Monica Devereaux |
|   | <b>7 to 8 p.m.</b><br>Mini Ball   |

# Grand Rapids Pride Celebrates 30 Years with En Vogue, Betty Who

BY DREW HOWARD

Thousands attended Grand Rapids Pride this weekend in celebration of its 30th anniversary, a significant mark of progress within the conservative-leaning community as evidenced by a lone protestor standing guard at the event's entrance.

Shielded by a group of volunteers wielding rainbow umbrellas, Pride's single Bible-thumping opponent was nothing more than an afterthought upon entering the festival. Previously held at John Ball Park - and later Riverside Park - Grand Rapids Pride celebrated 30 years in style by moving to the center of downtown at Calder Plaza and along Ottawa Avenue.

This year's festival, titled "30 & Fabulous," enlisted the talents of David Hernandez, Betty Who and En Vogue at the Calder Plaza main stage. Attendees were also treated to performances from local talent like drag queen Tequila Sanchez and the Circle Theatre cast of "Fun Home," among others.

But it was the thousands of fabulous, queer, straight, fluid, intersex, allied and affirming attendees themselves who, like always, proved to be the main attraction of such Pride celebrations.

"My daughter came out this year, and I wanted to come here in support," Pride attendee Jen Small told BTL. "I'm polyamorous and gender fluid. So, I'm like, I want to go! Let's go!"

Small attended GR Pride with their best friend Jarrod Schaffer, who sported a Pride flag with a bear paw print symbolizing what he considers to be an alternative identity within the LGBTQ community.

"I'm here with my partner celebrating three-and-a-half years," Schaffer said. "At the same time, I'm here as a voice for the community for those of us who aren't in the closet but not necessarily exploiting it."

"I want to show people that you can be masculine, that you can still be yourself, and that you don't necessarily have to be a stereotypical gay guy," he continued. "You can be proud of who you are and be proud of your community and support it - I'm here to break some of those walls."

The reasons behind attending Pride were much simpler for others.

"Expression, love and a place to be accepted," a woman named Al said.

Grand Rapids Pride also served as a



Top photo: Al and Joey (left to right). Bottom photo: Jarrod Schaffer and Jen Small (left to right) BTL Photos: Drew Howard.

platform for local LGBTQ businesses and vendors looking to gain exposure. At one tent, author Peter Kulas showcased artwork from his new sci-fi fantasy novel "Aberration," which follows a cast LGBT-identifying characters.

"Aberration" is defined as an abnormality," Kulas said. "The premise is that in this societal structure, men can be born with telekinetic powers, and women are born with telepathy ... and then if you're gay, you can be born with both of them. So, it plays a twist on gender roles, gender concepts, gender identity and everything."

At another tent, 3:11 Community Housing in Grand Rapids advertised their "safe and affordable" housing for youth aged 18 to 24 who are experiencing homelessness and/or have aged out of foster care.

Kayla Morgan, community liaison

with 3:11 Community Housing, said that homelessness is an especially relevant issue with LGBTQ youth.

"We know the statistics and numbers," Morgan said. "Youth who identify in the LGBTQ+ community are at higher rates of homelessness and abuse. We thought this would be the best place to get the word out that we're in the city and that we can provide a safe place."

Back at the Calder Main Stage, event organizers preceded the night's entertainment with a presentation of this year's Pride award for exemplary service to the LGBTQ+ community to Jason Skalandis, a volunteer with the Grand Rapids Pride Center.

"I didn't even know if I was queer - I was so afraid I convinced myself I was because I wanted friends that badly," Skalandis told the crowd in his acceptance speech. "The Grand Rapids Price Center was such a safe place for me to explore my identity. I got to interact with so many different people who had different ideas about gender and sexuality."

"By the time I realized I was trans, I knew there wasn't one way to be a man, not just one way to be trans," Skalandis continued. "The Pride Center saved my life. I mean that very literally."

Event organizers also recognized Tommy Allen with the 2018 Grand Rapids Pride Milt Lennox Community Award for his work in the LGBTQ community. Among his many credits, Allen is known as the first LGBTQ person to chair the Grand Rapids Community Relations Commission as well as the founder of the annual event "Love Wins" celebrating marriage equality.

"There were years where people would actively stand outside to try to stop you from coming to Pride," Allen said as he reflected on 30 years of celebration. "To tell you you weren't right, that there's something wrong with you. There's nothing wrong with you. You are unique and beautiful, and the planet needs every one of you, because what you bring forward is important."

*Proceeds from Grand Rapids Pride will go toward funding the Grand Rapids Pride Center. For more information on the center, please visit [grpride.org](http://grpride.org).*





## Follow The Rainbow

BY TODD HEYWOOD

**LANSING** – Lansing’s new Mayor Andy Schor was in rare form as he served as Michigan Pride’s Grand Marshall Saturday. He rejected a ride in a convertible, opting instead to join a bevy of supporters and his family walking the route wearing rainbow tie-dye T-shirts emblazoned with his name and new title.

Schor was elected to the Mayor’s office last November and replaced three-term Mayor and former Democratic gubernatorial candidate Virg Bernero. Schor had previously served on the Ingham County Commission and in the state house. He’s been a staunch supporter of LGBTQ equality and was the first state representative to co-sponsor legislation to reform Michigan’s outdated HIV felony law.

He was one of a dozen local elected officials on-hand for the parade, which started at the Lou Adado Riverfront Park across from Lansing Community College. The parade kicked off at a brightly colored crosswalk painted in the colors the Philadelphia Pride flag.

Once at the Capitol, Schor thanked his chief of staff Samantha Harkins and Lansing Association for Human Rights President Emily Dievendorf for the idea and action in painting the cross walk. He noted that Harkins “got up early” to apply the paint herself with the help of others. LAHR and the Salus Center joined forces to seek the installation of the crosswalks from the Mayor’s office.

Then, Schor stunned allies by announcing the rainbow crosswalks would become a standard a permanent fixture in the capitol city. In his speech Schor said that four crosswalks in downtown Lansing would be painted the color of a Pride flag unveiled by Philadelphia in 2017. That flag includes additional colors to reflect more accurately the racial diversity

of the LGBT community.

“Lansing is fun, exciting and welcoming to everyone,” Schor said in a statement to BTL. “What better way to showcase that than to paint some of our crosswalks the colors of the rainbow, which is inclusive of all of our residents and visitors! This small gesture is to show that everyone is not only welcome but is also celebrated in Michigan’s Capital city!”

Valeria Marchand, a spokeswoman for Schor, was unable to provide a specific timeline for the finalization of the painted crosswalks by deadline Tuesday.

The installations are set to be in place by the end of the month and will point toward downtown from the north, south, east and west sides of town,” LAHR officials posted Saturday on their Facebook page. “The direction of the crosswalks is intended to be a symbolic welcoming of the LGBTQIA community as downtown Lansing is uniquely the center for the legislature and the LGBTQIA community will find their own Mayor’s office. The gesture is one way to LGBTQIA voices in downtown Lansing are welcome and should be heard here.”

An estimated 2,000 people rallied at the Capitol Saturday afternoon, despite a brief but solid rain. Speakers included Schor, State Sen. Curtis Hertel, Jr. and more.

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# Creating Change Detroit Has First Meeting for 2019 Event

BY JASON A. MICHAEL

The first meeting of the Creating Change 2019 Host Committee took place Monday, June 11, in the outdoor courtyard of LGBT Detroit. The four co-chairs of the Host Committee were introduced to the crowd of about 50 potential volunteers who showed up to learn more about the LGBTQ-centered conference.

Bridie Johnson is a licensed social worker currently working as the clinical supervisor for the Behavioral Health Department of American Indian Health and Family Services in Detroit. She has previously worked as the director of programs for Ruth Ellis Center and conducted research for the I Am for Survivors Project, an initiative focused on increasing visibility in Michigan for LGBT survivors of domestic and sexual violence needing safe shelter spaces.

"I was very honored to be selected to be on the Host Committee," Johnson said. "I think that it's an

extremely important venue. It's the largest LGBT conference in the nation and I wanted to be a part of spearheading it and ensuring that it was successful."

Cara Mitrano is a senior undergraduate student at Wayne State University and one of the host committee members. She has been involved in LGBTQ activism since starting a Gay-Straight Alliance in her high school. At Wayne State, Mitrano founded the LGBT Student Advisory Board. Mitrano could not be reached for comment at press time.

David Nelson, Jr. serves as the Linkage to Care Specialist for Unified HIV Health and Beyond and is a member of the Southeast Michigan HIV/AIDS Council. He is another host committee member and is also a former member of the Hotter Than July – Detroit Black Gay Pride planning committee that oversaw the planning of the Palmer Park picnic and the Annual Gathering on LGBT Issues in past years.



Creating Change 2019 Host Committee Co-Chairs Lilianna Reyes, Bridie Johnson, Cara Mitrano and David Nelson, Jr. field questions at the first Host Committee meeting. BTL photo: Jason A. Michael

"I wanted to be a co-chair because I wanted to make sure that Detroit had a good presence at the conference and to make it as dynamic a conference as possible,"

Nelson said. "I really wanted to get involved with the HIV track. They usually have a really good HIV track and people of color track. And I also want to help out the trans people

of color track. I want more visibility for my trans sisters and sisters period."

of color track. I want more visibility for my trans sisters and sisters period."

The final co-chair is Affirmations Interim Executive Director Lilianna Reyes. In addition to her work at Affirmations, Reyes has worked with many state and national civil rights organizations including Planned Parenthood, the Detroit Police Chief's LGBT Advisory Council and Transgender Michigan. She is also a founding mother of the Trans Sistas of Color Project.

"I knew a trans woman of color absolutely had to be on the host committee so ... when they called me I felt I couldn't turn it away. I look forward to meeting all the new people and gathering people from all over Michigan to really help build this

## The next steps

At the meetings, co-chairs posted large sheets of white paper where volunteers could sign up for one or more of the 16 conference sub-committees. The sub-committees include Development and Fundraising, Local Promotion and Outreach, Volunteers, Programming, Communication, Marketing and Branding, On-Site Testing, Youth Hospitality Suite, Elders Hospitality Suite, People of Color Hospitality Suite, Transgender Hospitality Suite, People with Disabilities Hospitality Suite, Bisexual Hospitality Suite, Community Housing, Local Hospitality and Information, 12-Step/Recovery and Spiritual Needs.

Interested volunteers can still sign up to be a part of the Creating Change 2019 sub-committee.

The Host-Committee will meet monthly with sub-committees meeting in between. There has not yet been a date set for the next Host Committee meeting, however, as the co-chairs look for a meeting space big enough to handle the crowds they anticipate.

For more information, you can sign up for conference updates at [creatingchange.org](http://creatingchange.org) or visit the Host Committee's Facebook page online at [gaybe.am/OR](http://gaybe.am/OR).

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# Trump Admin Adopts Obama-Era Goals in Fighting HIV/AIDS

BY CHRIS JOHNSON

The Trump administration has gained a reputation for repudiation of policies enacted during the Obama years, but has adopted the plan of the Obama White House in combatting the HIV/AIDS epidemic.

The Department of Health & Human Services' Office of HIV/AIDS & Infectious Disease Policy issued a 69-page progress report indicating the Trump administration has "affirmed its support" for the 2010 National AIDS Strategy, which was issued during the Obama administration and enumerated gay and bisexual men as groups vulnerable to the disease.

"At the start of 2017 there was uncertainty about how the Trump administration would approach HIV and whether the NHAS would continue to guide our nation's response to HIV," the report says. "The Trump administration has affirmed its support of the NHAS and its goals, recognizing that adaptation and flexibility may be required. This is necessary in order to respond efficiently and effectively to scientific advances, changes in the needs of people living with and at-risk for HIV, and other factors that drive the response to HIV and AIDS."

The report also indicates the Trump administration will issue either a new or updated report by 2020 that will reassess the epidemic domestically and make new goals in combatting it. According to the report, work on that updated strategy will begin this year.

"In 2018 we will begin work on a new or updated NHAS that carries forward the theme of a national plan developed with the input of individuals living with HIV and at risk for infection, community groups and national organizations, the faith community, providers from various disciplines, researchers, federal, state, and local governments, and so many

others," the report says. "The new or updated NHAS will also build upon existing knowledge and experiences, set new goals and targets and guide us beyond 2020 to the end of HIV in America."

The report also includes a timeline of the Trump administration's effort to combat HIV/AIDS. Starting with the inauguration of Trump in January 2017, the report notes milestones such as an executive order renewing the President's Advisory Council on HIV/AIDS for another two years and new funding from the Centers for Disease Control for state health departments.

Carl Schmid, deputy executive director of the AIDS Institute, said his organization is on the whole "very pleased" the Trump administration has affirmed the Obama-era National AIDS Strategy.

"We're pleased that they adopted this," Schmid said. "We know it was approved by the secretary's office and that they're moving forward. Commitment to ending AIDS was in there, which is really important and that they want to also start the process of drafting a new strategy."

Richard Wolitski, director of the Office of HIV/AIDS & Infectious Disease Policy at HHS, talked about the process that went into the 2010 report, which was updated in 2015, when asked the Trump administration decided to affirm it.

"It was grounded in the best available data and science; the accumulated experience of states, cities and communities responding to HIV; community consultation; and input from people living with HIV and other key stakeholders," Wolitski said. "It continues to guide domestic HIV policies and programs. This administration is committed to improving

See Trump HIV, page 14



The Trump administration has continued the Obama-era National AIDS Strategy. (Photo public domain)

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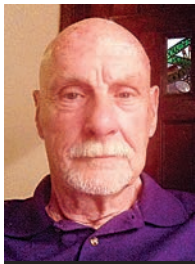
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## Parting Glances

OPINION BY CHARLES ALEXANDER

### Wet Nosing With Suzuki

The Grim Reaper in the guise of a mild-mannered tabby named Oscar is making news lately. A visit by him to the bedside of hospice patients is a sure sign the patient has only four hours to live. So far, Oscar's feline prognosis has proved correct 25 times (but who's counting?).

On a lighter note, I knew a guy who had a parrot named Bette Mae. Bette Mae said three things with camp inflection: What a dump! Come up, see me, sometime! Get you, Mary!

Curiously, Parrot Bette Mae said these classic movie lines only to gay men (she outed several closet cases).

I also remember years ago at Detroit's notorious Palais Bar there was a dyke, Drano, who always brought along her poodle, Patsy Belle (a male).

Drano would rack up the pool balls, plop perfumed PB down on the table, pat his manicured derriere, and, one by one, the miniature would wet-nose each ball into a pocket (for what it's worth: I learned to shoot pool at the Palais. Wet-nosing, elsewhere. Unfortunately, no eight balls in any pockets).

**"Animals can also zero in on clues that we provide without knowing it." One supposes it's called, Straydar.**

My favorite dog story concerns Hector, a fox terrier owned by a Willem Mante, captain of the SS Simaloer, a Dutch freighter docked at Vancouver, British Columbia (my own fox terrier Suzuki was an intelligent companion for 10 feisty, often-disobedient years – on her part, not mine. I saved money by clipping her. It took three nippy, but determined, hours to do so).

Hector liked to "explore" port cities, but one day failed to return from his amorous shore leave. Captain Mante, understandably, was heartbroken but had a tight cargo delivery schedule and couldn't wait out the truant canine Lothario.

When Hector did return dockside he was seen by three separate crews to board their respective ships, sniff about and disembark. Only when the Yokohama-bound SS Hanley was hours at sea was Hector discovered as a stowaway.

Nineteen days later, as the ship unloaded cargo at Tokyo, Hector became sparky, jumped overboard and swam to a landing craft that was then leaving the dock.

Familiar faces were on board, including Hector's owner, Captain Mante. Rescued dog and master were united 5,000 choppy miles later!

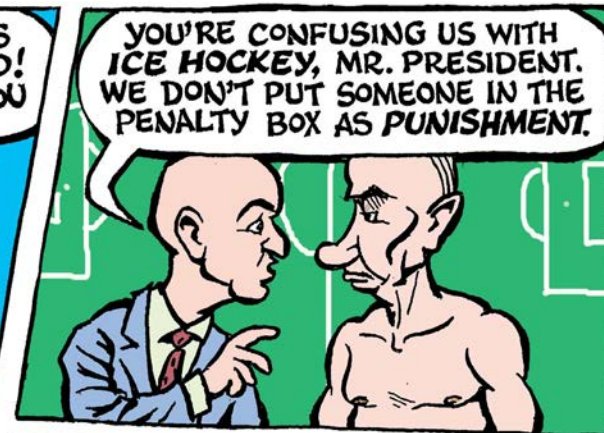
"What puzzled the overjoyed Mante," wrote author Dennis Bardens in his 1987 book "Psychic Animals," "was how the dog knew which vessel to choose at Vancouver.

How did he know the Hanley was Japan-bound? There's no logical explanation, was all Mante could say. "We can only marvel at the fact that it really happened."

Once, when my Suzuki got lost (followed by two days of panic on my part and that of my then partner Larry) we got a call. Suzuki was safe but miles away.

"Your terrier hid under our dining table," said the good Samaritan who rescued her by ID collar tag phone number.

See next page



### When a Tired Old Stereotype Becomes a Life-Saving Act

Viewpoint

BY JEM ZERO

Finding housing is complex and terrifying. With rent skyrocketing while quality plunges, even middle-class families are struggling to find something that works for them and is also affordable –especially if they have children, pets, and/or special needs. Initial payments are financially overwhelming, comprising of rent for the first month, plus a security deposit, plus any additional fees. If a person cannot find accessible housing, the generosity of friends and family is the only thing protecting them from homelessness. Those who are marginalized – people of color, disabled people and those within the LGBTQ+ community - face even greater challenges.

When I met my girlfriend, she was homeless and living on someone's couch. We started dating almost immediately and quickly fell head-over-heels for each other, which made my anxiety about her living situation even more severe. I felt powerless. What if they decided she couldn't stay there anymore? The reason she was homeless made finding safe alternatives to her situation even more fraught: she is a black trans woman whose family would not support her transition. Even if I did find a rentable room within our limited budget, I had no idea about the personal beliefs of the landlord.

A month into our relationship, a housing opportunity appeared. Thanks to an unexpected mass eviction, my best friend was removed from her Detroit home of five years and forced to find somewhere else to live. I

immediately suggested that she and my girlfriend room together. They tentatively agreed.

That success opened the door to one massive challenge: finding inexpensive, trans-friendly housing. Yikes.

For the LGBTQ+ population there is a very significant possibility of being denied access to housing, whether an apartment rental, house purchase, or even booking a hotel room, based on being transgender or in a relationship with someone of the same gender. The three of us hemmed and hawed before going to the lease signing, worried that we would be turned down if the landlord figured out that we were all queer.

Thankfully, we succeeded in getting the flat. My best friend stayed in the closet while my girlfriend quietly hoped that our new landlord wouldn't notice the unchanged gender marker on her ID. They neglected to mention my involvement.

Armed with only a Volkswagen and tenacity, we filled the one-bedroom apartment with the fixtures of our new life, having only barely made it before my best friend's former home was locked for good.

The National Coalition for the Homeless reports that 43 percent of clients served by drop-in health centers were LGBTQ. There are no statistics that show how much of the overall LGBTQ population is affected by

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## ► Viewpoint

Continued from p. 12

homelessness - it would be hard to do that, considering how few government censuses recognize and poll for LGBTQ identity - but out of over two million youths who face homelessness each year, 40 percent report themselves as LGBTQ.

Although homelessness in Michigan dropped by 9 percent in 2016, in 2017 there were over 11,000 homeless individuals in Detroit alone, as reported by the Homeless Management Information System. Members of the LGBTQ+ community have a higher likelihood of encountering homelessness than cisgender and heterosexual people, and once they are homeless, LGBTQ people have a harder time reintegrating with housed and employed society.

One major contributor to the housing crisis is the lack of laws preventing landlords from exploiting tenants. In Michigan, security deposits can be as high as 1.5 months rent, and the landlord can levy whatever fees they desire. We were charged a \$250 cleaning fee that was labeled as non-refundable (the reason for that is that if you get the cleaning fee back for leaving the apartment clean, then that counts toward the security deposit). By labeling it a non-refundable fee, the landlord can pocket the money. In our case, we're still trying to figure out our rights in this situation, as we paid that fee but the apartment at the move-in date was so filthy the carpet crunched.

Michigan residents do catch a small break when it comes to apartment rentals. Averaged out, apartments in Michigan run \$245 less than the national average. However, at \$750 for a one bedroom, a full-time minimum wage worker would only have approximately \$500 left after rent to support themselves each month. Considering how full-time jobs are increasingly hard to find, a single individual working part time would need two jobs to afford rent at the state average.

Considering all these factors combined

**“What I do know is that three queer people should not have to share a one-bedroom apartment just to make ends meet without fearing for our safety. LGBTQ couples should be able to grow their relationships naturally instead of being forced to view cohabitation as the only solution to the housing crisis.”**

with employer discrimination against LGBTQ people, especially trans people, the rush to cohabitate starts to make sense. A student working 28 hours at or near the state minimum wage would receive a biweekly paycheck of \$518 before taxes. It's hard for LGBTQ people to find safe roommates, but if this student has a live-in partner sharing half the rent, the situation feels almost survivable.

There's no way of knowing if my reluctant embodiment of the overly-committed lesbian stereotype will end up harming my relationship in the long run. Obviously, I hope it doesn't. What I do know is that three queer people should not have to share a one-bedroom apartment just to make ends meet without fearing for our safety. LGBTQ couples should be able to grow their relationships naturally instead of being forced to view cohabitation as the only solution to the housing crisis.

*Jem Zero is a disabled queer person with an art degree and poor volume control. By day, ze masquerades around the local community college disguised as a mild-mannered accounting major. All other times ze can be found hissing at technology or having an existential crisis about the vastness of space and sea. Zir writing and art can be found on zir at jemzero.com or facebook/jemzeroart.com. Connect with Jem at jemzero.art@gmail.com.*

provide without knowing it.” One supposes it's called, Straydar.

(Clever Hans, the world-famous Russian 'counting horse,' to everyone's amazement tapped out math answers with his hooves. Turns out the stallion scored  $6 \times 2 = 12$  simply by watching his owner's subtle facial giveaways.)

To be on the safe side, I keep goldfish. On a DVD aquarium, at that. They don't kiss, spy on you or smell (just like my sex life of late).

*Charles Alexander is prolific both as a BTL columnist (700-plus columns) and as a well-known LGBT community artist (1000 Face Book images). He is a Spirit of Detroit Award recipient and an Affirmations LGBT CENTER Jan Stevenson awardee. Connect with him at Charles@pridesource.com.*

# Creep of the Week

## Jeff Sessions

BY D'ANNE WITKOWSKI

Out of the blue the other day my 8 year old son asked me, “What would you do to get me back?”

“What do you mean?” I asked.

“Like, if I was taken.”

I was actually too stunned to formulate a good answer. “Well, I'd do anything,” I said.

He thought for a moment. “If you could only see me or Mommy,” he asked, referring to his other mom who is also my wife, “who would you choose?”

I had no answer for this, of course. But I couldn't help but think of the immigrant and asylum seeking families being torn apart at our border right now. Children being taken from their parents and put in cages by the U.S. government. In your name. In my name. In my son's name.

“You know what?” I said to my son. “I don't like this game. I'm glad I don't have to choose.”

But, of course, many families don't have that luxury. They can't say while an ICE agent is taking their child's shoelaces, “I don't like this game.” They can't say, while an ICE agent is cuffing them as their toddler daughter wails, “Let's play something else.” They can't say, while their child is in a van heading to an abandoned Walmart where they will sleep with a silver emergency blanket on the floor, “Have you had any breakfast?”

Which is what I said to my son in order to change the subject.

There are, of course, those who argue that if these parents didn't want their kids taken away then they shouldn't have been crossing the border to begin with. That the onus is on the parent fleeing violence or abuse or just looking for better economic opportunities here, rather than on the U.S. government to not engage in human rights abuses.

Note: there's no law requiring separation. This is a conscious choice by the Trump administration.

“Having children does not give you immunity from arrest and prosecution,” Attorney General Jeff Sessions has said as a warning to those who might try to enter the U.S. without proper documentation.

Now, Sessions claims that this zero tolerance, “You cross my border I take your baby,” policy is necessary in order to protect children because making the journey to America is often dangerous and should be discouraged.

Sessions apparently thinks that people coming into this country with children are using those children as shield against prosecution. What other reason could

**Children being taken from their parents and put in cages by the U.S. government. In your name. In my name. In my son's name.**

parents have for not leaving their child behind? Not to mention Sessions's assertion completely ignores the circumstances surrounding the family's coming to America in the first place, which are in most cases quite dire.

I mean, most Americans cannot even imagine a situation that would drive them to leave their homes, including everything they own and everyone they know, and risk their lives to enter another country where they have a chance to be safe and make a life for themselves. This is why so many Americans support Trump and Sessions and the whole hateful lot.

We shouldn't lose sight of the fact that there is a large number of Americans who are thrilled with what is going on. This is what they wanted. Sessions has dreamed of this moment since he was knee high to a racist.

Mind you, it's not the majority. The majority of Americans didn't vote for Trump and do not support these policies. Most people around the world are horrified by what is happening. And yet, besides voting these white supremacist scumbags out of office, what can you do?

Well, first, you must do that. You must vote. You must help others register to vote. You must help the campaign of a candidate who actually stands for this country's democratic values. Sitting on the sidelines is not an option unless you want to be complicit in this ugliness.

But on June 30 you can do something tangible. There's a rally in Washington D.C. where thousands will gather to tell the Trump administration that they must stop breaking of families. Trump knows that this policy plays well with his base and he's surrounded by sycophants and watches only Fox News. He needs to see that we are watching him.

If you can't make it to D.C. there are sister rallies being held all over the country. You can find one, or start one yourself online at [gaybe.am/Z9](http://gaybe.am/Z9).

And, yes, rallies are not the answer to the problem. They are an initial response. But joining together is powerful act. Do it for the families that would be together if only they could.

## ► Parting Glances

Continued from p. 12

“She wouldn't budge. She'd come out only when my husband or another man enters,” the caller said. “Never for me or my women friends.”

Scent of course is key (and it goes without saying that guys smell. They physically scent differently than gals. Especially ICON leather types).

According to Jim Lessenberry, director of the locally-based Animal Behavior Institute, “We know that dogs can identify and track to discreet scents emanating from five or more miles away.

“Animals can also zero in on clues that we



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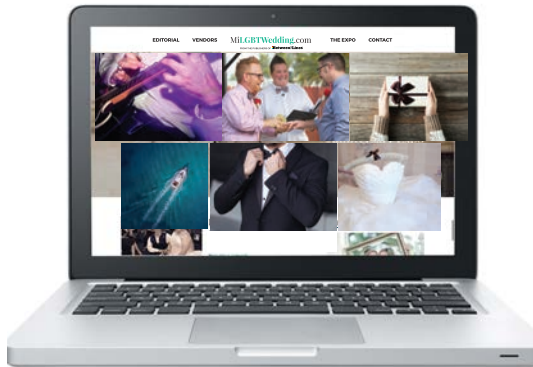
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## ► Trump HIV

Continued from p. 11

the efficiency, effectiveness, and impact of our efforts to achieve the goals of the National HIV/AIDS Strategy.”

For the new strategy in 2020, Wolitski said he had limited information, but said it's coming out in that year because that's when the previous report was set to expire.

“The NHAS is updated on a five-year cycle,” Wolitski said. “The first National HIV/AIDS Strategy was released in 2010, followed by the current plan which is operative from 2015-2020. We do not have any additional details to share with you at this point.”

The progress report itself enumerates gay and bisexual men among other groups as a population disproportionately affected by HIV/AIDS, as well as transgender women. While progress hasn't been achieved reducing HIV among gay and bisexual men, the report says the goals have been met in reducing the viral loads for transgender women in HIV care.

- For the goal of reducing the percentage of gay and bisexual men who have engaged in HIV risk behaviors by 10 percent, the report found the number climbed from 34.1 percent in 2013 to 35.2 percent in 2015. The annual target was 33.3 percent.

- For the goal of reducing the disparities in the rate of new diagnoses by at least 15 percent among gay and bisexual men, the report found the disparity steadily climbed from 20.5 to 22.7 in 2015. The annual target was 19.7.

- For the goal of reducing the disparities in the rate for new diagnoses by at least 15 percent among gay and bisexual men, the report found the disparity escalated from 109.4 in 2010 to 118.5 in 2015. The annual target was 105.3.

- For the goal of increasing the percentage of transgender women in HIV medical care who virally suppressed to at least 90 percent, the report found that number steadily increased from 62.2 percent in 2010 to 73.9 percent in 2015. The annual target was 71.9 percent.

“Indicators measuring disparities in new HIV diagnoses did not meet the annual target among gay and bisexual men overall, young Black gay and bisexual men, and among persons living in the southern United States,” the report says. “In contrast to these results, new HIV diagnosis disparities were reduced among Black women and the annual target was met.”

The report indicates goals among gay and bisexual men aren't met, while progress is made on other goals, such as increasing the number of people who know their HIV status and reducing the number of new diagnoses overall by at least 25 percent. The number of new diagnoses was 43,806 in 2010, but that number fell to 40,040 in 2015, according to preliminary data.

Wolitski said the Trump administration affirmed the strategy's enumeration of gay and bisexual men because those groups are heavily affected by it.

“The National HIV/AIDS Strategy was drafted to address the HIV-related concerns of all Americans,” Wolitski said. “It is important, however, for the strategy to recognize that certain populations are disproportionately affected by HIV in the United States. As in past reports, this progress report highlights a number of measurable indicators to determine whether the strategy was achieving its objectives, including HIV outcomes related to gay and bisexual men.”

Wolitski also noted gay and bisexual men aren't the only population enumerated in the report as disproportionately affected by HIV/AIDS.

“The strategy measures outcomes in a number of key groups that bear the greatest burdens of HIV or for whom key results are lagging,” Wolitski said. “Other groups specifically addressed in the 2017 Progress Report include: African-American women,

transgender women, youth, people who inject drugs and people living in the southern United States.”

Despite the enumeration of this data, Schmid said the report wasn't without faults, decrying how it excluded affirmation of the Affordable Care Act. Another absence was information on young gay Latinos, whom he said is another population where HIV/AIDS is “actually going up.”

Schmid also credited the Obama administration for laying the groundwork for the report. All the data, Schmid noted, goes until 2015, which was before Trump took office.

“The data is always lagging, so it doesn't represent the actual work of progress under the Trump administration,” Schmid said. “They're just reporting out on what occurred.”

Schmid said the report was expected on World AIDS Day on December 1, but it was only issued recently around Memorial Day. The report since that time has yet to receive significant attention in the media or elsewhere.

But it wasn't a surprise the Trump administration affirmed the National AIDS Strategy. Assistant Secretary of Health Brett Giroir, Schmid said, informed Congress the Trump administration would continue the Obama-era plan during his confirmation hearing.

“We've been hearing positive things from the administration on HIV,” Schmid said. “So, I was obviously pleased ... I think it's important for the community to know that they are moving forward.”

The Trump administration adopts the Obama-era strategy against HIV/AIDS as much of the internal infrastructure against the disease found in the previous administration is not in place. For starters, Trump has yet to appoint a director of the White House Office of National AIDS Policy, which was a position consistently filled in the Obama years.

The President's Advisory Council on HIV/AIDS, or PACHA, has gone without any members for nearly six months after Trump in December terminated the tenures of the Obama-era members, as first reported by the Washington Blade. Trump fired the remaining members of the council after six resigned in June 2017 over objections to the lack of an HIV strategy.

The most recent budget from the Trump administration for fiscal year 2019 also proposed modest cuts to domestic HIV programs, while making significant cuts to global programs. Congress is expected to unveil its own budget proposal in the coming days, which will address whether they're affirmed or rejected.

Schmid said he's heard from the Trump administration they intend to replace members of the President's Advisory Council on HIV/AIDS “soon, soon, soon.”

“I hope it's very soon because we need to have that check and that involvement with the community and the administration, and frankly, to keep the pressure on them,” Schmid said.

Wolitski said he had no update on when the administration would reappoint members of the President Advisory Council on HIV/AIDS.

“We don't have any new information about PACHA appointments, but will share that information once we have it,” Wolitski said.

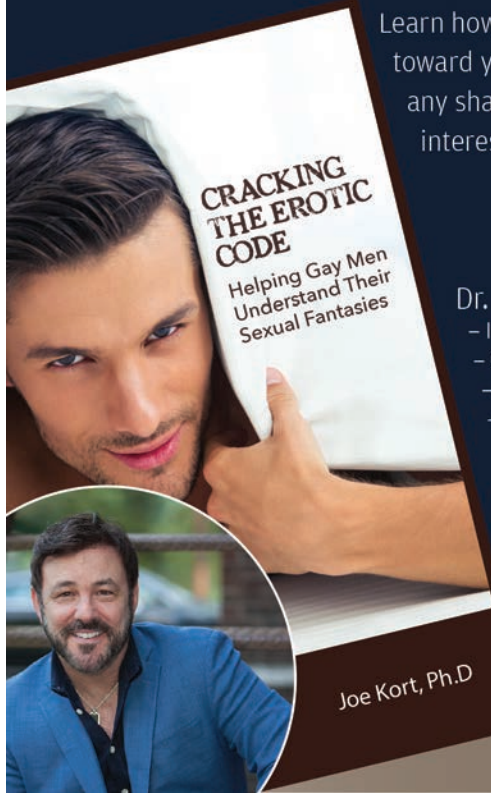
As for the appointment of a White House AIDS czar, Schmid said the Trump administration seems to have a general practice of decentralization to Cabinet departments.

“As long as the assistant secretary of health has the authority, has the leadership to implement these plans, to convene the different agencies, Cabinet agencies, we're comfortable with that,” Schmid said.

*This article originally appeared in the Washington Blade and is made possible in partnership with the National Gay Media Association.*



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# Star of Netflix's 'Queer Eye' Reboot Talks 'Open and Fluid' Sexuality, Crop Tops & Caring for Starstruck Fans

BY CHRIS AZZOPARDI

Even though Antoni Porowski is known for his avocados, on a recent afternoon he was contemplating the coconut, every sultry detail of the tropical fruit meticulously combed like that of someone's body during a first date. The fleshy inside, the milky liquid.

It's the first day of June when the Polish-Canadian wine-and-dine expert on Netflix's "Queer Eye" reboot rings and, oh right, we're talking about food. But gay America isn't hungry – it's thirsty AF. And because real lives are being changed thanks to Porowski, designer Bobby Berk, culture advisor Karamo Brown, stylist Tan France and groomer Jonathan Van Ness, it is also joyfully crying.

Season two of "Queer Eye" – note the dropping of its qualifier to be more inclusive – doesn't skimp on giving you opportunities to feel good about this otherwise not-good world, as the Fab Five imparts their best-life insight and general gay wisdom on a diverse group of clients, including the franchise's first woman and transgender man.

As Porowski continues to process his experience with the sudden upswing in gay male thirst and avocado sex puns (one Facebook commenter claims he was so compelled by Porowski's hotness, "I'm now cooking my own bloody guacamole"), the 34-year-old subject of culinary controversy talked critics and why variety truly is the spice of life.

**After the new Betty Who theme-song video for the show, where you're cradling avocados and wearing a crop top, the avocado dick puns are out in full force.**

I guess I asked for it, right? I'm literally wearing a crop top and unsuccessfully trying to juggle avocados, so I shouldn't be surprised.

**I must say, I do hope the crop top becomes a regular clothing theme of yours in the third season.**

(Laughs) Thanks! I do have to give credit where it's due, and that was 100 percent Tan France.

**When it comes to you, the thirst is real. What is that kind of attention like from the gay community?**

I do maintain a certain amount of ignorance to it and a kind of detachment. I learned quite early on, because there's been a lot of really amazing and positive and nice attention from the show. But with that, there's also gonna be certain haters and some negative and not-so-nice comments, so I've sort of decided that if I'm gonna take the good, I have to take the bad, so I've decided to take neither.

I take it all very lightly, with a small pinch of salt. It's entertaining and it's funny, but I just try to focus on what my next move is with this

show, with press that we're working on, living out of hotels for the past couple of months, and hoping that people really enjoy (this season) as much as they did the first.

**When you're living out of hotels, how do you maintain a healthy diet?**

I don't! That's the honest truth of it. My only thing is, I always love to have a proper gym, because I get up fairly early, and when you're jet-lagged, you don't really know what day of the week it is or what city you're in, which is often the case with me.

When we do go on press, and we discovered we were in London recently and Tan introduced me to the wonders of Nando's, which is a chain that they don't have here yet in the States, but it's this awesome PERi-PERi chicken. Had that for, like, four meals in a row with a bunch of PERi-PERi mayo, guilt-free with chicken livers, 'cause, I mean, I wanna live my life too. I'm not one to deny myself of the pleasures of, like, a good ripe stinky cheese on a fresh crusty baked bread in Paris.

**Oh, I've seen you indulge on the show.**

It happens.

**You're not afraid of some macaroni salad.**

There ya go! Well, but that wasn't my recipe.

**It wasn't, but you still ate it.**

Oh, I ate it. I'll try anything twice.

**Are you still trying to wrap your head around your overnight fame?**

Yeah. I mean, it certainly hits in waves. The next level of kind of acceptance of what's actually going on was when we were just recently in London, and when you experience people who've been waiting outside of your hotel with magazines to sign. It's kind of like, "Wow, you're a human with a life and a job, presumably, who wanted to wait to have a moment," and I'm grateful for it, but it's not something I want to be too comfortable with. It's very bizarre and very overwhelming, and it's a perpetual state of shock.

What my therapist tells me is, "Don't trust your feelings right now because you're constantly basically running on adrenaline – your life right now is pure adrenaline." It's been like overdrive, so it's just, take everything very lightly, focus on the next move, make sure you always have a bottle of water in your hand and that you're not drinking too much coffee, and that you rest whenever you can. And remember not to lean into your workaholic self, which is very alive and well in this new chapter of my life.

**What are your gay fan interactions outside of hotels like?**

# Antoni, AT YOUR SERVICE

Photo: Netflix



I feel like I'm pretty good at reading people, but with fans it's very different because the connection, like the energy and the direction of it, is very different. I always think, "Oh my gosh, I'm so uncomfortable after that interaction and I don't know why." Tan will tell me, "No, because they're experiencing this concept of being starstruck, of seeing someone on TV, and then you meet them in person and you don't really know how to behave."

So my thing is, ask them a question about themselves, try to make this a human interaction, and try to normalize it in the best way that you can, just to make sure that the person kind of has a nice, meaningful experience and they can leave happy. Sometimes I'm left, like, taking care of people. They'll come up and their mouth opens and they don't say anything, and you don't want to be presumptuous and be like, "Yeah! I'm the guy from that show!" But then once it becomes clear what show I'm on and the work that I do it's like, I have to kind of take care of them and be like, "Are you OK? It's fine. Here, do you want a hug? Do you want a photo?"

**You don't just go right in for the hug?**

No, I'm a little – yeah, I have more of a European sensibility. We like to kiss twice. Or: I don't know, healthy boundaries.

**Kiss twice, though? Everyone must enjoy meeting you.**

(Laughs)

**How has helping other people on this show changed your approach to your own life?**

I've had many passions: I studied psychology, that's what my bachelor's is in; I worked as a gallery director; I photographed vintage furniture; and on the acting side of things, that was something that was always very ego, where it was always how I want to be perceived. I wanted people to look and see and feel my presence, whereas with the show, it actually isn't that at all. That became very clear with episode one: the energy is directed in the other direction, so it's really us being of service to this person that we're helping and figuring out how best we can benefit their lives in such a short amount of time and try to impact them in a meaningful way.

**We see that happen in the first episode of season two, with "Mama Tammye."**

Mama Tammye is an example who spun it on us, and doesn't even taken care of herself and shows up as a teacher and as a member of her church, and for the five of us.

**You cried at the end of that episode. Of you five, who cries the most?**

You're talking to him! When you hear somebody's struggle, or especially when they've overcome something or made a choice like Tammye – there was a lot of pain and a lot of fear and borderline hateful

feelings toward gays, and she realized that it was her perspective that was wrong, and she's a beacon of hope for people. It's possible at any age. If you have people like Tammye who were able to figure it out, there's no excuse for the rest of us.

**Even though you've been with men and women, you've said that you don't like to call yourself bisexual. Have you found the best way to explain your sexual orientation to people yet?**

Not really. And it's not something that I feel too pressured to figure out. Sometimes I have very strong opinions about how to cook a filet of salmon so the skin remains crispy and doesn't stick to the pan, but with a lot of things, I don't like being the expert. I'd rather go in and be like, "I don't know." There's a power in that for me. It's sort of like going in with humility and saying, "I'm still trying to figure it out."

While I don't think I'm trying to figure out my sexuality, I'm just not as concerned with it anymore. My 20s were a really hard time for me of figuring out what the hell I wanted to do with my life. And being in my 30s, now that I kind of have a point and purpose with what I'm doing in this chapter of my life, it's just, I'm happy where I'm at and that's all that really matters.

Look, that (coming out) conversation with AJ in that changing room in season one, that was seriously a byproduct. Tan brought me along because we both had similar experiences. He as a Muslim and me just as the individual that I am. We're both so completely different, but we have the same feelings about what it was like to come out, and that it's this dynamic process, like (out actor) Charlie Carver recently – a fellow Gay Times alum – feels he's constantly still coming out, that it's this continued thing, that it doesn't just happen once and you shoot your proverbial load and it's done; you have to keep doing it over and over again. Some people don't, but it's not like a start, stop. And I don't need that pressure in my life to try to find myself in any way where I feel like I'm locked into something. I'd just rather keep it open and fluid, because that's how I am with the books that I read, the music that I listen to. All of my interests are always changing, and it's a constant dynamic process, and so is my sexuality.

**These days, there is obviously less pressure to subscribe to any one label, or stick to the binary.**

For people who want to be not binary, go right ahead. If that helps you sleep better at night and you feel more like you're better and truer version of yourself, then 100 percent, you should be able to pursue that with freedom and – is today June 1?

**Today is June 1.**

It has me thinking about Pride and what Pride means: the ability to be the truest version of

See Antoni, page 21



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# Ann Arbor Mayor Announces New LGBTQ Liaison

BY BTL STAFF

Mayor Christopher Taylor announced just last month the appointment of Travis Radina to serve as the new LGBTQ liaison to the mayor's office. Radina was appointed to replace former LGBTQ liaison, Brad O'Furey, who resigned earlier in May due to work conflicts.

"While Brad O'Furey continues to be an important voice in Ann Arbor's local LGBTQ community, I am proud to announce that w," Taylor said. "As president of the Jim Toy Community Center, Travis is already well-connected to many of our region's LGBTQ residents and organizations, and he is uniquely positioned to ensure the voices and perspectives of an incredibly diverse LGBTQ community are always well-represented within City Hall."

Radina is currently serving in his second year as president of the board of the Jim Toy Community Center, Washtenaw County's LGBTQ Resource Center and has served on the organization's board of directors for nearly four years. Radina is also Senior Global Engagement Manager at the Alumni Association of the University



Travis Radina with Mayor Christopher Taylor will be the next LGBTQ liaison to the mayor's office.

of Michigan, supporting the engagement efforts of alumni association chapters on the East Coast and in western and northern Michigan. Radino also works with several global affiliate groups, including the U-M LGBTQ Alumni and U-M Black Alumni.

Radina previously spent five years working in the legislative office of former

Michigan State Representative and Democratic Floor Leader Kate Segal – initially as her constituent services director and later as her legislative director.

"I look forward to working with Mayor Taylor, Sgt. Dawn Murphy – the police department's LGBTQ liaison – the Human Rights Commission and Ann Arbor's diverse LGBTQ community to ensure that Ann Arbor continues to be a welcoming and equitable place to live, work, raise a family and visit," Radina said. "Under Mayor Taylor's leadership, Ann Arbor has received perfect scores on the Human Rights Campaign's Municipal Equality Index, and our city has made significant progress toward achieving increased visibility and equity for our LGBTQ residents. I am honored to be given this opportunity to build upon Ann Arbor's already long history of leadership on LGBTQ rights and to continue the work that Mayor Taylor and Brad already started."

*Radina's appointment as LGBTQ liaison to the mayor's office is effective immediately. Residents can reach him at travisr@jimtoycenter.org.*

# Ann Arbor Summer Festival Lineup

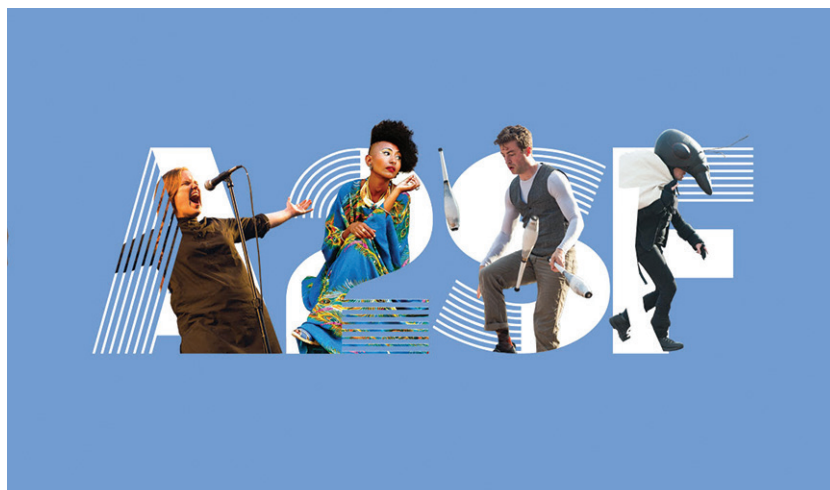
This year marks the 35th consecutive Ann Arbor Summer Festival, a longstanding tradition that showcases some of the best of Ann Arbor's art and music scenes – with its fair share of national acts, too. And though the event got started on June 8, it will run for four weeks until the end of June on Saturday, June 30. Here is an all-inclusive schedule that lists the remaining events until the event's end.

## Thursday, June 21

- 5 p.m. Retreat: The Psyche System
- 5 p.m. KidZone: Ann Arbor Hands-On Museum
- 5 p.m. Ann Arbor Guitar Trio
- 5:30 p.m. Buzzed Bee
- 6 p.m. Abigail Stauffer
- 7 p.m. Dave Sharp Worlds Quartet
- 8:30 p.m. AlSarah and the Nubatones
- 10 p.m. The Big Sack

## Friday, June 22

- 5 p.m. Retreat: Introduction to the Way of the Japanese Sword
- 5 p.m. KidZone: International Institute, Center for Japanese Studies, and AFS



- 5 p.m. MYNA
- 6 p.m. Janelle Reichman Trio
- 7 p.m. Nadim Azzam
- 8:30 p.m. Madelyn Grant
- 10:15 p.m. Thornetta Davis

## Saturday, June 23

- 5 p.m. Retreat: Introduction to the Ninja Martial Arts
- 5 p.m. KidZone: Stone School Cooperative Preschool
- 5 p.m. Elle Casazza
- 6 p.m. Spencer Michaud
- 7 p.m. The Stellars
- 8:30 p.m. Adam Plomaritas
- 10:15 p.m. Seth Bernard

See Ann Arbor Summerfest, page 20

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► **Ann Arbor Summerfest**

Continued from p. 19

**Sunday, June 24**

5 p.m. Retreat: Afro Vin Flow Yoga w/ Marty  
5 p.m. KidZone: C.S. Mott Children's Hospital  
5 p.m. Chey Halliwill  
6 p.m. Shari Kane & Dave Steele  
7 p.m. KidsRock: Milkshake  
8:15 p.m. Hoodang  
10 p.m. Remember the Titans

**Tuesday, June 26**

4:30 p.m. Polyglot Theatre's Ants  
5 p.m. Retreat: TBC  
5 p.m. KidZone: University Center for Language and Literacy  
5 p.m. Tasting Tuesdays  
5 p.m. Harrington Brown  
5:30 p.m. Long Table Discussion – Zero Waste  
5:45 p.m. Polyglot Theatre's Ants  
6 p.m. Bike Night  
6:15 p.m. Dede and the Dream  
6:30 p.m. At the Illusionist's Table  
7 p.m. Polyglot Theatre's Ants  
8 p.m. Big Sam's Funky Nation  
9:30 p.m. At the Illusionist's Table  
10 p.m. Some Like it Hot

**Wednesday, June 27**

5 p.m. Retreat: Zen Moon Flow  
5 p.m. KidZone: Keith Hafner's Karate  
5 p.m. Warren & Flick  
5 p.m. Wine Down Wednesdays  
5:30 p.m. Letterpress Workshop  
6 p.m. Audra Kubat  
6:30 p.m. At the Illusionist's Table  
6:45 p.m. Madcat Midnight Blues Journey  
8 p.m. The Dustbowl Revival  
9:30 p.m. At the Illusionist's Table  
10 p.m. Galaxy Quest

**Thursday, June 28**

4:30 p.m. Polyglot Theatre's Ants  
5 p.m. Retreat: Argentine Tango  
5 p.m. KidZone: UM Museum of Natural History  
5 p.m. Oh Brother Big Sister  
5 p.m. Slam Poetry & DJs  
5:45 p.m. Polyglot Theatre's Ants  
6:15 p.m. Dave Menzo  
6:30 p.m. At the Illusionist's Table  
7 p.m. Polyglot Theatre's Ants  
7 p.m. A Photo Exhibit by Myra Klarman  
8 p.m. The Go Rounds  
8 p.m. Jazzmeia Horn  
9:30 p.m. At the Illusionist's Table  
10 p.m. Isle of Dogs

**Friday, June 29**

5 p.m. Retreat: Slow Vinyasa Flow  
5 p.m. KidZone: Leslie Science and Nature Center  
5 p.m. Rebecca Rosen  
6 p.m. Max Bowen Trio  
6:30 p.m. At the Illusionist's Table  
7 p.m. Sumkali  
8:30 p.m. The Ragbirds  
9:30 p.m. At the Illusionist's Table  
10:30 p.m. K. Jones and the Benzie Playboys

**Saturday, June 30**

5 p.m. Retreat: Zumba  
5 p.m. KidZone: Michigan Creativity Association  
5 p.m. Adam Labeaux  
6 p.m. ROLLIE Tussing  
6:30 p.m. At the Illusionist's Table  
7 p.m. Lushh  
8:30 p.m. Chirp  
9:30 p.m. At the Illusionist's Table  
10:15 p.m. Lady Sunshine and The X Band

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► **Antoni**

Continued from p. 17

yourself without any negative consequence or fear of being persecuted or judged or criticized or hurt for it. And whatever that is for a person, however you define yourself or don't define yourself, you should be able to do that with total freedom. I know that's utopian and idealistic, but that's really something to strive for and something the show has reminded me of.

**I read that you were a private chef for some high-profile clients. High profile as in celebrities?**

So with food, it was something that kind of happened accidentally, cooking for people. There were some I'm not allowed to discuss, but in the sports world in New York there was somebody I was working for in particular where we would host these intimate dinner parties. And I remember as a kid when we would have dinner parties at my parents' house, everyone would always gravitate toward the kitchen; that's where the heart of the home is.

**Where the smells originate.**

Exactly. That's where the slow-roasted garlic wafts are emanating from. And for me, I'm not a traditional classically trained chef where I'm in a kitchen and I'm doing my own thing; I am an entertainer, that's who I am. And I love food and I love playing with it, and I love preparing it for people. It's how I show my love. So, it sort of became this whole thing. We would make short ribs and I would just talk to people. She's a close friend who works in the sports world and she was the one who kind of started this whole thing for me, kind of recommended me to other people in the biz, and then afterwards, I met (original "Queer Eye" foodie and "Chopped" host) Ted Allen and worked as his personal assistant but also cooked for him and we did dinners, like "Chopped" barbecues, for some of his cast members and crew on his show. It sort of evolved in this weird, organic way while I had other jobs. It was sort of a side

thing I did every now and then. It wasn't a regularly occurring everyday thing where I showed up and made breakfast, lunch and dinner for someone. I was never one like that for any job. I've always had, like, 10 different things going on at the same time.

**If you could cook for any celebrity, who would it be and what would you cook?**

Dead or alive?

**They can be dead.**

I would take something off of the menu at Voltaire in Paris and I would prepare it for Oscar Wilde, and I would slap my copy of "De Profundis" in front of him and be like, "We're gonna talk about this for five hours and I'm gonna feed your belly and I'm gonna get you drunk, and you're just gonna tell me everything and answer all of my questions." And then I would also maybe throw Allen Ginsberg in there, and why not Jack Kerouac? And who else? I'd throw in Virginia Woolf and she'd tell me all about "Orlando."

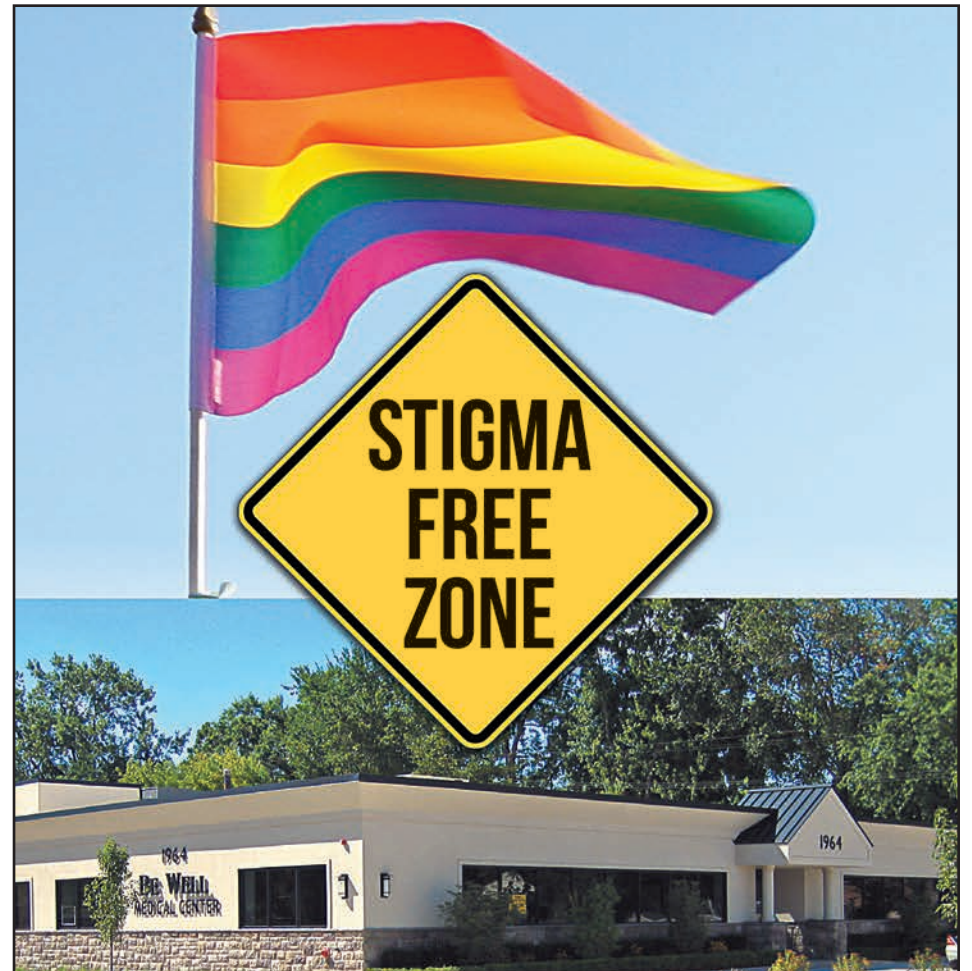
**You're on a desert island and you can survive off one food, what's the food?**

I love a fresh coconut. You crack it and you have the milk, which is so delicious, but the flesh too. There's that creamy part on the inside that you can scoop with a spoon, and then there's the really hard shell part that, if you roast it with sugar, it gets caramelized and really nice and crunchy. So, I think coconuts. I'd get fed up with them after a week, but I don't know what food I wouldn't get fed up about, truly. Ask me again tomorrow.

**I've never thought about the flesh of a coconut until now, and it sounds weirdly sexy.**

(Laughs) Oh, think about it. Go buy a fresh coconut and think of me.

*As editor of Q Syndicate, the international LGBTQ wire service, Chris Azzopardi has interviewed a multitude of superstars, including Meryl Streep, Mariah Carey and Beyoncé. Reach him via his website at [www.chris-azzopardi.com](http://www.chris-azzopardi.com) and on Twitter (@chrisazzopardi).*



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# Collision of Gays, Gentrification and Race Explored in Michigan Premiere Drama

## Slipstream Theatre Initiative Spurs Discussion with 'St. Sebastian'

BY DONALD V. CALAMIA

As more and more young people from Detroit's suburbs find jobs in the city and settle into some of its historic black neighborhoods, longtime residents have expressed concern over what impact such changes will have on their communities. Beginning June 15, Ferndale's Slipstream Theatre Initiative tackles the hot-button topic of gentrification, but with a twist perfectly suited to stimulate discussion during Pride month.

"'St. Sebastian' is about a gay couple, a gay white couple, that find a very affordable repo house in a historically black neighborhood," New York City and Indianapolis-based playwright Andrew Kramer recently told BTL. "One partner thinks it's a good opportunity for them to make some money by flipping it and reselling it at a higher cost; the other partner slowly but surely starts to take pretty big issue with this. And that only becomes further complicated when they meet one of their neighbors, who is a young, black boy."

It's a subject with which the author is intimately familiar, as it's one he himself experienced.

"I actually was flipping a house with my partner," Kramer explained. "(He) decided that he was going to get this really cheap repo



Richard Payton, David Wilson and Jackson Abohasira star in "St. Sebastian" at Slipstream Theatre Initiative June 15 – July 8. Photo: Jan Cartwright Photography

house in an African-American neighborhood, and I just was sort of along for the ride."

The journey, however, was fraught with much soul searching.

"It was his first flip, and neither of us knew what we were really doing, literally, in sort of like a logistic sense," Kramer said. "As we started to settle in, much like the couple in the play, I was like, 'Wait a minute, I think this is a lot more complicated than we originally thought.' And that's not about putting up walls and picking paint colors; that's literally about our presence in the neighborhood – and what

we were doing to the neighborhood economics and all sorts of other really tough questions and complicated thoughts."

The two were the only whites in what Kramer calls a "a little pocket neighborhood" just north of Downtown Indianapolis, anchored by "a beautiful African American church on the corner" and a half dozen or so streets that surrounded their house. "It was an interesting experience. One of the characters in the play says, 'We're not contributing to a problem, we're starting one.' I thought about that a lot."

Kramer was especially concerned how he

and his partner would be received by their neighbors, given the ever-increasing racial tensions in the country. "Tamir Rice had just been killed in Cleveland, and I'm from Cleveland. So that was really hard; it was on my mind a lot. And there's the question of responsibility that I kept thinking about as a greater citizen of the world. And so I, of course, did a whole bunch of spiral thinking, like, 'They don't want us here.' And it wasn't that I was mad about that or angry about that, it was like I understood it in a way that I had never really considered before."

In hindsight, such thinking built a war between them and their neighbors that might not have been necessary. "I'm certain they probably would have come over and said hello to us and been lovely, but because of my nervousness, and sort of unwillingness to stoke any kind of potential fires that would have been there, and because of the larger political scope of the world, we really did keep to ourselves. We did not meet them, and it was a pretty solitary confinement. I think that that's interesting, given that it was on us coming into their neighborhood, and we chose to remain sort of solitary."

It was a decision Kramer thought about throughout his time in the house – and it's one he examines throughout his play.

"One side says yes, we should, as a member of this community, be doing our due diligence to meet people and say hello and introduce ourselves, and create and contribute to this sort of like lovely neighborhood that we've moved into," he said. "That's Monday morning. And then on Tuesday morning I would wake up and think, 'But no, maybe we shouldn't be here at all, because it's not that we should go and say hi, and it's not that we should go and be neighborly. It's like, what if they don't want that?'"

But it was more than that: The two were there simply as temporary custodians of the property. "We didn't plan to live here. We planned to literally make this house – quote-unquote – better. Which means a higher price, which means pricing people out, which means changing the neighborhood, which means – you know, all of that stuff. So it was a lot of Monday morning thinking turning into Tuesday morning thinking that was exactly opposite of the twenty-four hours before it."

See *Collision of Gays*, page 26

### PERFORMING

#### St. Sebastian. Slipstream Theatre Initiative

460 Hilton Rd., Ferndale

313-986-9156

\$12

8 p.m. Friday, June 15, 22, 29, July 6

8 p.m. Saturday, June 16, 23, 30, July 7

7 p.m. Sunday, June 17, 24, July 1, 8

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## Chromeo Headlines at Royal Oak Music Theatre

Montreal-based electro-funk duo  
Chromeo is heading to Michigan's  
Royal Oak Music Theatre on  
Friday, June 22. Comprised of  
David "Dave 1" Macklovitch and  
Patrick "P-Thugg" Gemayel,  
Chromeo has been making music  
since 2002 and has released  
five studio albums, including  
their latest album "Head Over  
Heels," which came out June  
15. The show starts at 8 p.m.  
and tickets start at \$28.50. More  
information can be found online at  
royaloakmusictheatre.com.

Photo by Tim Saccenti

# Happenings

## OUTINGS

### Saturday, June 23

**2018 Season Home Bout #4: East  
Lansing vs. Cadillac DeVillains** 6 p.m.  
ELRD hosts their fourth bout of the season  
featuring the first bout of 2018, at home  
for our B-team, the Broadbarians! Our  
opponents for the evening are one of  
Michigan's newest teams to roller derby,  
Court One Training Center, 7868 Old  
M-78, East Lansing. 989-205-1888 join@  
mittenmavens.net join@mittenmavens.  
net http://mittenmavens.net/join/  
bootcamp https://www.facebook.com/  
events/178844906072575/?ti=icl

### Tuesday, June 26

**Strand with Trans Support Groups  
- Ann Arbor - Washtenaw** 6:30 p.m.  
Journey of Faith Christian Church, 1900  
Manchester Road, Ann Arbor. http://www.  
standwithtrans.org

### Saturday, June 30

**Great Lakes Bay Pride Festival** 12  
p.m. The Great Lakes Bay Pride Festival  
aims to build a community that inspires  
engagement, equality, and respect for  
all throughout the Great Lakes Bay  
Region and beyond. Wenonah Park,  
800 N Water St, Bay City. http://www.  
greatlakesbaypride.org

### Monday, July 1

**Stand with Trans 2018 Support  
Groups - Adrian-Lenawee County**  
6:30 p.m. Hilltop Counseling, 115 W.  
Maumee Street, Adrian. 313-909-5408  
www.standwithtrans.org http://www.  
hilltopcounseling.org

### Wednesday, July 3

**Stand with Trans 2018 Support Groups  
- Lake Orion / Oakland County** 7 p.m. St.  
Mary's In The Hills Episcopal Church, 2512  
Joslyn Court, Lake Orion. 248-391-0663  
www.stmarysinthehills.org http://www.  
standwithtrans.org

### Monday, July 9

**Stand with Trans 2018 Support  
Groups - Macomb County** 6:30 p.m.  
Dakota High School, 21051 21 Mile  
Road, Macomb. 586-723-2700 http://  
www.chippewavalleyhighschools.org/schools/  
high-schools/dhs/

### Wednesday, July 11

**Stand with Trans Youth Support Group  
- Flint - Genesee** 6:30 p.m. Unitarian  
Universalist Congregation of Flint, 2474 S.  
Ballenger Hwy, Flint. 810-232-4023 uflint.  
org http://www.standwithtrans.org

### Thursday, July 12

**Detroit Regional LGBT Chamber  
of Commerce Merge & Mixer** 6:30  
p.m. Michigan Employee Resource  
Groups for Equality (MERGE) Monthly  
Networking Event. All are welcomed  
to network. Host by: Detroit Regional  
LGBT Chamber of Commerce. Check  
website for monthly location, RSVP is  
Required. An event every month that  
begins at 6:30pm on day Second of  
the month, repeating until December  
13. Soho, 205 W. 9 Mile Road, Ferndale.  
248-542-7646 info@detroitlgbtchamber.  
com info@detroitlgbtchamber.com  
www.ferndalesoho.com http://www.  
detroitlgbtchamber.com

### Saturday, July 14

**Detroit: You're So Unusual Bus Tour  
(Part Un)** 1 p.m. This  
fun, quirky motor  
coach tour goes  
beyond the familiar

Detroit landmarks and showcases the cool,  
curious, unfamiliar, and forgotten sites  
of interest located within the city's vast  
139 square miles. 2934 Russell Street,  
2934 Russell St, Detroit. 313.757.1283  
marionchristiansen@comcast.net  
marionchristiansen@comcast.net https://  
cityourdetroit.com/detroit-youre-so-  
unusual-bus-tours/ https://cityourdetroit.  
com/detroit-youre-so-unusual-bus-tours/

**Summer Osborne in Concert** 7 p.m.  
Summer Osborne is one of the hottest  
new voices in the Women's Music Scene.  
An award winning singer-songwriter from  
St. Louis, Missouri, her powerful vocals  
and artful storytelling illuminate the  
power of spirituality, truth, love. Unitarian  
Universalist Congregation of Flint, 2474 S.  
Ballenger Hwy, Flint. 810-232-4023 uflint.  
org http://office@uflint.org

## Erasure with Reed and Caroline at 20 Monroe Live

Erasure is an English synthpop duo that has  
made itself something of an icon within the  
LGBTQ community. Since 1985, openly gay  
member Andy Bell bell has been a positive  
influence on many LGBTQs. Now, the group will  
be doing a performance on Wednesday, July 25 at Grand Rapids' 20 Monroe Live, hosted by the  
Grand Rapids Pride Center. The group will be joined by New York-based band Reed and Caroline.





## Marriage Equality Anniversary Celebration at Jim Toy Community Center

This annual celebration held by the Jim Toy Community Center marks the day, Sunday, June 24, when marriage equality was made law in 2015. The Ann Arbor LGBTQ community center will be hosting events from 10 a.m. to 7 p.m. ranging from brunch to dance parties. More information about the event and a full schedule can be found online on the center's Facebook page or by going to [jimtoycenter.org](http://jimtoycenter.org).



### Thursday, July 19

**Safetalk Training** 10 a.m. Hosted by American Indian Health and Family Services and American Foundation for Suicide Prevention, safeTALK is a half-day alertness training that prepares anyone 15 or older, regardless of prior experience or training, to become a suicide-alert helper. Affirmations, 290 W. Nine Mile Road, Ferndale. 248-398-7105

### MUSIC & MORE

**Fairy Tale Festival 2018 at Edsel & Eleanor Ford House** June 23, 10 a.m. Adventurers from far and wide are invited to explore the daring tale of Robin Hood on the grounds of Ford House. Little lords, ladies, jolly outlaws and fairy folk will enjoy games, crafts, performances and Edsel & Eleanor Ford House, 1100 Lake Shore Rd, Grosse Pointe Shores. 3138844222 [info@fordhouse.org](mailto:info@fordhouse.org) <http://www.fordhouse.org>

**Ann Arbor Summer Festival 2018 Main Stage Lineup Continues!** June 26-July 2, 6:30 p.m. AT THE ILLUSIONIST'S TABLE: Hosted by the world-renowned Scottish mentalist/storyteller Scott Silven, 22 strangers will share an elegant candlelit 3-course meal as mesmerizing illusions complement everything from the cocktails to the dessert course. Ann Arbor Club, 103 E. Liberty, 3rd Floor, Ste 300, Ann Arbor. 734-764-2538 [info@a2sf.org](mailto:info@a2sf.org) <http://a2sf.org>

**Ann Arbor Summer Festival 2018 Main Stage Lineup Continues!** June 28, 8 p.m. After winning the coveted top honor at the Thelonious Monk and Sarah Vaughan jazz vocal competitions, the 26-year-old breakout jazz singer, Jazzmeia Horn, is a talent ready to take her place alongside the best headlining Power Center, 121 Fletcher Street, Ann Arbor. (734) 647-3327 [info@a2sf.org](mailto:info@a2sf.org) [http://smt.d.umich.edu/about/facilities/central\\_campus/power/index.htm](http://smt.d.umich.edu/about/facilities/central_campus/power/index.htm) <http://a2sf.org/events/jazzmeia-horn/>

**Satori Circus presents "Stroke"** June 29, 8 p.m. SATORI CIRCUS will perform a new original performance art piece titled, "Stroke" at the Tangent Gallery / Hastings Street Ballroom. Also performing will be the theatrical rock performance group, The Haberdasher from Port Huron, MI. Tangent Gallery, 715 East Milwaukee Avenue, Detroit. 2484451277 <https://www.facebook.com/events/252206855341425/>

**Ann Arbor Summer Festival 2018 Mainstage Lineup Continues!** July 4, 4 p.m. In their annual 4th of July appearance, America's foremost political satirists, The Capitol Steps, are here with this year's biggest stars—Mike Pence, Hillary Clinton, Vladimir Putin, Bernie Sanders, and those who were gone too soon—Sean Power Center, 121 Fletcher Street, Ann Arbor. (734) 647-3327 [info@a2sf.org](mailto:info@a2sf.org) [http://smt.d.umich.edu/about/facilities/central\\_campus/power/index.htm](http://smt.d.umich.edu/about/facilities/central_campus/power/index.htm) <http://a2sf.org/events/the-capitol-steps/>

**Kubat, Finlay & Rose in Concert!** July 6, 8 p.m. The Detroit singer-songwriter trio Kubat, Finlay and Rose will mark their Ann Arbor debut performance at Michigan's historical folk venue, The Ark. Celebrate a night of harmony and story through song wit <https://www.facebook.com/events/1507965139333102/> The Ark, 316 S.Main St., Ann Arbor. 734-763-TKTS [www.theark.org](http://www.theark.org) <https://www.facebook.com/events/1507965139333102/>

**Matrix School of Theatre Summer Creativity Camps** July 9, 9 a.m. Get ready for a great experience at Matrix School of Theatre's Summer Creativity Camps! Sign up today and work with a professional artist to write your own play and perform it in a safe, supportive space. Matrix Theatre Company, 2730 Bagley St., Detroit. 313-967-0599 [info@matrixtheatre.org](mailto:info@matrixtheatre.org) <https://www.matrixtheatre.org/summer-creativity-camps>

**Detroit: You're So Unusual Bus Tour (Part Un)** July 14, 1 p.m. This fun, quirky motor coach tour goes beyond the familiar Detroit landmarks and showcases the cool, curious, unfamiliar, and forgotten sites of interest located within the city's vast 139 square miles. 2934 Russell Street, 2934 Russell St, Detroit. 313.757.1283 [marionchristiansen@comcast.net](mailto:marionchristiansen@comcast.net) <https://citytourdetroit.com/detroit-youre-so-unusual-bus-tours/>

**Summer Osborne in Concert** July 14, 7 p.m. Summer Osborne is one of the hottest new voices in the Women's Music Scene. An award winning singer-songwriter from St. Louis, Missouri, her powerful vocals and artful storytelling illuminate the power of spirituality, truth, love Unitarian Universalist Congregation of Flint, 2474 S. Ballenger Hwy, Flint. 810-232-4023 [uuf Flint.org](http://uuf Flint.org) [office@uuf Flint.org](http://office@uuf Flint.org)

### ART 'N' AROUND

**Star Wars and the Power of Costume** June 15-September 28, 9 a.m. Star Wars™ and the Power of Costume explores the challenges in dressing the Star Wars universe from the Galactic Senate and royalty to the Jedi, Sith and Droids™. Detroit Institute of Arts, 2100 Woodward Ave., Detroit. 313-833-7900 <https://www.dia.org/starwarsattheDIA>

**Fairy Tale Festival 2018 at Edsel & Eleanor Ford House** June 23, 10 a.m. Adventurers from far and wide are invited to explore the daring tale of Robin Hood on the grounds of Ford House. Little lords, ladies, jolly outlaws and fairy folk will enjoy games, crafts, performances and Edsel & Eleanor Ford House, 1100 Lake Shore Rd, Grosse Pointe Shores. 3138844222 [info@fordhouse.org](mailto:info@fordhouse.org) <http://www.fordhouse.org>

**The Residence: Contemporary Visual Art Exhibition** June 29, 6 p.m. Come celebrate local emerging artists who not only create really cool pieces inspired by the city, but teach and mentor children in Detroit Public Libraries! Holding House, 3546 Michigan Avenue, Detroit. [jessica@projectart.org](mailto:jessica@projectart.org) <http://www.holdinghousedetroit.com/>

### THEATER

**A2CT Auditions for Dirty Rotten Scoundrels** June 24, 2 p.m. At the initial auditions, June 24-25, all should come in before the start of auditions, fill out forms, and sign up for a singing slot. Auditions begin with the entire group learning a short dance One event on June 25 at 7:00pm A2CT Studio Theatre, 322 W. Ann St., Ann Arbor. 734-971-2228 <http://www.a2ct.org/audition>

**Polyglot Theatre's Ants** June 26-28, 4:30 p.m. Ants is an interactive roving performance which has giant ants bringing children together in a gentle and intriguing landscaping project. Gradually a world of meaning unfolds, illustrating the human desire for order. Perfect for kids. Top of the Park, 915 E. Washington St., Ann Arbor. 734-994-5999 [info@a2sf.org](mailto:info@a2sf.org) <https://a2sf.org/category/top-of-the-park/> <http://a2sf.org/events/polyglot-theatres-ants-1/>

**Disney's The Lion King at The Wharton Center** July 11-July28, 7:30 p.m. Giraffes strut. Birds swoop. Gazelles leap. The entire Serengeti comes to life as never before. And as the music soars, Pride Rock slowly emerges from the mist. THE LION KING, is making its triumphant return. Wharton Center, 750 E. Shaw Lane, East Lansing. 517-353-1982 [www.whartoncenter.com](http://www.whartoncenter.com) <http://www.whartoncenter.com/events>

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Playwright Andrew Kramer.

### ► Collision of Gays

Continued from p. 26

From opening the door for the first time to selling it, Kramer and his partner lived in the house for about two years. "It was a changing point in both our lives," Kramer said. "And I got a play out of it."

That play is exactly what Slipstream's artistic director was searching for when planning his company's June schedule.

"We were looking for something in the Pride slot that didn't fall under the glittery, gay men (category) that we've done for the last three seasons," said Bailey Boudreau, who is also directing the play. "We wanted something that expressed pride in a different kind of way, and outside of just gay men — addressed color, and not just homosexuality, but race, and pride, and community, and pride in Detroit. And pride in, you know, who we are as people."

In addition, Boudreau was looking for something that his young artists could sink their teeth into. "They're a lot less stuck in one realm," he said. "They're a lot less gay man or lesbian, or black or white, or this or that. They're much freer. So we wanted to try to encompass that in our Pride month."

It was a chance encounter that brought Boudreau and Kramer together: a staged reading of Slipstream's production of Maxim Vinogradov's award-winning "A Night of Stars with Tennessee Williams" at The American College Theater Festival held at the University of Indianapolis this past January. "So he sent us a couple of plays, and this one struck me, because I thought the characters were really, really well developed. And I was really excited by a playwright who could give me something that was no set, and you don't need lights, you don't need any of the stage

magic. You just need really good actors to tell the story."

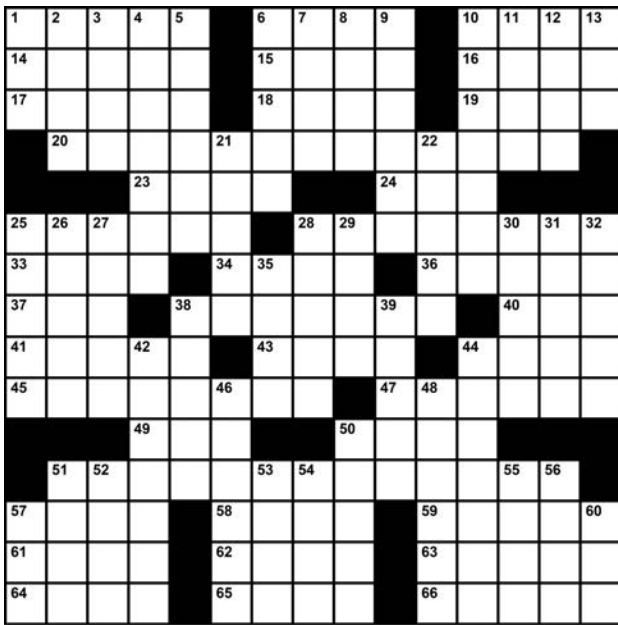
And that he has. The Michigan premiere of "St. Sebastian" will star local favorite Richard Payton, who Boudreau immediately knew would be perfect for the show. "So it was just casting around Richard, which was pretty easy, because he's incredibly great to work with, but he's also incredibly gracious and I knew that if he could work with some younger actors, it would be a really beneficial experience for them. And so it worked out that way."

After minor accommodations were made by the playwright to adjust the characters' ages, the director had his ideal cast. Payton's partner will be played by rising star Jackson Abohasira, who "holds his own," Boudreau said. David Wilson will complete the cast as the young neighbor.

For Kramer, his expectations are that his play will stimulate a much needed conversation — and it may not be a comfortable one for many people, especially white liberals. "As we progress and as we become more linguistically savvy about the words that we use to call things, I think that we have to have a discussion about queerness, especially white queerness," he said. "About what white queer people, especially white gay men, think that they're allowed to do and say. And so it gets really complicated when you have queerness butting its head against race. And what then — and this is totally what the play is about — how do we even begin to literally talk about it? What are the literal words and the literal language to sit down with someone and say, 'This is who you are, and I understand it in my own way. This is who I am, I think you understand it in your own way. How can we talk about this?'"

"Because I don't think we know how to yet. And I hope that we will learn soon."





## Stephanie Clifford on TV

### Q Puzzle

#### Across

- 1 Hatcher, on "Desperate Housewives"  
 6 Folded fast food  
 10 Frequent Trump portrayer Baldwin  
 14 Joe Cocker's "You \_\_\_ Beautiful"  
 15 Sandy-colored  
 16 Caesar's voice

- 17 Sgt. of a '90s Steve Martin flick  
 18 West Hollywood pollution  
 19 Suffix with prefer  
 20 Start of a quote in a skit: "I know you don't believe in \_\_\_"  
 23 YMCA member?  
 24 Drag  
 25 Peter Allen's "Once \_\_\_ I Go"  
 28 Meat that you hold in your hand

- 33 Tools for the Tin Man  
 34 Lothario  
 36 Gladiator area  
 37 More of the quote  
 38 Source of the quote and stage name of Ms. Clifford  
 40 The skit was done on this TV show  
 41 Word of parting  
 43 Peter by the piano  
 44 Banana stalk  
 45 Aromatic evergreen of Nureyev's land?  
 47 Like a zombie's stare  
 49 Mary, in Montmartre (abbr.)  
 50 Tiny bottle  
 51 More of the quote  
 57 Lesbian porn star Hartley  
 58 Sounds from the "Giant" set  
 59 Scroll at Beth Chayim Chadashim  
 61 Vows for many gays these days  
 62 Lube ingredient  
 63 Rudely sarcastic  
 64 End of the quote  
 65 Do-overs for Billie Jean  
 66 Written test type

#### Down

- 1 Queen in "Romeo and Juliet"  
 2 "Spamalot" writer Idle  
 3 "Roll Tide!" e.g.  
 4 Nose rubbers  
 5 Flat user  
 6 They come during finals week  
 7 Top  
 8 Nile menace  
 9 Alanis Morissette's "You \_\_\_

- Know"  
 10 Emma Peel was one  
 11 "So \_\_\_, Farewell"  
 12 Pilate's "Behold!"  
 13 "Cabaret" opening?  
 21 "The end of \_\_\_"  
 22 Star quality and more?  
 25 Storybook elephant  
 26 Discharge  
 27 Malodorous  
 28 Gus Kenworthy, for one  
 29 Be a voyeur, e.g.  
 30 Silences for Tchaikovsky  
 31 Dr. Weaver portrayer Laura  
 32 Favorable forecast  
 35 Jodie Foster's role with the King  
 38 On account of  
 39 It may make you rub your head  
 42 Agony opposite in a flick about Michelangelo  
 44 Some pinks  
 46 For skin  
 48 Sage of the East  
 50 They hold pansies, perhaps  
 51 Verdi slave girl  
 52 Kind of appeal  
 53 Marilyn Monroe facial feature  
 54 Residue for Mary Poppins' pals  
 55 "The Bell" author Murdoch  
 56 Frida Kahlo's zip  
 57 Writer's point?  
 60 "Take your hands off me!"

Find solution to this puzzle at [www.pridesource.com](http://www.pridesource.com)

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# Back Lot Bash Co-Founder Moves to Metro Detroit Area

BY EVE KUCHARSKI

When friends Amie Klujian and Christina Wiesmore-Roberts met up for drinks at a Chicago bar in 2003 they had the same thought, ‘Wow, all the boys around here have all the parties.’ That’s when they started to formulate what would become Back Lot Bash, an annual lesbian-centered music and entertainment festival based in Chicago that now attracts thousands from the Midwest and the rest of the nation.

“There was really nothing for women (in terms of) unique or safe spaces that had events,” said Wiesmore-Roberts. “We thought what if we just had a one-off party, and we love music so much and our friends are in a band, so we gathered this idea and the next thing you know, what started as a one-day event expanded over two weekends with over 6,000 people throughout it.”

The event, now celebrating its 15th consecutive year, kicks off on Saturday, June 23, with headliners Kittens, Sarah Shahi and more. Wiesmore-Roberts said that since its start, not only has Back Lot Bash grown in the crowds and headlining acts it attracts, but it has expanded its demographic reach, too.

“It’s kind of funny, back when we started I

was that person who just wanted to party and hang out, but now my favorite event is Pride Kids & Family Fest. It’s so cute and this is our sixth year doing it, and now myself and all of my friends look so much more forward to it,” she laughed.

Another one of Wiesmore-Roberts’ favorite new additions to Back Lot Bash’s lineup is its new tasting event.

“One of the things we started last year was Whiskey, Wine & Women, and this is a demographic of women that reached out to us that are a little bit older that would go to the Sunday festival, which are around 21 to 25,” Wiesmore-Roberts said. “The Whiskey, Wine & Women demographics are around 30 and higher. We had a feeling that people wanted to mix and mingle, and people love tastings and it just took off. The event is almost sold out right now for this year, but moving forward we’re looking at changing the event and we hope to do a huge tasting this year and move it into a bigger space.”

However, eager Detroit-attendees shouldn’t despair if a trip to Chicago seems out of the way, Wiesmore-Roberts just took up residence in Royal Oak, and is already thinking of ways to bring a little taste of Back Lot bash to the area.



Back Lot Bash co-founders Amie Klujian (left) and Christina Wiesmore-Roberts. Photo: Mystic Images Photography

“I’m falling in love with it, and I’m right by Ferndale, too,” she said. “So, I’m learning (laughs).”

“It’s interesting, we’re already talking about it and I’m already honored and excited that when I was out I was asked by several people about it,” she said. “I believe we have the resources and the connections to definitely make it happen and I love doing it. So, yes, we’re definitely looking into it.”

Wiesmore-Roberts said that the longer she stays in the area she’s learning more about the local LGBTQ community, too.

“I’m falling in love with it, and I’m right by Ferndale, too,” she said. “So, I’m learning (laughs).”

More information about Back Lot Bash 2018 can be found online at [backlotbashchicago.com](http://backlotbashchicago.com).

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**Between the Lines™**

## Fund Supports Brother 2 Brother Program to End AIDS

BY BTL STAFF

**DETROIT** – The LGBT Detroit End AIDS program expanded in June with the newly-developed and funded social group Brother 2 Brother, largely because of support from The Jewish Fund. The goal of Brother 2 Brother is to create safe and secure opportunities for men to address the sexual practices that increase the risk of contracting HIV. This will also provide Metro Detroit with another resource to address the increase of HIV and STIs (sexually transmitted infections).

“The Jewish Fund is very proud to support the launch of LGBT Detroit’s Brother 2 Brother initiative through a three-year grant,” said Margo Pernick, executive director of The Jewish Fund. “We are impressed with the organization’s thoughtful and focused outreach efforts and its motivation to address an issue that is often concealed within our community. LGBT Detroit has the leadership and track record to accomplish its objectives we look forward to this exciting partnership.”

Executive Director of LGBT Detroit

Curtis Lipscomb said that the initiative will help many in the LGBTQ community.

“According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Black and African-American MSMs (men who have sex with men) and MSMs of other races and ethnicities have an increased chance of being exposed to HIV because of the larger number of MSMs of color living with HIV,” Lipscomb said. “LGBT Detroit addresses this alarm by implementing Brother 2 Brother.”

The group discussions will assist the participants in addressing the behaviors of HIV and other sexually transmitted diseases, sexual relationship dynamics and the social and psychological influences that racism and homophobia have on HIV risk behaviors. The gatherings will include guided meetings, community outreach, resource/information tables at local events and increased access to testing.

LGBT Detroit aims to provide a safe space for HIV positive men as well as a space for HIV negative men to encourage them to stay negative.

“LGBT Detroit has extensive experience and expertise in LGBTQ

health, HIV/AIDS and STIs,” said Danny Inman, program director of LGBT Detroit. “We engage in direct service provision, prevention, and health promotion programming, as well as structural strategies aimed to reduce STI and HIV rates among LGBTQ communities.”

The program name “Brother 2 Brother” honors the late Joseph Beam and the late Essex Hemphill. Beam is the author of the acclaimed and award-winning book “Brother to Brother: New Writings by Black Gay Men,” which was completed by Hemphill after Beam’s death in 1988. The book is a collection of now-classic literary work by black, gay male writers.

The final goal for the Brother 2 Brother groups is that attendees will be able to share physically and emotionally safe settings, while learning and sharing in a supportive environment.

*More information about LGBT Detroit can be found online at [lgbtdetroit.org](http://lgbtdetroit.org) or by calling 313-397-2127. The Jewish Fund can be found online at [thejewishfund.org](http://thejewishfund.org) and by calling 248-203-1487.*

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