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By Sarah Bricker Hunt



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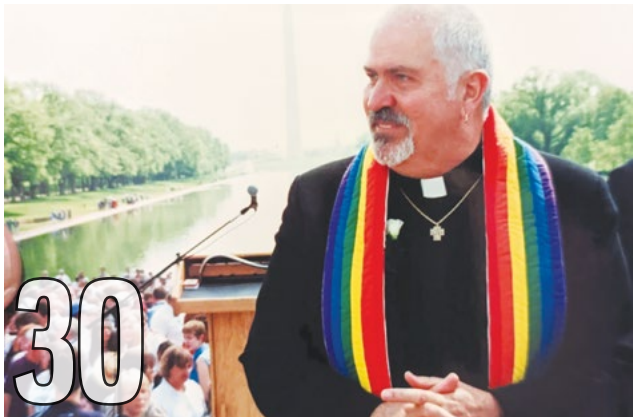
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5 Queer Things You Can Do Right Now-ish

BY SARAH BRICKER HUNT

It's fall, bitches. And that means two things: winter is coming (so get out now before hibernation is upon us), and self-care just got a whole lot cuter. Who isn't adorable strolling around in a cozy cardigan sipping a hot mug of Earl Grey? Celebrate the all-too-brief Michigan autumn at a King Princess concert, support a local Black- and queer-owned bakery, pick up a book for cozy couch time — or do the opposite by joining a queer sports team.

National Coming Out Day

Since the first National Coming Out Day was observed in 1988, queer culture in America has evolved and changed many times over, but it's still not easy for every queer person to come out as their authentic selves — especially in today's heated political climate. This unofficial holiday is a chance to recognize the sometimes painful journey many queer people have to endure on their way to living authentically and to lend support to people bravely coming out for the first time. National Coming Out Day falls on Oct. 11, the anniversary of the 1987 National March on Washington for Lesbian and Gay Rights, and the holiday was the impetus behind many Pride festivals, including OUTFest, which later became Ann Arbor Pride. Above all, the founders said, this day is focused on the idea that homophobia thrives where there is silence and ignorance.

NATIONAL COMING OUT DAY



King Princess. Photo: Collier Schorr

See King Princess Royally Rock

In some ways, King Princess is a study in the pointlessness of labels. The artist identifies outside the binary, somewhere between male and female, and her music isn't easily categorized, either. Is it folk? Indie pop? Hard rock? Sadcore? Yes, yes, yes — and sometimes, yes. King Princess' second album, "Hold On Baby," dives deep into her queer identity — a coda, in a way, to her 2018 debut single, "1950," where the musician's infectious, bouncy chorus belied a nagging truth about navigating the world as a queer person: "I hate it when dudes try to chase me/But I love it when you try to save me."

Catch King Princess Oct. 9 at The Fillmore in Detroit. Tickets available at [ticketmaster.com](https://www.ticketmaster.com).



April Anderson and Michelle Anderson, owners of Good Cakes and Bakes. Photo: [goodcakesandbakes.com](https://www.goodcakesandbakes.com)

Get Those Fall Comfort Calories (While Helping Your Community)

Now that the thermometer has taken a distinct dive into sweater weather, it's time for some comfort baking. Better yet, leave the comfort baking to the experts at Detroit's Good Cakes and Bakes, the lesbian-owned bakery that made headlines in 2020 when it received a cake order with a homophobic message. The owners, pastry chef April and her wife, Michelle Anderson, agreed to fill the order without the requested message. When it came time for pick up, dozens of Pride flag-waving supporters showed up to rally behind the Andersons (though the "customer" never did). Sometimes, the good side wins — and you will, too, because in addition to the infusion of love and inclusion, the cake is on point (and organic and vegan, too, if you prefer).

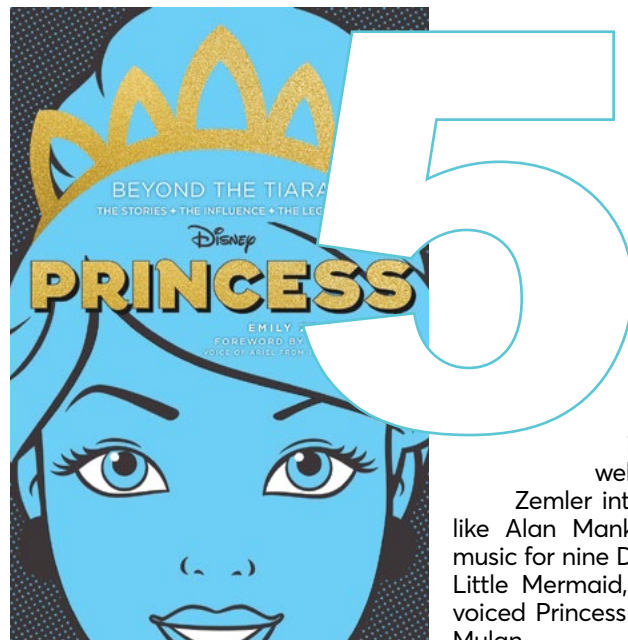
Good Cakes & Bakes is located at 19363 Livernois Ave. Visit [goodcakesandbakes.com](https://www.goodcakesandbakes.com) for hours.



Support Trans Youth During Trans Empowerment Month

It's an incredibly important time to support the transgender community, and that includes lifting up trans youth. Stand with Trans has been a leader on this front since 2015, connecting trans youth with supportive resources, fierce advocacy and events aimed at fostering young trans adults. The organization will host its annual Trans Empowerment Month Oct. 5-30 and invites trans and non-binary youth (up to age 24) to attend a series of free events, including workshops, panels and performances, online and in-person. Allies are welcome, too, for a modest fee.

Learn more at standwithtrans.org/TEM.



Go 'Beyond the Tiara'

Cozy up with a fascinating new read or liven up your very gay monthly book club with "Disney Princess: Beyond the Tiara" by Emily Zemler. The book explores the history of these larger-than-life characters, which have had an outsize impact on pop culture well beyond the big screen.

Zemler interviewed Disney notables like Alan Menken, who has composed music for nine Disney films, including "The Little Mermaid," and Lea Salonga, who voiced Princess Jasmine in "Aladdin" and Mulan.

Connect with your favorite independent bookstore to find your copy — consider Detroit's queer-owned 27th Letter Books or Black Stone Bookstore and Cultural Center in Ypsilanti.

Please check event pages for the most up-to-date scheduling information.

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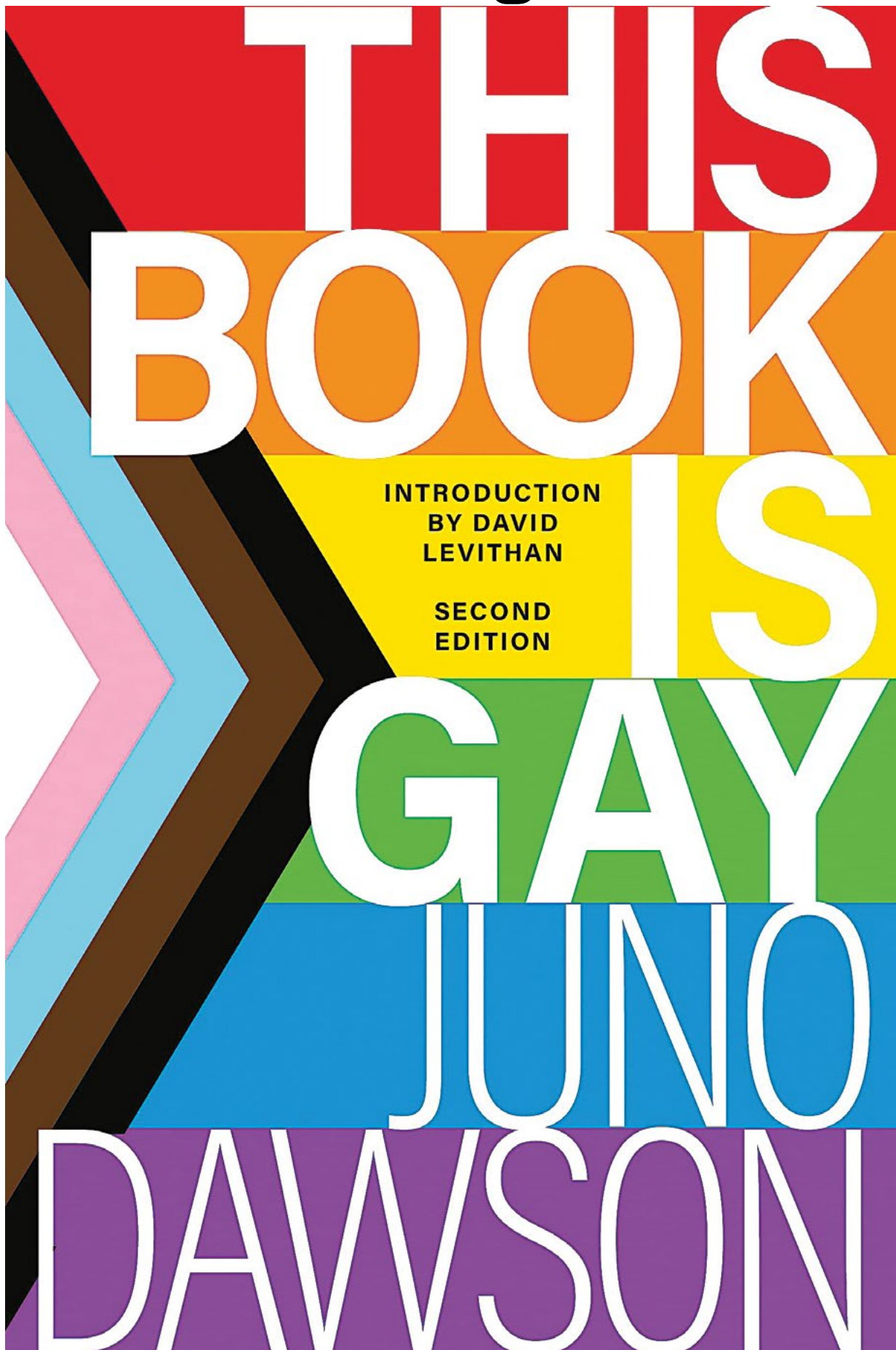
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Book Banning Escalates in Dearborn



REPORTED COLUMN

Parent Says She Filed Police Report Over Pro-LGBTQ+ Book Found in High School Library

BY JASON A. MICHAEL

Angry, anti-LGBTQ+ agitator Stephanie Butler is pissed. She was so upset that students at Edsel Ford High School (EFHS) in Dearborn, where Butler's daughter is a senior, can actually find a variety of diverse books — including those that positively portray LGBTQ+ teens — that the rabble rouser said she went right down to the Dearborn Police Department and filed a report.

The book that especially raised the demagogue's ire is "This Book is Gay," a bestselling U.K. import from author Juno Dawson that first came out in 2015. Butler said in a Facebook post that the book was "so graphic" that she felt compelled to report it to the authorities. The Dearborn Police Department has not responded to a request for information about the status of the report and could not confirm whether an investigation has been opened.

In a post that accompanied a video on Facebook chronicling her hate-filled campaign, the fierce firebrand expressed offense at the fact that the book, which New York Times bestselling author Patrick Ness said in a review was "the book every LGBT person would have killed for as a teenager," spoke candidly to teens about sex, how to meet other LGBTQ+ teens, and how to challenge hate speech by anti-LGBTQ+ religious zealots.

Dawson, who is trans, is a former teacher specializing in behavior studies. She, herself, calls the tome a "handy guidebook" and official press materials for the book say it's appropriate for LGBTQ+ teens, tweens and adults; readers looking to learn more about the LGBTQ+ community; parents of LGBTQ+ kids, and educators. Dawson conducted a national survey on the issues covered in the book in 2013 and used that research to fill the book with facts, charts, illustrations and stories from more than 300 LGBTQ+ people.

But "This Book is Gay" is not the only book that has Butler the blowhard billowing smoke out of her nostrils. Butler, who appears to be a frequent poster to radical right-wing Facebook groups as One Dearborn and the nasty neighborhood association Concerned Citizens of South Dearborn, bragged in the same Facebook post that she had single-handedly managed to have a total of four titles removed from the shelves of the EFHS library. (WXYZ reports that to date a total of seven books have been placed under review.) She also called for the firing of EFHS Principal Rima Hassan, accusing her in a post of being "disgraceful and disgusting."

This was in response to a letter Hassan sent to parents of EFHC students. In it, Hassan, without mentioning Butler or any parent by name, wrote "When there is so much negativity shared on social media, focused on one school, it's natural that student and staff morale is affected. When morale is affected, you might as well add diminished pride and effort." The letter went on to say that EFHS students deserve better than negativity and naysaying. Students

See [Dearborn Book Ban](#), page 24



Karen Cristian and Sam Smalley, both of Dearborn, positioned themselves at the front of the stage steps in silent protest. Photo: Jason A. Michael

Protesters Call for Book Bans at Dearborn Rally

Anti-LGBTQ+ Sentiments on Full Display

BY JASON A. MICHAEL

A crowd of nearly 400 Arab Americans gathered as an angry mob and descended on the pavilion in front of Dearborn's Centennial Library on Michigan Avenue on Sunday afternoon to protest the inclusion of pro-LGBTQ+ books in libraries in Dearborn high schools. Though organizers tried to say the event was not about homophobia or an effort to infringe on the rights of LGBTQ+ students, those claims from the stage rang shallow as standing right next to it was a man holding a sign reading, "Stop grooming students, you sexually perverted animals."

Moments before the rally began, Sam Smalley, a recent graduate of Dearborn High School, sat on the steps just in front of the stage with an LGBTQ+ Pride flag and a trans Pride flag spread around him. Karen Cristian sat down next to him in solidarity. Soon, they were surrounded by a dozen or so agitated men who began harassing them for being there. Both stood — or in this case, sat — their ground. Dearborn Police, who had to send additional officers to the library to work crowd control, then had to erect a protective barrier around them for safety from the anti-queer throng.

Cristian, a graduate of Edsel Ford High School, said she came because she saw a post

on Facebook "about this horrible movement to censor books." Looking at the incensed anti-queer mob surrounding her, Cristian said, "I thought we were past this ... but I guess we still have to fight this fight."

For his part, Smalley was mostly stoic, sometimes using his megaphone's siren to attempt to drown out particularly erroneous and extremist statements. In return, he faced an onslaught of horrible slurs. One man continued to shout "faggot" at him so ferociously that an organizer, unsuccessfully, pleaded with the irate man to stop. The man was then handed signs by another member of the crowd that read "Stop grooming kids" and "Save Children — No porn in schools" and shook them in the direction of Smalley.

They "protest my right to exist freely," Smalley told BTL at the end of the demonstration, just before multiple police officers escorted him to his car for fear he would be harmed if he walked alone. "They might say that it's about protecting the children or whatever. But that's a front. A lot of these people, whether they like to admit it or not, don't actually support or accept people that are a sexual minority or have different gender identities."

See **Anti-Queer Protest**, page 28

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Queering Michigan One Mural at a Time



Photo: Royce Lasalle Redmond

Joey Salamon Talks Chill Approach to Art, Life and Love

BY SARAH BRICKER HUNT

It's a challenge to reconcile Joey Salamon's exuberant art style — which favors primary colors, midcentury modern lines and bright, boisterously cheerful rainbows — with the quiet, friendly everyman on the other side of Zoom. He seems to possess endless chill, except when he instantly flips to proud dad mode while talking about his dog, a boxer named Yoshi. He's "the cutest," according to Salamon (a quick flip through his Instagram @joeysalomon confirms this assessment). "My little dude" one Yoshi post reads.

"I like nice, relaxed, easy things," Salamon recently told BTL from Palm Springs, California, where he's been working on a new mural for Blackbook Bar. "I like the idea of everyone always feeling relaxed and when it's not hyper competitive; I hate when things are just, like, too showy."

Perhaps it's not surprising that the artist grew up in a small, unpretentious Michigan city (Midland, west of Bay City). He was ready to see more of the world, though, after graduating from Grand Valley State University near Grand Rapids in 2010, so he hit the road. Hard.

"For five years or so after that, I bounced around a lot," he says. "I moved to a tiny island in Hawaii for a little bit [Molokai] for maybe a year. And then, a couple of months down in Miami, where I apprenticed with Jen Stark, an artist I still absolutely look up to. After that, I moved to Chicago for almost two years. And then, after *that*, I briefly lived in basically a hippie commune in Virginia [Acorn Intentional Community]. Then it was Detroit."

Why Detroit? Salamon says the art scene is super innovative and that he simply loves the culture. "Honestly, it's just a good space for doing cool stuff," he explains. "It was always the end goal that I'd get there after I got all my bouncing around done."

Salamon assures me that he's "totally fine" to do our interview at the end of a work day at the Palm Springs mural site, but that it was

a long day — most mural days are. Between these projects, he says, he needs recovery time. "They take a lot out of you physically and mentally, and as the months go on, it becomes even more imperative to stay on top of your health and rest." Lately, he's come to appreciate the off-mural season as a chance to recharge.

Salamon, though, was no stranger to hard work before his current job. He spent several years in the newspaper industry, laying out pages and putting his graphic design skills to use. Before that, he served tables and at one point even worked as a banker. "I actively use learned skills from those jobs in my art career to this day, and I am better at what I do because of it," he says.

Salamon has come a long way since waiting tables, but he has stayed firmly grounded, even as the pile of accolades and his list of clients — some of them globally significant — keep growing. So far he's avoided the pitfalls so many fall into when they make it big.

Still, skimming the painter's impressive, lengthy list of clients might leave you with a certain impression: He's got to be one of those pretentious art types who "casually" name-drops clients and big projects, right?

Nope. Salamon lets his art speak for itself. In many cases, that art feels bigger than life — think murals painted on top of surface streets stretching down city blocks for hundreds of feet and others that engulf the sides of structures several stories tall.

If he did feel like waving his own banner, he'd have a lot to talk about, including how much he's achieved since graduating from Grand Valley State in 2010 with an art and design degree. And about the breadth of his clientele, which includes major corporations like Meta and Microsoft, prominent breweries, bands and musicians like Matisyahu and The War on Drugs, and music festivals and cities across

See **Joey Salamon**, page 22

PURITY, POTENCY & PRIDE

As a leader in the marijuana industry, MKX Oil Co. knows it is important to acknowledge the labor and vision of early HIV/AIDS and LGBTQ+ activists. Without these trailblazers, marijuana legalization wouldn't be where it is today.





Patmos Library. Courtesy photo

Nora Roberts Donates \$50K to a Michigan Library Defunded Over LGBTQ+ Books

BY CHRIS AZZOPARDI

Bestselling romance author Nora Roberts tells BTL she has a simple reason for donating \$50,000 to the Patmos Library in Michigan after she learned that, in August, voters in Jamestown Township voted to defund the library. Why? According to various news reports, the answer is blatantly homophobic — voters would rather close the library than allow it to stay open and offer LGBTQ+ books to the public.

Roberts wasn't having it.

"Those in the LGBTQ+ community have every right to find books and stories that speak to them, that reflect who they are, within those walls," Roberts said in an exclusive statement to Pride Source.

"A library is a place open to all, a place of learning, one that celebrates the exploration of knowledge, of stories that speak to us as humans," she continued. "All of us, not a select few, but all."

Roberts' hefty donation came through a GoFundMe organized by Jesse Dillman, a resident of Jamestown, which is southwest of Grand Rapids. "I firmly believe most residents here don't share these views and desire to continue funding our local library. Funds raised here will be donated to the Patmos Library so that we can keep it open long enough to consolidate community support for our library millage," Dillman wrote on the fundraising page.

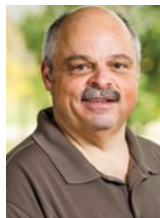
The library, the only one in Patmos, was at risk of closing due to a now-failed millage that was on the August primary ballot, resulting in the library losing 84% of its operating budget, about \$245,000. According to the Detroit Free Press, the board has revised the millage for the midterm election in November, but if it doesn't pass, the library is at grave

See **Nora Roberts**, next page



"THESE FIFTY DRAG QUEENS SAY THEY WERE PROMISED WE HAVE A TEACHER SHORTAGE HERE IN TALLAHASSEE!"

The Terrifying Possibilities of a Tudor Dixon Administration



By Jon King

Governor Tudor Dixon. It's a possibility that sends a shudder down the spine of anyone in Michigan's LGBTQ+ community.

And for good reason.

It is no exaggeration to say that there has never been a major party gubernatorial candidate in Michigan history so openly hostile to the rights of LGBTQ+ people. That's not to say previous candidates (and governors for that matter) haven't been bigoted, but never has a candidate made their hatred an actual plank in their platform.

Education is the very first section on the issues page of Dixon's website, under which she says she wants to ban school personnel from "talking to Kindergarten–3rd grade children about sex and gender theory secretly behind their parents' backs," and ban "born boys from playing on girls' teams in school-sanctioned, gender-specific sports."

Both of those positions are patently transphobic, feeding into the hysteria behind Florida's notorious "Don't Say Gay" legislation and efforts already here in Michigan to ban trans athletes from high school athletics.

Dixon has repeatedly returned to those themes throughout her campaign, most recently on Tuesday, Sept. 20, outside the Michigan Department of Education (MDE) in Lansing, where she held a

press conference to call for the resignation of state Superintendent Michael Rice after the release of an MDE training video from 2020 instructing teachers how best to deal with students of different gender identities.

While the video discusses calling students by their preferred names and pronouns and how to report mental health concerns without outing students to their families, far-right activists have falsely claimed it is instructing teachers how to secretly assist with the sexual transition of children without informing parents.

The MDE has denied those allegations, calling them "patently false and deliberately divisive," while defending the training as providing "safe, supportive, and inclusive school climates where all students can thrive — especially students who identify as LGBTQ+."

It's important to note that the Trevor Project has reported that more than half of LGBTQ+ youth who reported running away from home did so because of mistreatment or fear of mistreatment due to their LGBTQ+ identity.

Dixon, however, is fully on board with the hysteria, regardless of what damage it may do to LGBTQ+ kids.

"Make no secret about it — our own state agency is being weaponized to actively recruit our kids and advance their radical gender theory with zero input from parents," she said in a statement. "My position is very clear: Our schools need to stop pushing radical sex and gender theory and instead get back to teaching kids how to read, write, and do math."

Dixon also wants to ban certain books, using Tuesday's event

See **Tudor Dixon**, next page

◀ Nora Roberts

Continued from previous page

risk of shutting down.

Already Dillman's efforts have exceeded the goal of \$245,000 (as of this report, just over \$264,000 has been donated, including Roberts' contribution).

"Libraries and librarians should be valued and celebrated, never attacked and demeaned," Roberts wrote on the GoFundMe page. "50K is the limit GoFundMe allows for donations.

◀ Tudor Dixon

Continued from previous page

to say that if elected, she would favor legislation to ban books that are deemed "pornographic."

"I would take a look at the books that we are seeing that are pornographic and make a decision on what we do to make sure that we are not having children reading pornographic — or having a teacher read — pornographic material to children or a child in school," said Dixon, apparently unaware of the irony of her comments coming during Banned Books Week.

Dixon has been previously critical of "All Boys Aren't Blue: A Memoir-Manifesto," a book aimed at the young adult audience and written by a queer and Black author.

As to who or what entity would decide what was pornographic in a K-12 setting, Dixon told a reporter for the Michigan Advance it was "two naked people, and they are acting out a sexual act, and multiple different sexual acts."

She then offered to send the reporter examples of porn.

But then, none of this can really be said to be a surprise about Dixon, who has been ramping up her anti-LGBTQ+ rhetoric for months.

As early as April, she tweeted claims that schools are "grooming children," adding "we won't let them secretly talk to kids under 8 about sex." Then in June, when drag queens were the outrage of the month, she said that if elected she would "sign a bill that creates severe criminal penalties for adults who involve children in drag shows. This type of behavior is criminal child sexually abusive activity."

However, education isn't the only arena in which the LGBTQ+ community should have concerns about a Dixon administration. Her

If you're short of your goal, please contact me. I'll make up the rest."

While public and school libraries across the country are being targeted by a book ban wave in which conservatives intend to try to wipe public spaces clean of any queer content, Roberts, at least, is vehemently on our side.

"I'll never understand why some choose to demean, even attack others over their sexual preferences, their gender identity," Roberts told PrideSource. "And it is a choice to do so. Bigotry of any kind reveals a small, narrow mind and a closed heart."

unequivocally hardline stance against reproductive rights would also have an impact.

Dixon, who believes there is "healing" through forcing a 14-year-old pregnant rape victim to carry her baby to term, says that the only exception for abortion she is in favor of is if the life of the mother were in danger.

"I've made it very clear. Health of the mother and life of the mother are two different things," said Dixon. "Anytime the mother's life is in danger."

But Dixon's concept of gender identity makes it clear that she's leaving transgender people out of the conversation around reproductive rights.

In fact, immediately upon gaining the GOP nomination, Dixon opted to use gender identity as a line of attack against Democrat Gretchen Whitmer, who she'll be trying to unseat Nov. 8.

"It's time to elect a real woman in Michigan," Dixon tweeted the very night of her primary win, quickly following up by asking Whitmer "What is a woman?"

Studies have shown that transgender men with a uterus are at a similar risk of unplanned pregnancy as ciswomen and would similarly benefit from abortion services.

So whether it is pandering to the age-old trope that those who are LGBTQ+ are by definition sexual predators or that providing compassion to trans children is morally depraved, the queer community has more than enough reason to make sure the phrase "Governor Tudor Dixon" never comes to pass.

Jon King has been a journalist for more than 35 years. He is also an adjunct faculty member at Cleary University. Jon and his family live in Howell, where he also serves on the Board of Directors for the Livingston Diversity Council.

CREEP OF THE WEEK

U.S. Radical Right Totally Jelly Of Iran's Morality Police



By D'Anne Witkowski

In Iran, Islamic religious police detained Mahsa Amini, a 22-year-old woman, for wearing her hijab too loosely.

Reports say that some of her hair was visible. That is forbidden.

Amini died while in custody. Her family says she was beaten. The government says she just happened to die. What a coincidence.

Who are you going to believe? A grieving family of a woman lost too soon or a government that arrests women who show their hair?

There are protests going on in Iran right now with women tearing off their hijabs and burning them. The government is responding with violence. People have died.

And for far too many people in the United States, what's happening in Iran feels distant, something that happens "over there." But not here.

For those of us paying attention, however, we know there already exists a morality police in the U.S. The biggest difference is that there is a separation of church and state in the U.S. Make no mistake: the religious right seeks to destroy that barrier and make Christianity the only allowable religion, with everyone having to live by Biblical laws whether they are Christians or not.

It should be noted that while the religious right, which is predominantly white, wants to enact a Christian government, they don't exactly see the Iranian government as a model. Because the religious right is also steeped deeply in racism and xenophobia. They see Islam as evil and if, say, a group of Iranian women arrived on our shores seeking asylum they would declare them invaders and enemies. They might even load them up on a plane under false pretenses and ship them off to Martha's Vineyard.

The only thing Iran is doing wrong, see, is using the wrong religion. If they were oppressing people using Christianity the religious right here would be totally on board.

How do I know this? I've been watching the radical right for decades. I've seen them amass more and more power all while preaching hatred for LGBTQ+ people and laser focused on controlling women's bodies.

They aren't going to stop with the overturning of Roe v. Wade. They want to criminalize abortion, sure, but they also want to control all aspects of gender and sexuality. We are seeing radical ideas that would have rightly been dismissed as absurd years ago becoming mainstream: outlawing birth control, forcing 10-year-old victims of incest

to give birth, executing LGBTQ+ people, doing away with public school "indoctrination centers," smearing anyone who loves

and supports LGBTQ+ kids as "groomers," banning books with LGBTQ+ storylines or characters from school and local libraries, denying election results based on conspiracy theories instead of evidence, lashing out against measures like mask wearing and vaccines to stop a deadly pandemic, forbidding the teaching of slavery and denying the existence of racism in order to spare the apparently fragile feelings of white children.

And when I say that these areas have been mainstreamed, I do not mean that they are in any way popular. A small minority of people subscribe to these ideas. Unfortunately, that small minority has outsized power, in large part because one of our two major political parties has adopted the beliefs of the fringe wholesale. This is especially evident as we head into the midterms. There is no real distance between your average Republican candidate and the Q Anon cultists who believe that the country is run by a secret horde of pedophile lizard people from whom only Donald Trump can save us.

Ridiculous? Oh, yes. But also deadly serious. Remember that a man entered Comet Ping Pong, a Washington D.C. pizza parlor, with an assault rifle because he believed he was going to save a group of children who were being trafficked out of the restaurant. Remember that a group of Trump cultists invaded the U.S. Capitol of their own fucking country because they believed there was a giant conspiracy theory against their would-be king.

We have a Supreme Court that declared anyone with a uterus incapable of making their own decisions regarding pregnancy. The same court has already made clear they want to overturn marriage equality. Coming before them is a case that would essentially let state legislatures declare the presidential winner in their states, regardless of the voters' choice. That would set the stage for entrenched right-wing power like we have never seen, not at all concerned with what the majority of people want. Not all that different from Iran.

You think it can't happen here? I wish you were right. But it absolutely can. Years on, we can protest in the streets and get shot at by the police for expressing what used to be our First Amendment rights. Or we can fucking vote for the party that believes in democracy and isn't crushing on Christofascism. (That would be Democrats for anyone who is confused.) It's literally up to us.

Making the Most Of It

Jason Morgan Doesn't Know How Long He Has to Build a Better State, But He Won't Stop Trying



Jason Morgan. Photo courtesy of Jason Morgan

BY ELLEN SHANNA KNOPPOW

Jason Morgan is no “Debbie Downer.” Yet that’s what the Washtenaw County Board of Commissioners Chair and candidate for Michigan’s 23rd State House District fears people might think upon learning he has Becker Muscular Dystrophy. Morgan was diagnosed with the condition, most frequently found in boys, at about age 13 after experiencing unexplained muscle pain. It’s a neuromuscular disease caused by mutations in the dystrophin gene that result

in progressive muscle weakness and loss of muscle mass. Related to Duchenne Muscular Dystrophy, BMD is less common and has a milder course.

“I’m 33,” said Morgan, who is also an instructor of American Government at Washtenaw Community College and a Northern Michigan University (NMU) Trustee. “I run multiple times a week and bike and swim, and I’m extremely active and really, really fortunate to have overcome what the doctors told me was going to be my prognosis.” That prognosis was a disease

that would progress at varying levels and significantly impact the arms, legs and, most importantly, the heart. The long-term effects are losing the ability to walk, very likely in one’s mid-20s. The life expectancy for what Morgan has — even if able to maintain the ability to walk — would be somewhere in the 40s.

“One of the things that I often hesitate to talk about — because I always wish I’m being cheery and positive and optimistic as I generally am — is the part of the disability that people don’t see,” said Morgan, who has

regular medical appointments to monitor his heart. He sometimes wakes up in the morning with muscle pain and soreness if he overdoes it.

By being upbeat, Morgan doesn’t wish to give the wrong impression: It’s a careful balance. And part of that equation was his decision to publicly disclose he has muscular dystrophy in a video in 2017. Morgan had been conditioned to believe that strength is the best indicator of being qualified to serve and whom to support; however, after learning how few elected officials shared his

“

I felt like I needed to talk about my disability in a way that was not a story that would make people feel bad for me...

disability, Morgan felt his story might inspire others with the same or other challenges. In a way, it was, for Morgan, a coming out story.

“It really just hit me one day and I said, ‘You know what, I’ve gotta come out and talk about this,’” Morgan told BTL. “I felt like I needed to talk about my disability in a way that was not a story that would make people feel bad for me by any means — because I am so, so fortunate to be where I am in my life — but to use it and to share it as a story of hope, of overcoming pretty big obstacles to achieve your dreams because that’s how it has been for me.”

As a State House candidate, Morgan believes it’s his combined lived and professional experiences that prepare him for elected office — whether that means living with a disability, being gay or experiencing life in rural Michigan. A Pinconning native, Morgan brings with him the experience of working for Secretary of State



Jason Morgan (left) and his partner, Jon. Courtesy photo

Jocelyn Benson and Congress members John Dingell, Debbie Dingell, Haley Stevens and other elected officials.

“I’ve really experienced what it is like to struggle and feel like the deck is kind of stacked against you,” Morgan said, in reference to being LGBTQ+, having muscular dystrophy and growing up in a low-income household. “And my hope is that I can bring that experience forward to work on behalf of every single person in Michigan who has felt that way and who needs someone fighting for them and standing up for them when no one else is.”

When he’s not tackling big picture issues on behalf of Michiganders, Morgan might be found enjoying time at home. Newly engaged, Morgan and his fiancé, Jon, recently moved in to their first apartment together in Ann

Arbor. They each bring to the relationship one cat whom Morgan calls best friends. “We’re definitely solid cat people,” Morgan expressed.

Morgan said he’s running for office to help make Michigan and its communities better places to live, work and raise families, and that begins with infrastructure. “Building a better Michigan,” the focus of Morgan’s campaign, means not just repairing roads and bridges, but also investing in Michigan’s “people infrastructure,” or things like public

education, community college and four-year institutions, as well as the wraparound services that help individuals thrive in their communities.

Protecting access to voting, ensuring workers’ rights and advancing social justice, including LGBTQ+ rights, are also among Morgan’s priorities, if elected. As a county commissioner, Morgan was proud to help lead Washtenaw County’s effort to recognize Transgender Day of Visibility and Pride Month each year and to introduce the county’s first-ever Equity and Inclusion Statement and Non-Discrimination and Anti-Harassment Policy.

BTL is not the first to mention Morgan’s long list of accomplishments at just age 33.

See Jason Morgan, page 20



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Social Media Healers Are Just a Tap Away

How Twitter, TikTok and Facebook Creators Use Their Platforms For LGBTQ+ Mental Health Care

BY SARAH BRICKER HUNT

When it comes to LGBTQ+ mental health, representation matters.

In fact, it's at the heart of why Chris Grant, aka "The Queer Therapist" (@theqtherapist on Instagram), has dedicated so much professional time fostering a strong social media presence. Grant's practice is based in Scotland, but their followers come from around the world.

"Because most queer folk don't grow up with positive representation of queer people, they lack mirrors for identity development," explains Grant, who identifies as trans and nonbinary. Without those mirrors, they say, queer people can struggle with identity development as a result of internalized stigma.

Positive LGBTQ+ representation on social media is helping to shift the narrative away from that stigma

and shame. "Having a therapist who is able to positively mirror aspects of your identity is extremely powerful," they say.

Grant says people in marginalized communities often thrive online and use social media to express their authentic selves long before they do so in the real world.

Even Grant's disclosure about their core identity as a trans person holds power. That disclosure, they

say, may seem radical to some, but as Grant points out, cisgender therapists unintentionally disclose their gender every day without wondering about representation. "Really, this [approach] isn't something new when it comes to white, cisgender, heterosexual, middle class folk, but when it comes to marginalized communities, it is new territory."

"So much of our work as therapists relies on trust, but we often don't

realize that building that foundation can start long before you meet the client," they add. A social media presence can allow potential clients to make an assessment on their own. "And, if you have aligned your posts with your authentic practice, then you have started to build a relationship already," they say.

Grant does caution that a large

See **Queer Therapists**, page 18

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Threesomes: Let My Experience Be Your Guide

Pros, Cons to Consider Before You Take the Triple Plunget

BY JEM ZERO

At 30, I've had a lot of threesomes. I've identified as polyamorous my entire life, since I started dating at 15, though I wasn't sexually active until age 21. You'd be surprised how many threesomes you can fit into nine years — OK, closer to seven, since the pandemic dried me up. But after getting married at Ferndale Pride in 2019, that hasn't bothered me too much.

I've had threesomes with strangers, with friends and within established polycules. In my 20s, I was down to fall into bed with almost any attractive, willing duo. There's endless fun to be had with multiple sex partners — new positions, new bodies, new kinks.

Threesomes are great, and I'm pleased to have had so many of them, but I'm only one person. Everyone involved has to assess their emotional

and physical safety — ideally before clothes come off.

Let's talk about the good first.

Pros of having a threesome...

1. There are things I never thought I'd be into until I got a chance to try them with more experienced partners. Fisting was one of those things. I was never interested in fisting until a friend and I took a girl home from Gigi's and it turned out both of them had done it before. We were going at it a bit rough, so watching a very dominant woman push her whole hand inside my friend was an unexpected turn-on. After that, I got to try it myself, and as weird as it is to have your whole hand enveloped by someone else's

body, seeing how much my friend loved it makes that weekend one of my most impressive encounters.

2. One of my favorite parts of having a threesome is getting a personal show. I find sex fascinating, but my fickle sex drive sometimes means I need a break. Fortunately I'm really into watching, so during a threesome I can take a sec to admire my partners, maybe drink some water. Otherwise, randomly stopping and starting feels kind of weird. Imagine withdrawing from a single sexual partner to stare at your phone for a few minutes until you're in the mood again. Major no!

3. Threesomes majorly appeal to people yearning for sexual freedom. Sexual adventure within a stifling couple-based monogamous society is highly valued, especially when that involves escaping homophobia

and transphobia. It's thrilling to step outside the lines! I was raised super Christian, ingrained with a severe fear of "sexual sin." Not fun. My first threesome was a lot emotionally, but after being stifled for so long I finally felt in control of my desire and choices.

4. Sexual experimentation can help you figure out your identity — it did for me. I identified as a lesbian for a decade, but during that time I did have threesomes involving masc-of-center people and, yeah, a few men. I was confused about my willingness to participate in those, even while being careful to establish physical boundaries. Eventually it stopped feeling like a fluke and I was able to accept myself as a transmasculine person who is definitely attracted to men.

Though this is a major bummer, group sex doesn't always live up to the fantasy.

Cons I've experienced...

1. Jealousy is the big one. This is most common within relationships. I had a threesome with my wife and one of her partners. It was fun for the most part, but a few times I became insecure and grumpy because I felt left out. We communicated through it, but I did slink off to the other hotel bed to sulk for a while. Not my best moment.

2. Since threesomes often have a queer element, identity plays a huge part in establishing comfort during group sex. Above, I discussed how threesomes with people of different genders can help you find the perfect label, but on the path toward that, I felt a lot of guilt. I was still "in the closet" as a lesbian and hadn't yet come out as my authentic self. I thought I was betraying lesbians by letting men touch me instead of us both focusing on the woman in the equation. Once I came out as a masc4masc guy, I made some impulsive decisions involving Grindr because I wanted to confirm my sexual discoveries. I can't say I recommend the way I went about things.

3. After a passionate one-night

stand, few things are worse than post-bang awkwardness. So it felt great in the moment, but fucking my roommates immediately after moving in wasn't a great decision. In that instance I hooked up with both of them separately, but a few years before that I had a threesome with my partner at the time and a guy I was in a theatrical performance with. He got to make out with another cast member onstage, and I was majorly envious. If you're gonna see one or both people the day after smashing, put some careful thought into it.

On that note... If you're still with me on the "yes!" train, before you agree to a threesome, you should ask yourself a few questions.

- Can I stand to see someone else touching my partner? Because jealousy isn't fun for anyone involved.
- Will this affect our friendship? Because some people can't help feeling awkward after giving a casual friend a rim job.
- Does my desire to do this go against my instincts when it comes to single-partner hookups? Because an hour of indulging sexual curiosity is not worth feeling like you've betrayed yourself.
- Is this situation empowering? Because empowerment lies in your ability to say "yes" and your ability to say "no."

If the answer to any of the above skews negative, you might want to decline. There's nothing to be gained from forcing yourself into a situation to avoid disappointing someone(s). Consent and communication should always be mandatory, but especially here.

Between health issues, energy levels, and how difficult it is to meet people when you aren't outside much, I'm not sure how active I'll be sexually or if/when I'll have a threesome again. However, I'd like to participate in an orgy before I die. Maybe that chance won't come until I'm 70 and playing strip-bingo in a nursing home, but when it does, I'm gonna take it and hold on with both wrinkly hands.



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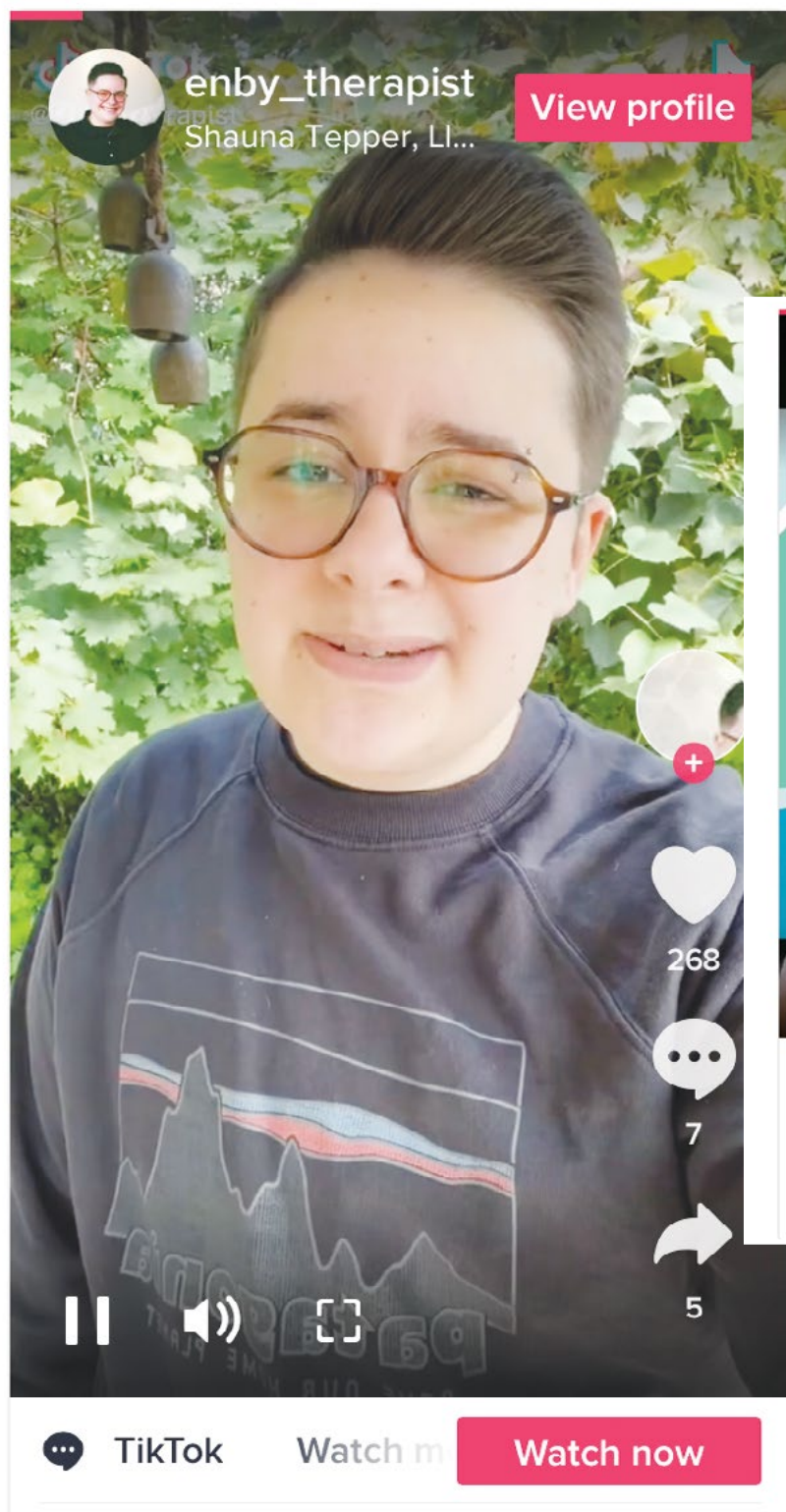
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or inaccessible,” they say. “I have certainly found a much more diverse client base through this strategy.” Plus, the interconnected nature of the internet has led Grant to make

Dr. Joe Kort

Kort (@drjoekort) is a hometown success story. In addition to running The Center for Relationships and Sexual Health in Royal Oak, he famously introduced the concept of “sides” (long before Grindr introduced the term earlier this year). As the doctor wrote in 2013, a side

is an alternative to common terms like “top” and “bottom” and describes a male-identifying person (of any sexual identity) who refrains from anal sex. Kort’s 5,700-member Facebook Group, “Side Guys,” is a judgment-free zone where, he writes, “loneliness and shame do not exist.”

Kort says he uses social media to promote his brand and to educate the public about mental health — particularly for those who can’t afford therapy or who are not represented in the mainstream. Social media “encourages queer people to seek mental health care and to know which therapists are not only friendly, but LGBT-informed,” he adds, noting that

connections throughout the world with individual clients and national organizations working to remove mental health stigma.

That interconnected virtual world includes a long list of queer therapists who are having a bit of a moment, engaging with people seeking help, education and, sometimes, entertainment. Here are a few on that list to consider.

ranging from narcissism to fetishes like findom, a financial BDSM dynamic, and maintains an active blog and YouTube channel.

Therapy To A Tea, Co.

Therapy To A Tea’s (@therapytoateaco) Instagram channel focuses on mental health within the queer and trans BIPOC community, including neurodiverse and gender expansive people. The channel is an extension of the practice group’s D.C.-based office, but followers come from all over the world to reflect on the team’s real-talk approach to topics like trans kids, relationship boundaries and self-care.

Expansive Therapy

Need a pick-me-up? This California- and New York-based LGBTQ-focused practice group uses Instagram (@gaytherapy) to communicate positivity to LGBTQ+ community members. Pro tip: This is one of those rare internet rabbit holes where the comments are almost as good as the content.

Lesbian Counselor

The Lesbian Counselor TikTok account (@lesbian_counselor) explores a niche need in the LGBTQ+ community — reconciling faith with nonconforming gender and sexual identities. The account is the social media hub for virtual LGBTQ+ therapy practice The Christian Closet. Founder Candice Czubernat shares messages of encouragement and explores an exhaustive list of mental health topics.

enby_therapist

Shauna Tepper’s @enby_therapist TikTok channel focuses on all things gender nonconforming, with a special focus on advocacy for gender nonconforming youth and mental health resources for LGBTQ+ kids and their parents. Over 12,000 followers tune in to watch Tepper tackle topics like learning to self-advocate and funny clips about their work as a therapist.

◀ Queer Therapists

Continued from page 14

social media platform can create a power dynamic — a therapist’s voice can become amplified in an

online community. It’s something they carefully consider in their interactions, but ultimately, social media has been a tool Grant has used for good. “It can level the playing field for clients who may otherwise find the idea of therapy intimidating

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HEALTH GUIDE

◀ Jason Morgan

Continued from page 13

It should also be noted he was student body president at NMU, he earned a Master's of Public Administration from the University of Michigan and he currently serves in the U.S. Coast Guard Auxiliary.

"I often have folks who wonder how I've done so much at a young age," said Morgan, who has been a Muscular Dystrophy Association volunteer since 2007. "And the answer, quite honestly is, I don't know how much time I have. And so I am very intentional about spending every minute that I have trying to do something good and useful and helpful to others in the world. Because that is what I have found to be my purpose.

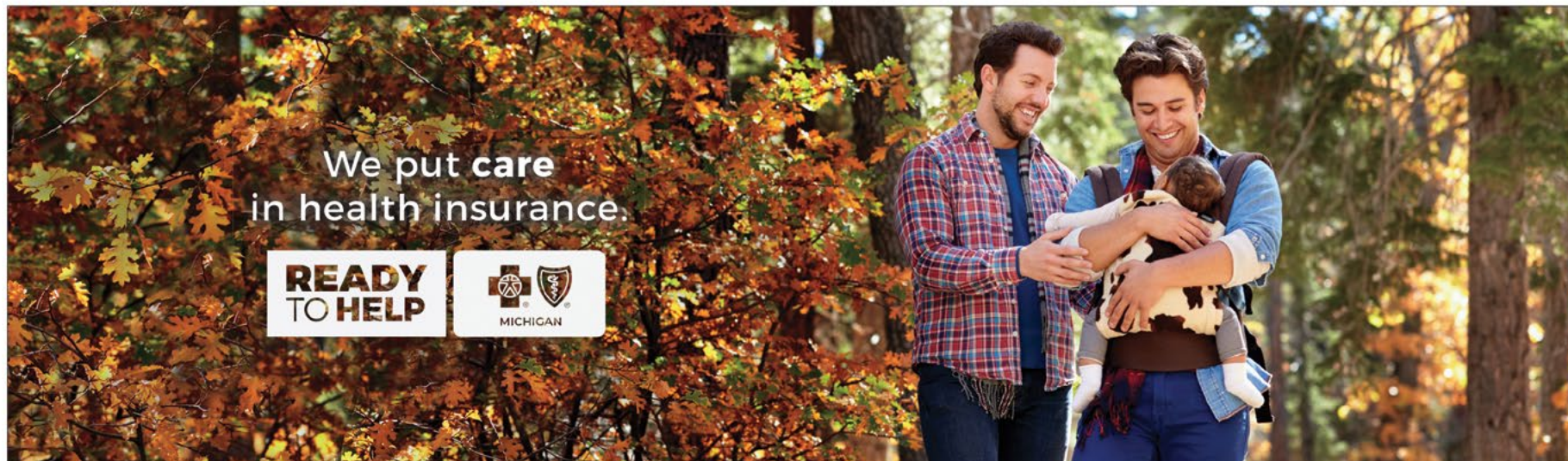
"So it's not just that I want to go really far, or something like that," he continued. "It is a matter of wanting to do as much as I can in the time that I have. And hopefully that time is a lot longer than the prognosis medically, but just in case it isn't, I don't want to waste any minute or any day not doing everything that I think I can do to make the world a better place."

Michigan's 23rd State House District includes downtown Ann Arbor and the University of Michigan campus; the city of South Lyon; and parts of Lyon Township, Northville and Plymouth Townships. Fall Fundraiser: Thursday, Sept. 29, 5:30 p.m. to 7 p.m. Ann Arbor address provided upon RSVP.

Election Day is Tuesday, Nov. 8. Early voting begins Sept. 29.



Jason Morgan. Courtesy photo



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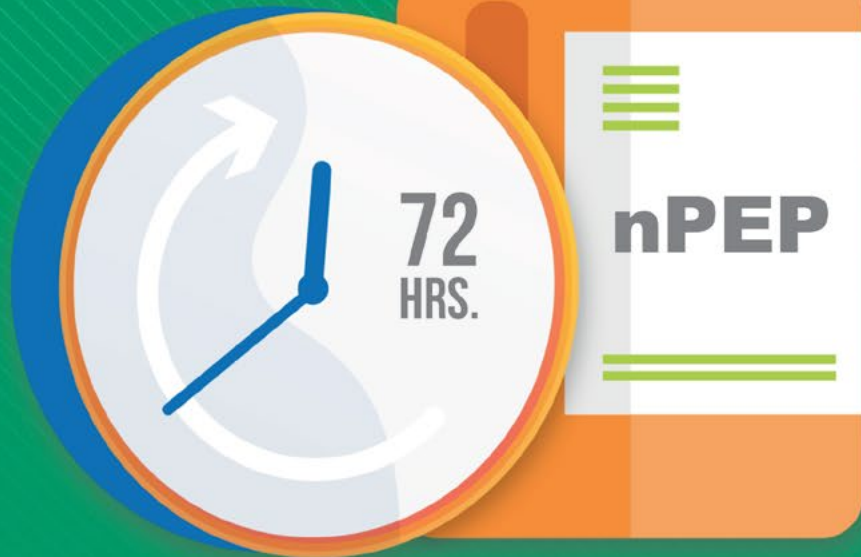
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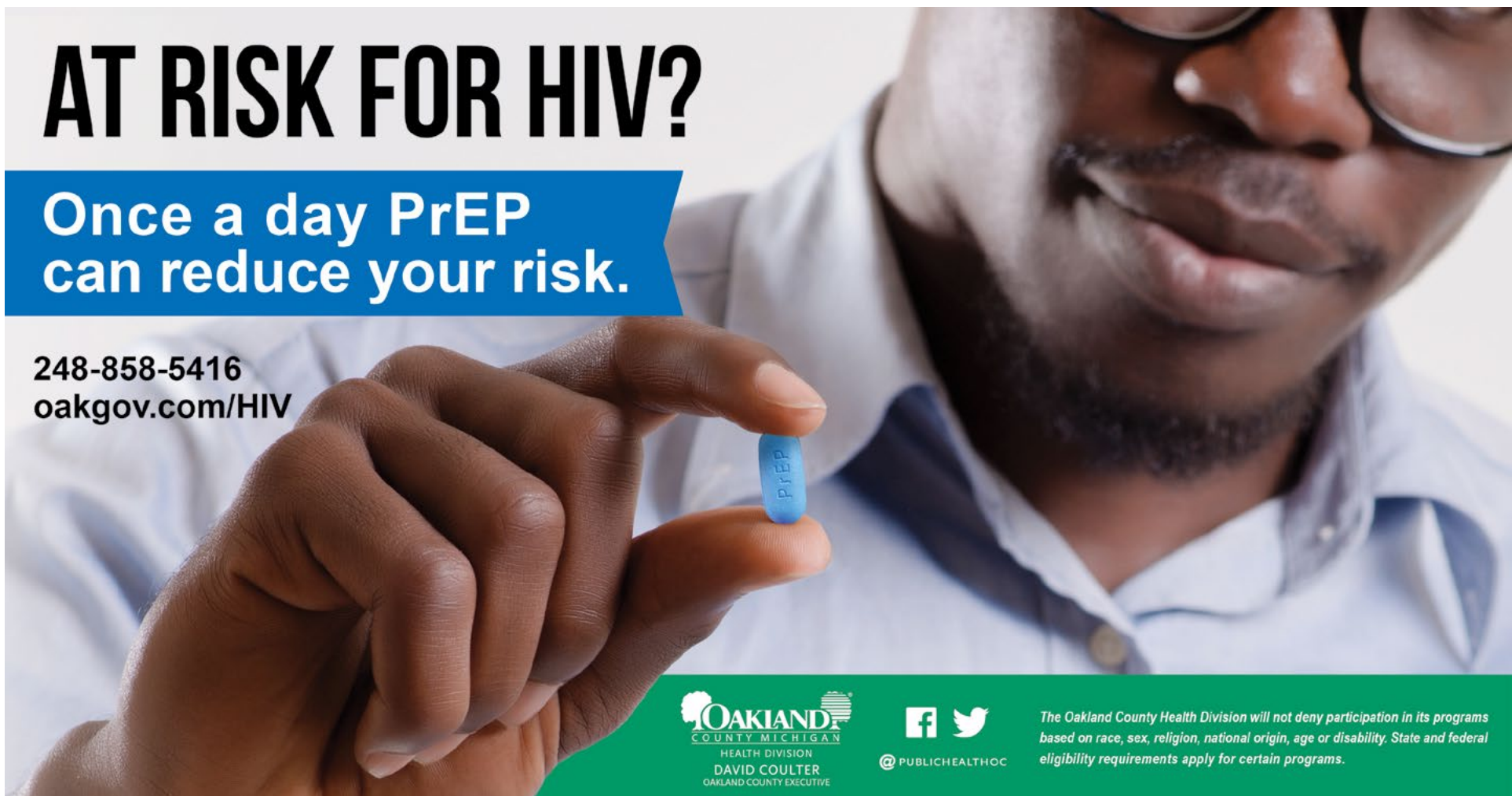


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Ann Arbor Art Center facade. Photo: joeysalamon.art

◀ Joey Salamon

Continued from page 8

the country. About how he's routinely featured in the media or how his interior design work has appeared on the Food Network. About the overwhelmingly positive reviews his work has earned, too, especially the murals, which are often described by observers with terms like "joyful" and "dazzling."

In warmer months, you're apt to find the artist crouched on the ground or perched atop scaffolding, crafting distinctly Joey Salamon creations that brighten up crumbling infrastructure or turn the cold steel of a shipping container into a rainbow-imbued shrine to queerness, like a mural in remote Thompsonville, "UP North Pride," commissioned by Iron Fish Distillery.

Each mural is its own thing, but Salamon's public art often focuses on unique interpretations of the traditional Pride flag, which he says represents a welcoming place, but the rainbow riffs are just one sign he has abundant love for the queer community. It's also apparent in the way he's chosen to create public monuments to Pride in rural places, where queer folks are less likely to feel comfortable, and in urban communities, where a little brightly colored paint can inspire hope and positivity amidst the hustle and bustle of daily life.

"Stylistically speaking, my goal is to always try new things in my work while keeping the energy the same throughout. I always want people to be able to see a work of mine and know it's mine, even though stylistically, I am always evolving," he says.

A few weeks ago, Salamon cut the ribbon on "Polychromatic Super You" in Ferndale. The mural, commissioned by JARS Cannabis and HYPE Cannabis, is part of the Smoke with Pride campaign and benefits LGBTQ+ support organization Ruth Ellis Center.

The perennially busy artist is gratified about his success, but he recognizes it hasn't just been dumb luck. "It's great to look back at all the hard work getting to this point, and how it is now all working and paying off," he says.

More often than not, new projects come his way because his existing work resonates with a style and message that connects with potential new clients. Most of the projects he's pitched make sense for him at this point in his career. "Very rarely will I be asked about something that is not something I do, like portraits, for example," he says. "When that happens, I politely decline and offer the names of artists that would be more appropriate."

When Salamon isn't pouring himself bodily into art projects, he might be found spending time with his

partner of eight years, Matt Buskard. Salamon talks about Buskard as affectionately as he does his canine companion Yoshi. "We both moved to Detroit within a month of each other," he says. "He moved to Detroit because he had a dream of opening up his restaurant, and he wanted to do all these things. He had all these dreams," he says. "And I came to Detroit to really dig in on my art career and pursue that. And so, we kind of got to do both of our dreams together and help each other on the way."

Buskard's restaurant dream blossomed into Bobcat Bonnie's, a concept that has spread across lower Michigan in places like Detroit's Corktown and Ypsilanti — and soon, to Toledo. Inside each of the six locations, which feature events like drag brunches and bingo, Salamon's trademark positivity and artistic aesthetic is everywhere, from mural work to framed fine art pieces to interior design touches.

Buskard tackles the business and management side. "We kind of balance each other really well," Salamon notes. "Things like operations, I know nothing about, but clearly he does it well. He'll sometimes ask me questions or for my opinion, but at the end of the day, I'm always like, 'Honestly, you know what you're doing. Go with your gut.'"

When the couple manages to find downtime, they spend it with friends, travel to places near and far, or head up north to their cabin. In recent months, Salamon has been building up a new side business, too: selling vintage clothing, furniture, vinyl, art and other items inside Detroit's iconic Eastern Market. He calls the venture Hypersonic Vintage (@vintageeasternmarket) "It brings me a lot of joy," he says. "It's something I can see myself always doing."

Salamon has been creating art for as long as he can remember, and he plans to keep doing it for as long as it keeps stimulating his brain. "I enjoy the ride of not knowing exactly where it's all going. It keeps it fun," he says. "The potential in creating is limitless."

Visit joeysalamon.art to view a gallery of Salamon's work.

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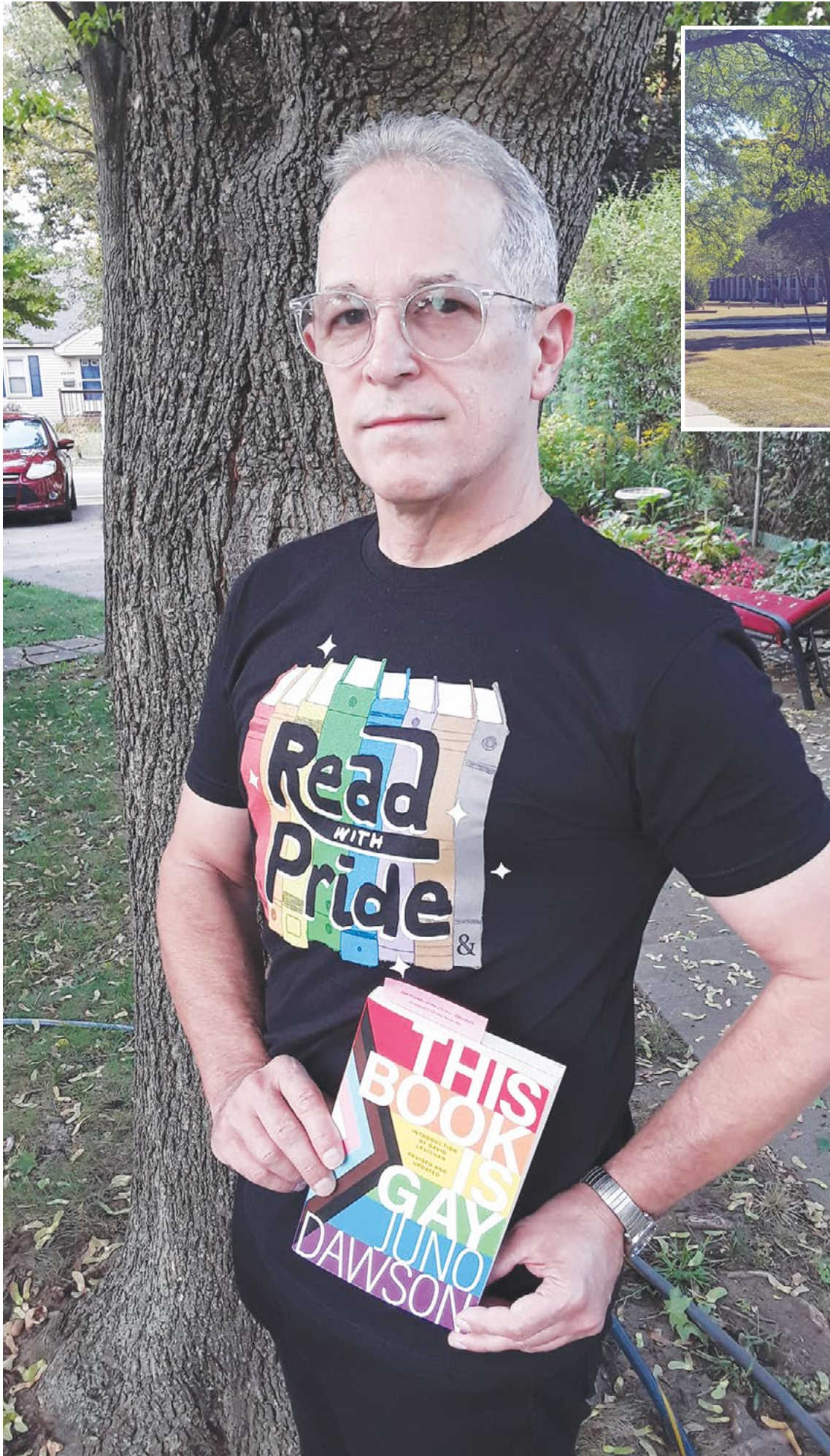
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Edsel Ford High School. Photo: Rmhermen

◀ Dearborn Book Ban

Continued from page 6

“should not have to internalize a national debate as being solely theirs,” she continued. “With everything else teens have to deal with, let us, at the very least, minimize negative dialogue and messaging.”

Hassan, however, was not quite as bold and brave as she could have been. She acquiesced at least in part, promising that Dearborn Public Schools had initiated a process of weeding out books and vetting them for grade level and age appropriateness as well as allowing parents to opt their children out of borrowing books their parents “deem unfit.” She and other Dearborn Schools officials have said, though, that they are not currently banning books.

Still, that’s what former Dearborn Schools teacher Paul Bruce says the current removal of books amounts to. He has started a campaign to combat Butler’s efforts and responded to the troublemaker’s tirades online and at the last school board meeting.

“The school board was met with a disgruntled parent, one with a history of being disgruntled, and made the unfortunate mistake of allowing her arguments for the removal of these seven books to heard,” Bruce said in a post.

Bruce went on to say that five of the seven titles removed were works designed to support and interest the LGBTQ+ community.

“While the perpetrator of the ban has gone out of her way to claim that she has ‘nothing against the LGBTQ+”

community,’ no statement could be more ridiculous,” he said.

Bruce has created a t-shirt campaign to retaliate against Butler’s brutish banning efforts. The shirts, which say “Read with Pride,” can be purchased at the Barnes & Noble in Allen Park. Bruce said the books in question are “designed for LGBTQ+ high school students — or any high school students — who wish to read them, to know that they are cared

“No one is forcing anyone to read any of this material.”

about and valued as much as anyone else.” It’s all about helping teens learn about themselves and see examples of people like them, no different, he said, than “supplying books for African Americans, Asians, Latinos or Muslims so that they can feel valued while relating to characters like themselves.”

Butler, Bruce said, belongs to a “hate group” and needs to be stopped — and he called on the school board to do just that, saying they had “empowered this individual as well as those who are part of a hate group watching from the sides. ... This request should have been cut off at the knees.”

“No one is forcing anyone to read any of this material,” he continued. “If you don’t like it, don’t read it. End of story.”

Paul Bruce, a former Dearborn teacher, holds “The Book Is Gay,” a book targeted for removal from the school district’s library. Courtesy photo

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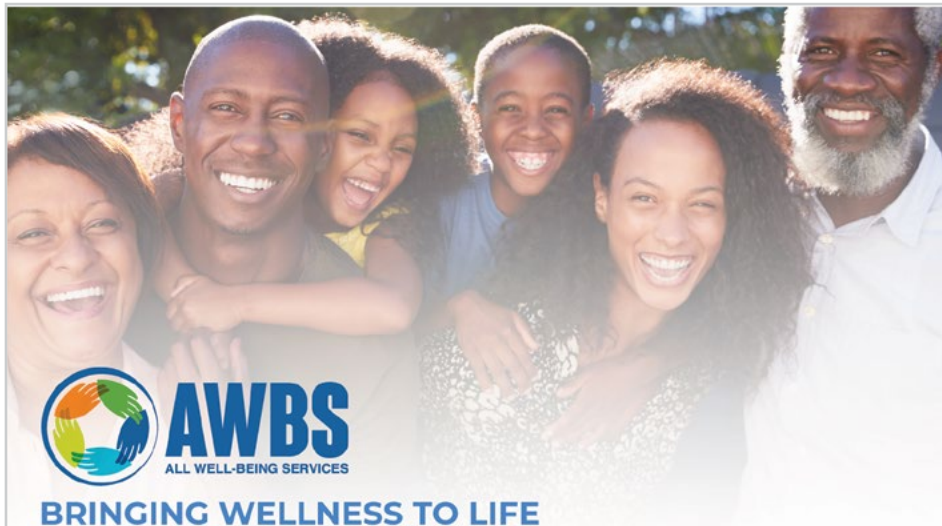
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Gone Too Soon: Danielle Eve Captured Spirit of Local Queer Nightlife

Before Her Death at 61, Eve Took Photos for Many LGBTQ+ Pubs During 25-Year Career

BY JASON A. MICHAEL

She helped us see ourselves in a better light. Danielle Eve, who photographed southeast Michigan's queer nightlife for over 25 years, succumbed to a brief battle with cancer and died Sept. 19. She was 61.

Eve did not like to focus on the past and rarely talked about her childhood and, according to friends, had a strained relationship with her family. In a 2021 interview with the Stay Fabulous show on Facebook, she said to host Jacqueline Frost only that her family "never really accepted much of Danielle." Like many in the LGBTQ+ community, she built a family of her own, comprised of close friends and complemented by the droves of people she knew from the clubs. It is through their eyes that Pride Source reflects on Eve and her work.

What is known about Eve's origins is that she was born in Detroit on Feb. 25, 1961 and was of Guatemalan and Mexican heritage. She grew up on the city's east side. Her interest in photography developed in the late '80s when a friend passed by and gave her a camera. "It was a terrible time,"

Eve confessed to Frost. "My house had been broken into and a lot of things were taken. I was feeling pretty down." The camera helped instantly, as Eve quickly taught herself how to use it by reading technical books and with lots of practice. Soon, she started venturing out to nightclubs, camera in hand.

"I started taking pics, and it just grew and grew," she said on Stay Fabulous. "Then, when I started coming out to the bars, I just started talking to people and they said it was OK to take pics."

By day, Eve ran the photo lab in the Roseville Meijer for many years. At the store, Eve initially presented as a male while working. In later years, she worked as her authentic self.



Danielle Eve at TG Detroit's TransFUSION 2022 conference in July. Photo: TG Detroit

Through the years, she encountered a lot of transphobia while working at Meijer from fellow employees, management and, sometimes, customers.

At night, Eve began taking photos in LGBTQ+ clubs across metro Detroit. Her first gig was for Cruise magazine, the premier bar rag in the city. Tony Rome had started publishing Cruise in 1979. When he learned that Eve would be presenting

as female when taking pictures for the magazine, he was not pleased.

"[He] told me, 'We don't see many of your kind around,'" Eve recalled on the Stay Fabulous show. "Trans girls didn't have a name back then. Well, they called us all kinds of names."

Despite admitting that she was overqualified, Rome almost

fired her shortly after she started taking photos for his magazine. "I was taking them as Danielle, and he didn't like that. [The magazine] wanted me to stop or they were going to fire me."

But by then, Eve's popularity was already rising, and she proudly remembered what happened next while on the show.

"The bars got behind me and they

said, 'We like Danielle. You can't do that. You're a gay magazine.'"

Rome relented and the subject was never brought up again.

Through the years, Eve worked for virtually every queer Michigan publication in existence. In addition to Cruise she worked for Hott, Flame, OutPost and Between The Lines, where she took photos for a regular bar column for nearly a decade. "Between The Lines was great ... [former publishers] Jan [Stevenson] and Susan [Horowitz]. ... I did like working with a newspaper because I got to write a little bit, too."

Her longest running gig, however, was taking photos for Metra magazine. She shot for the magazine for a quarter of a century. Mary Sappington, aka Mary Metra, told Pride Source that Eve was the best photographer Metra had had in its 40-year history. "She was an example of excellence and inspiration to so many people here in the Detroit LGBTQ+ community," Sappington said in an additional statement.

Back at Meijer, she was befriended by another store associate, Jamie Crystal Taperek. Taperek heard that

See **Danielle Eve Tribute**, page 31



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First Thing in the Morning
Puzzle on page 33



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This unidentified man repeatedly shouted “faggot” at Sam Smalley. Photo: Jason A. Michael

◀ Anti-Queer Protest

Continued from page 7

From the time it began with an opening Muslim prayer in Arabic and English, until it ended over an hour later, speaker after speaker spewed anti-LGBTQ+ rhetoric disguised as concern for kids.

The apparent keynote speaker at the rally, and the only non-Arab American to speak, was Stephanie Butler, who went so far recently as to file a police report after finding a book she felt was inappropriate, “This Book is Gay,” on the library shelf at Edsel Ford High School. Talking about the book, Butler said it was a “manual that as an adult, married woman with four children, I did not know some of these sexual terms that they are pushing in front of our children.”

Additional speakers at the rally included Nagi S. Almudhegi of the Schaeffler Group and Dearborn pharmacist and co-owner of HealthPro Pharmacy Hassan Chami, among others.

That one Christian Anglo-

American woman could hold such sway over such a large swath of the Arab American community in Dearborn is peculiar yet undisputable.

“A month ago, we had one Stephanie Butler,” an unidentified man said in introducing her. “Today, Mash’Allah, I see there’s hundreds of Stephanie Butlers here and ... we’re not going to be silenced anymore.”

At the earlier rally, nearly 200 people showed up in support of the rights of LGBTQ+ students. Speakers included concerned parents, a teacher, a politician and several actual students — elements missing from the second, scarier rally.

“We shouldn’t isolate [LGBTQ+] members of our community,” Dearborn High School student Mark Struman told the crowd at the earlier rally. “We should nurture them as we would any other student. To ban their literature in public schools would only marginalize their community, divide our city, and desecrate our children’s future, our community, as a whole.”

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Metropolitan Community Church founder Rev. Dr. Troy Perry married an estimated 3,000 couples outside the Lincoln Memorial on April 29, 2000. Photo: Jason A. Michael

Metropolitan Community Church of Detroit Turns 50

BY JASON A. MICHAEL

In April of 2000, I traveled to our nation's capital as a cub reporter for this publication to cover the Millennium March on Washington. I had been on the job less than a year and I was off to D.C. for only the second time in my life. Not only was I going to witness and chronicle what I saw but I would be taking part in a historic demonstration for LGBTQ+ rights.

While there, I was assigned to write about a mass wedding led by Rev. Dr. Troy Perry, who founded the Universal Fellowship of Metropolitan Community Churches (MCC) in 1968 — a year before Stonewall

— in Los Angeles. Just outside the Lincoln Memorial, Perry “married” thousands of couples, despite the fact full marriage equality in the country was still some 15 years away.

I photographed Perry and all his MCC chiefs that day, including the Rev. Dr. Nancy Wilson, who would go on to become Perry’s handpicked replacement for moderator of the MCC when he stepped down five years after the march.

Wilson’s path to becoming global leader of the MCC brought her to Detroit late in 1975. She was ordained as a MCC minister some three years earlier in Boston. When the call came that MCC-Detroit (MCC-D), which had been founded in 1972 by late

activists John Kavanagh, Jim Toy, Larry Hawkins and Joe Aubit, was looking for its first official pastor, she and her then partner Rev. Heather Anderson answered the call and moved sight unseen to Detroit, where they were instated as the first couple ever to co-pastor an MCC church.

Though her tenure at MCC-D was relatively short — a little over four years — it was an important and impactful time. After all, this was barely a handful of years after the American Psychiatric Association removed homosexuality from its list of mental illnesses. Wilson spoke to me about these crucial years, when she was one of a small group of leaders speaking out on behalf of

LGBTQ+ rights in metro Detroit, just before she delivered the sermon and accepted the honor of being named Pastor Emerita at MCC-D’s 50th anniversary service Sunday, Sept. 18.

Wilson recalled often appearing on radio — and even once on the local television talk show “Kelly & Company” — only to often be met with open hostility. But this was the only means to get the word out about the church. At the time, there were few LGBTQ+ support groups in the state, no LGBTQ+ community center and no LGBTQ+ community newspaper. There was no internet, no social media. Radio and TV time was essential to let people know that the church existed. “That was important,”

Wilson said of her efforts to promote the fledgling church. “That began to draw people out. They began to find us.”

While still in her first year at the church, Wilson vividly remembered the time one of her congregants was killed just after leaving a gay bar. “He was bullied and then beaten and then dragged behind a car.” An obvious hate crime, though that phrase did not yet exist, Wilson was horrified by the murder. But even more so by what happened just after it. Friends of the victim colluded with local police, she said, to hide his sexuality from his parents, going so far as to actually

See **MCCD**, page 32



Photography by Danielle Eve

◀ Danielle Eve Tribute

Continued from page 26

Eve had been harassed while getting gas after leaving a nightclub one night and offered to hang out with her on weekends so she wouldn't have to be alone.

Taperek said that offering to go out with Eve was "one of the best decisions. I never told her, but my home life wasn't great, and getting out of the house once a week was everything I looked forward to."

To this day, 20 years after they first met, Taperek said she looks back on the times spent with Eve with great joy.

"She introduced me to so many great people in the most welcoming, happy, accepting environments," said Taperek. "It was amazing. Honestly, people were so warm and welcoming when she walked in. Everyone was so happy to see her and have their picture taken."

Everyone included Tim McKee, who used to enjoy it when Eve would come into Menjo's while he was managing the bar. "She was quite frankly one of the sweetest people this community ever produced," he said. "Truly one of the kindest people this community has ever seen."

McKee became fast friends with Eve and the two would often go out to eat.

"Her favorite food was Mexican," he said. "She could eat like a horse, and she was always getting me and other friends to go down to Mexican Village."

In addition to nightlife, Eve also took photos of other queer events, such as Prides, the Performers Awards of Detroit (PAD) ceremonies, the annual Metra picnic and other cultural events that interested her. She would oftentimes take promo pics of Detroit entertainers for free if they couldn't afford to pay. She volunteered her time and talent for various fundraisers and many groups, including TG Detroit, whose TransFusion 2022 gala she attended in July. In addition, she also took photos of landscapes for a time and, more recently, liked to photograph flowers.

In August, Eve learned she had cancer. The disease ravaged her body quickly and she died approximately six weeks after being diagnosed. Though she is gone, friends say her legacy will

live on.

"I believe she knew she was a staple in the community, even though she was super humble about it," said Taperek. "It was something that made her connect people and be connected all at once."

Though a great deal of her early photos and negatives — from the old days before digital photography — were destroyed by a flood many years ago, her digital files are with her close friend deorbiter, who is cataloging and preserving the images.

"Her legacy is her body of work," said fellow photographer Antonio Cassone. "I wish PAD was still around or some organization [that] would have showcased her work and rewarded her. [It's] such a big loss, really."

Patrick Burton was the creative director and curator of the massive Mighty Real/Queer Detroit art exhibition that took place in June. He selected six of Eve's photos to be a part of the exhibition. Three hung at Hatch Art in Hamtramck and the other three at Norwest Gallery on the northwest side of Detroit.

"Danielle Eve was a Detroit icon, a dedicated public servant and pillar of our community," he said. "She chronicled Detroit's queer nightlife through her photography. Her images will be long remembered for capturing the spirit and joy of local LGBTQ+ folk."

Burton said there's talk that an exhibition of Eve's work will take place in the near future. Burton, himself, knew Eve for over 25 years. "Our paths crossed often and, obviously, she was liked by everyone. She was so warm. She really captured a loving spirit of Detroiters. There's a real beauty in her work."

In her artist statement for the Mighty Real exhibition, Eve described what she did in her own words. "I love noticing the unique and the common, often finding similarities between all people," she said. "If I can help a person see how beautiful they are, give them a smile, then I've done my job."

Eve's family has announced that, per her wishes, she will be cremated and there will be no funeral. Friends are planning a remembrance service for Eve at Adam's Apple, one of her favorite spots, on Sunday, Oct. 9 at 4 p.m. Adam's Apple is located at 18931 West Warren Ave. in Detroit. The event is being planned as a fundraiser for a yet unannounced cause. A collection of Eve's works will be on display.



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Nancy Wilson and Rev. Stringfellow. Photo: Jason A. Michael

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Following Obama's re-election, Wilson gave a scripture reading at the Inaugural Prayer Service at the National Cathedral in Washington, D.C. — the first openly gay clergy to ever participate. She has, to date, written several books, including "Outing the Bible: Queer Folks, God, Jesus and the Christian Scriptures" (LifeJourney Press) and "Outing the Church: 40 years in the Queer Christian Movement (LifeJourney Press)," and she has appeared in several anthologies and as a frequent contributor

to HuffPost and others.

◀ **MCCD**

Continued from page 30

remove items from his home before his family arrived. "Never mind that he was murdered. The worst thing — worst than being murdered — would be for them to find out he was gay."

Wilson, at that time, saw no other option than to keep the secret. "I just remember feeling so guilty and awful," she said.

Wilson saw mass vice stings in Hyde Park and men who lost their jobs as a result and some who even took their own lives. She led a vigil when San Francisco Supervisor Harvey Milk, the first openly gay man to be elected to public office in California, was shot and killed in 1978.

Yes, Wilson packed a lot into her time here, until Perry orchestrated her election to the international leadership from MCC and she left the state.

By 1980, she was gone from Michigan and on her way to becoming one of the most influential leaders in MCC. She took with her quite a souvenir in the form of Paula Schoenwether, who she met while pastoring the church. The two had a holy union at MCC-D in 1977 and will celebrate their 45th anniversary in November.

I heard Wilson speak for the first time at the installation service of Rev. Dr. Roland Stringfellow, MCC-D's current senior pastor and teacher, eight years ago, in 2014. She is a gifted orator, and I was excited to worship with her again at the 50th anniversary celebration. Much has changed since her days in Detroit — in her life and in the world. MCC is now a global ministry. As its moderator, Wilson saw much growth during her 11 years in charge. In 2011, President Barack Obama appointed her to the President's Advisory Council on Faith-Based and Neighborhood Partnerships. Three years later, she was recognized by HuffPost as one

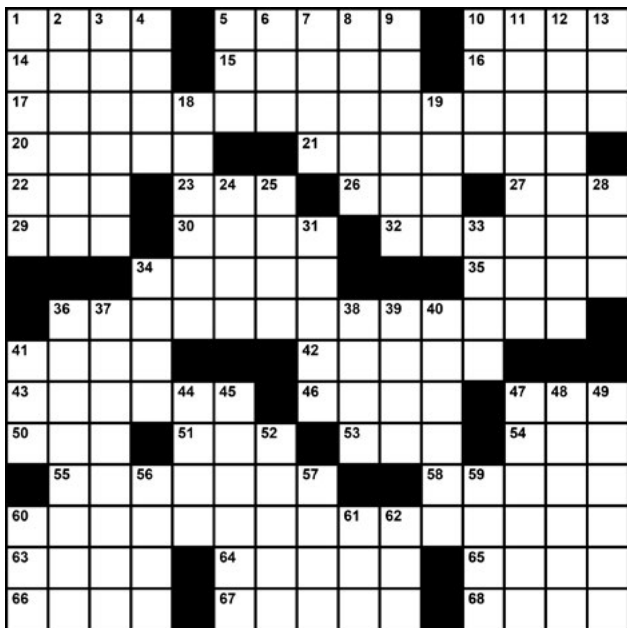
to HuffPost and others. Today, Wilson is still pastoring. This time at SunCoast Cathedral MCC in Venice, Fla. Despite the current condition of the country — Roe v. Wade being overturned and women's reproductive rights being in jeopardy alongside threats to marriage equality — Wilson said she is still optimistic about the future. "There's a group of people who still hate us just as much as they ever did," she told me. "But I think, and you know, I just may be wrong about this, [that] the vast majority of people in our country have come to a different place, [thanks to] LGBT+ people coming out of the closet."

Wilson said now everybody knows someone under the rainbow umbrella and that the younger generation is turning away from fundamentalism and conservative religion. It's that same generation she finds to be overwhelmingly in support of LGBT+ marriage and rights.

Meanwhile, around the world, there are new MCC congregations forming continuously. MCC currently has churches in Eastern Europe, Asia, Africa and South America. There are more than a dozen MCC churches in Brazil alone.

Most touching to Wilson of the change she has seen over the years is the "tremendous diversity and variety that has the freedom to emerge." She said it was more than she ever imagined, which is saying a lot. Much like MCC-D, Wilson has been blazing trails for 50 years. Just days ago, she told me, she spoke to MCC founder Rev. Dr. Troy Perry, with whom she often reflects on the progress that has been made.

"He likes to say, 'I just started a church because I needed to go to church,'" Wilson said with the same humble smile that had been on her face throughout our interview. "I think he was surprised, too. I just sometimes shake my head and I think, 'I can't believe all of this has happened.'"



- 41 Guthrie with a guitar
 42 One that ought to be paddled
 43 It shoots off in Yellowstone
 46 Cowboy actor Jack
 47 "___ was saying ..."
 50 Gaydar, perhaps
 51 Mo. named after a Caesar
 53 Grand ___ Opry
 54 Butler on television
 55 "QAF" director McDougall
 58 Travels aimlessly
 60 End of what she said
 63 Milk man?
 64 Witherspoon of "Legally Blonde"
 65 Stadium level
 66 Painting and such, to Michelangelo
 67 Arrow shaft
 68 Vibrator measure

- 18 Top banana
 19 Frat party robe
 24 "Cat on ___ Tin Roof"
 25 B in Leviticus
 28 Papers of D.H. Lawrence, e.g.
 31 Auto pioneer Henry
 33 Lothario
 34 Pam Parsons and David Kopay
 36 _The Nanny_ star Fran
 37 Timothy of "Damages"
 38 ___ Alto, California
 39 Like a rim job
 40 "The Thin Man" actor Cesar
 41 Personal-ad info
 44 Lawman Wyatt
 45 Peter the Great and more
 47 "___ for Strings" (work of 48-Down)
 48 Composer Barber
 49 Dildo, e.g.
 52 Playwright Jean
 56 Composer Thomas
 57 Nemesis of Tinkerbell
 59 Where to see rabbit ears?
 60 Cruising area
 61 Big initials in fashion
 62 Supporter of Spencer-Devlin

Down

- 1 Language of the cut
 2 Shirley, in "Terms of Endearment"
 3 Will's presidential namesake
 4 Part of a vacuum that sucks
 5 Spreading tree
 6 Wilder's "The Bridge of San Luis ___"
 7 Campus mil. org.
 8 Tatum of _The Bad News Bears_
 9 Footwear brand
 10 Online intro
 11 Edward Albee play
 12 Hall & Oates song about fellator?
 13 It was sometimes split, for Kopay

First Thing in the Morning

Q Puzzle

Across


- 1 Shakespearean auxilliary
 5 Mistake by Glenn Burke
 10 Words after woe
 14 Current currency of Sitges
 15 Western director Sergio
 16 Lindsay Lohan's "___ Girls"
 17 Start of what 36-Across said she would do first thing in the morning
 20 DiCaprio title role of 1996

- 21 Bottom
 22 Pitching stat
 23 Pick up
 26 ___ Cabin Federation
 27 "Modern Family" family member
 29 White as a ghost
 30 Mother of Chaz
 32 Solid gold measures
 34 Mapplethorpe work
 35 Hairy copiers
 36 Writer with many friends

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See p. 24 for answers

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 (subject: Fiddler on the Roof) | **OC - October 16 - 7:30PM**

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ON THE SCENE

Big Bash

Several hundred attendees came out in their snazziest formal wear for the first Big Bash gala since 2019. The event celebrated Michigan's LGBTQ+ community and the individuals that have dedicated their time and resources to Affirmation's LGBTQ+ community center. Among the awardees: Michigan Attorney General Dana Nessel, winner of The Community Hero Award; Michigan State Sen. Mallory McMorrow, winner of The Lorna Utley Outstanding Ally Award, and Dr. Kofi Adoma/Amorie

Robinson, who won the Jan Stevenson Award. During the program, Lt. Gov. Garlin Gilchrist gave a powerful speech about moving the needle forward for the LGBTQ+ community, while Affirmations Executive Director Dave Garcia spoke about the center's enduring significance to the local queer community. Affirmations received just over \$50,000 in donations with more than half of them being first-time donors. *Photos courtesy of PaintedLightPhotography.com, via Affirmations.*





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HEALTH AND WELL-BEING PROGRAMS

Take care of your mind, body, and spirit by learning about the following LGBT+ services.



The Togethr campaign addresses the impacts of HIV stigma

HEALING & SUPPORT SERVICES

Healing and Support Services is a domestic violence and sexual assault referral prevention program



All Of Us Research Program is specialized health research.

LGBTQ CANCER ACTION COUNCIL

Cancer Health Advocacy is a specialized health focus.



Limitless is a program for disabled/physically challenged LGBT+ persons.



#RollUp is LGBT Detroit's response to the Coronavirus and MVP.

BREAKING THE CYCLE

Breaking The Cycle is a smoking cessation program

MY STATUS / OUR STATUS

My Status / Our Status is an HIV/AIDS testing and counseling service. Request an appointment - bit.ly/mystatusourstatus

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www.lgbtdetroit.org



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START THE VOTING PROCESS NOW FOR THE NOVEMBER 8 ELECTION



REGISTER TO VOTE!

- Register to vote online or by mail through October 24. Complete or download an application at mi.gov/vote
- Starting October 25 through **8:00 p.m. on Election Day** register to vote at your city or township clerk's office
- It only takes two minutes, register today!

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 - By MAIL by printing an application from mi.gov/vote
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