



GEAE's Virtual E3 Summit on November 20-21 opening night included a fabulous Drag Show. See page 7.

2021 Vision Card Workshop for LGBTQ+ 12-15 year olds on December 30

Journey to A Trauma Informed Life and Greater Erie Alliance for Equality are proud to present a vision card workshop by guest presenter Eric Reiche for LGBTQ+ 12-15 year olds on Thursday, 12/30, 3-5 pm. Vision cards are mini vision boards with a twist.

Eric Reiche is a queer-identifying grad student studying art therapy at Edinboro University. You must

register to attend, via Google meet link or in-person (provided it is safe). Limit 8 people in-person.

We are assembling "vision art packs" for participants to use. They will have various things to create their own vision card. They will need to provide their own scissors, and they can also participate without having the "vision art pack." Pick-up or Delivery with enough advance notice.

Tyler Titus Elected Erie City School Board President

On Wednesday, December 1, 2020, Tyler Titus was elected President of the Erie City School Board. The vote was unanimous. Titus is the first openly transgender person to hold that position, and also was the first openly transgender person elected to public office in Pennsylvania when initially elected to Erie City School Board on November 7, 2017. Titus also serves as co-vice chair of the Pennsylvania Commission on LGBTQ Affairs.

EGN Editorial Board Call for Applications

Erie Gay News is proud to have served the region's LGBTQIA+ community since 1992. Within the past year, we have formed an editorial board that meets virtually every month to discuss potential articles, distribution, social media presence, and other ways to maintain and improve the publication. We invite those interested in sharing this crucial work to submit applications to be a part of our editorial board. If you want to volunteer, please email a resume and cover letter to info@eriegaynews.com by Sunday, January 31, 2021.

Erie HRC MEI Score Increases to 80

On December 9, 2020, Mayor Joe Schember and members of the Mayor's LGBTQ+ Advisory Council announced that the Human Rights Campaign's (HRC) 2020 Municipal Equality Index (MEI) scorecard for the City of Erie has increased to 80. This record high score for Erie represents a marked

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If you are restarting events or are moving to hosting events/meetings virtually, or want to change your copies received for distribution, please email info@eriegaynews.com

EGN Rates & Data

QUARTER PAGE	FULL PAGE	HALF PAGE VERTICAL
HALF PAGE HORIZONTAL	EIGHTH PAGE	

AD SIZE	PRICE/ISSUE	DIMENSIONS
EIGHTH	\$40 - \$36 Prepaid	1 5/8" high X 2 7/8" wide
QUARTER	\$65 - \$58.50 Prepaid	3 1/2" high X 2 7/8" wide
HALF VERT.	\$120 - \$108 Prepaid	3 1/2" high X 6" wide
HALF HORZ.	\$120 - \$108 Prepaid	7" high X 2 7/8" wide
FULL PAGE	\$200 - \$180 Prepaid	7 1/2" high X 6" wide

Camera ready art or manuscript and/or photos, illustrations and logos must be received by the 15th of the month.

Photos and Illustrations should be PDF or TIFF and Hires.

All hardcopy ads submitted will be reproduced as close as possible.



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The *Erie Gay News* is published monthly as a source of news, events, information, and support for gays, lesbians, bisexuals, transgender people (GLBTs), their families, friends, and supporters in the Erie PA area.

We welcome and encourage all readers to submit timely news, comments, and opinions of interest to local GLBTs for publication in these pages. Please include your contact information with any piece you submit.

Erie Gay News is now included in
The EBSCO *LGBT Life*[®]
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THANKS
 From Your Friends at Erie Gay News

To Lake Erie Counseling Associates for hosting! Andrea Shaffer, Audrey, Jeff Hill, Johauna, Kim Conti, Rex Apps, and Tabitha Wolf for folding; Johauna, Kim Conti, Rex Apps, and Tabitha Wolf for distribution; Mike Lipiec for ad layout & etc. If you're interested in helping out, contact Michael Mahler at (814) 456-9833 or info@eriegaynews.com.

Community News

improvement from the City's preliminary 2018 score of 34 out of a possible 100 points.

The MEI examines how inclusive municipal laws, policies, and services are of LGBTQ people who live, work, and visit there. Cities are rated based on non-discrimination laws, municipality as employer, municipal services, law enforcement, and the city leadership's public position on equality.

The 2020 Municipal Equality Index rated 506 municipalities of varying sizes from every state.

Since June 2018, we have earned 46 points for the following policies, programs, and initiatives:

- * Non-Discrimination Laws +5 points (30/30)
- * Conversion Therapy Ban +2 points (2/2)
- * Non-discrimination in employment +14 point (14/14)
- * Trans-inclusive Health Care Benefits +6 points (6/6)
- * LGBTQ Liaison in Mayor's Office +5 points (5/5)
- * LGBTQ Police Liaison +10 points (10/10)
- * Leadership's Public Position on LGBTQ Equality +3 points (5/5)
- * Leadership's Pro-Equality Legislative or Policy Efforts +1 point (1/3)

In 2021, the Mayor's LGBTQ+ Advisory Council will strive for additional points in:

- * City Contractor Non-Discrimination Ordinance (6)
- * Youth Bullying Prevention Policy (2)
- * Leadership's Pro-Equality Legislative or Policy Efforts (2)
- * City Services to LGBTQ Youth, Homeless, Elders, those living with HIV or AIDS, and the Transgender community (10)
- * Reporting Hate Crimes (12)

For more information on the HRC's MEI, visit the City of Erie's website at

<https://cityof.erie.pa.us/government/boards-commissions/lgbtq-council/>.

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2020 Health Needs Assessment

In a year where public health is at the forefront, LGBTQ Pennsylvanians deserve affordable, accessible and affirming healthcare options at every level. Bradbury-Sullivan LGBT Community Center, in partnership with the Pennsylvania Department of Health, administered the largest statewide assessment of LGBTQ health needs.

More than 6,500 LGBTQ Pennsylvanians from more than 900 zip codes across 64 counties, including Erie, answered questions about everything from mental and sexual health to flu shots and dental visits. The 2020 Pennsylvania LGBTQ Health Needs Assessment also includes the largest known sample of intersex health challenges to date.

Looking at the northwest PA data, 44 percent of respondents from Erie County said they've used tobacco products before, while 71 percent believe all bars should be smoke-free. Forty percent have never been tested for HIV, and less than three percent are currently taking PrEP.

In Erie County, the top five health priorities suggested by LGBTQ community members were depression, suicide, isolation, alcohol and other drug addiction, and bullying.

Statewide, more than one in three LGBTQ Pennsylvanians believe most of their healthcare providers don't have the medical expertise related to their health needs. Almost one in five say they rarely or never get the emotional support they need. Seven in ten LGBTQ Pennsylvanians have experienced a mental health challenge in the past year, but only four of those seven are receiving mental health counseling or treatment.

Almost four in ten LGBTQ Pennsylvanians have experienced violence from a family member, partner or spouse, and more than two out of ten have experienced violence based on their LGBTQ status. Specifically, LGBTQ Pennsylvanians of color, transgender, non-binary and genderqueer respondents are experiencing violence at even higher rates.

This new data reconfirms what many of us already know. Healthcare remains a critical issue for LGBTQ Pennsylvanians, especially in the midst of a pandemic. Concerns about mental health and violence are particularly alarming, as many people are isolated at home.

The report lists ten recommendations that include supporting connections to LGBTQ-competent providers, promoting tobacco cessation opportunities, and prioritizing the health needs of transgender, non-binary, genderqueer and intersex individuals. The full 71-page report is available at www.livehealthypa.com/lgbt.

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Erie Alliance for Equality and other stakeholders across PA to collect these data. The findings will guide healthcare providers, community groups and others in a more informed, more compassionate approach to care.

PA LGBTQ Townhall on December 9

from Pennsylvania Commission on LGBT+ Affairs

On Wednesday, December 9, the Pennsylvania Commission for LGBTQ Affairs hosted a statewide town hall for LGBTQ Pennsylvanians to talk about their experiences on issues such as discrimination, education equity, aging services, access and quality of health services, and housing, among others. About 120 people attended. The commission wanted to be as informed as possible in their advocacy for legislative and policy initiatives and help individuals and organizations find resources and support. Speakers representing a wide array of backgrounds and perspectives included Matt Haslam, Marshall Blount, Senator Tim Kearney, Janelle Crossley, Marilyn Blackburn, Terri Clark, Ceshia Elmore,

Amanda Blouir, Trista Cochran, and Ciora Thomas. Please check the online version of this article for the recorded video of the town hall.

Zone Closed Until January 4

Due to restrictions because of the surge in COVID-19 cases, The Zone Dance Club will be closed until January 4. They are hoping to reopen as soon as it is allowed and safe.

NW PA Pride Alliance New Board Members

NW PA Pride Alliance welcomed new board members Tabitha Wolf and Bobbie Fenno on December 4. They join current board members Alex Sphon, Season Crannell, Rex Apps, Michael Mahler, Diana Ames, Andrew Caswell, Moe Ferrara, Anthony Gressley, Julie Lebow, Michael Mooney, and Steve Wadsworth. Also, Andi Fair and Leroy Oglesby joined the advisory panel.

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Transgender Day of Remembrance Virtual Vigil on Nov 20

from TransFamily of NWPA

Friday, November 20 - TransFamily of NWPA, again, honored our transgender, non-binary, or gender nonconforming family members lost over the past year due to acts of violence.

Due to concern for public safety and to maintain social distancing, the vigil was held virtually as a Zoom meeting. Dana Rasmussen gave opening remarks about the circumstances of how each person was taken from us.

Volunteers presented the photographs and information celebrating the memory of each of the 45 individuals lost in the last year from a PowerPoint. Community members read the information for each individual lost, which included name, age, date the person was taken from us, and a glimpse of who the person was.

Ms. Rasmussen gave closing remarks that

focused on how an attempt was made this year to remember the person lost and their life and not to glorify the violence which took them from us. She also noted that the 45 lives lost is the highest number reported for the U.S. alone. Worldwide it is estimated that over 350 transgender, non-binary, or gender-nonconforming people were killed in the past year due to violent acts. TransFamily of NWPA has a video of the presentation and transcript of the remarks on their Facebook page at www.facebook.com/TransfamilyOfNWPA

Bad Mood or Red Flag?

from SafeNet

During these stressful and unpredictable times, it can be difficult to tell whether an episode of yelling or name-calling by your partner is a symptom of frayed nerves or deliberate intimidation. Does a statement like "If you ever do that again, you'll be sorry" sound like someone having a very bad day or a deliberate threat? Is an ultimatum between two

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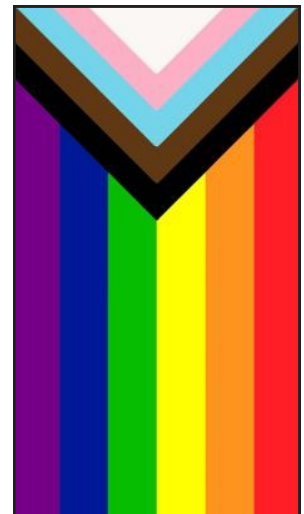
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undesirable choices evidence of fleeting exasperation or deliberate coercion?

There's a big difference between an isolated argument and a pattern of abusive behavior. Ask yourself this question: Does my partner seem intent on making me feel afraid on a regular basis? If the answer is yes, they could be deliberately pushing to maintain power and control in the relationship. Intimidation, threats, and coercion are forms of intimate partner violence that cause invisible scars, leaving victims traumatized.

If you suspect you are in an abusive relationship and aren't sure what to do, help is available. While confiding in a friend or family member helps, it isn't an option for many people. SafeNet advocates are available around the clock to answer questions, provide support, and offer helpful resources. You don't need to suffer in silence.



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2020 E3 LGBTQ Youth Summit: Healing in Community

The 2020 E3 LGBTQ Youth Summit was held virtually November 21-22 2020, but that didn't stop the excitement and engagement for everyone that participated.

E3 kicked off Friday night with a live performance from Brandi Fresco Carlini. Brandi is a 23- year old local Erie MC with multifaceted talents. Brandi's flow brought a ton of energy to the Summit and got the audience ready for the next act, a drag show! The drag show, hosted by Rebecca Mae, was awesome! The Queens brought their best with beauti-



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ful outfits, duets and group performances. Rebecca Mae was joined on stage by Michelle Michaels, Debbie, Alysia Wonderderland, Misty Michaels Kall, Priscilla Godzilla, Pissi Gabune and Shea D'Heaux.

PACA contributed to the success of the Friday night performances by lending their beautiful space and tremendous audio and visual support.

Day two of the Summit provided dedicated time for youth and adults to separate into breakout sessions where they heard from professionals in various fields of expertise. Saturday morning participants were greeted by a live DJ named GeXella. Youth had fun requesting their favorite songs and meeting new friends (virtually).

Presenters in the morning included Sara Weinstein and Simone Shuster-Zimicki from the Native American Community Services of Erie and Niagara Counties. Sara and Simone facilitated a breakout session for youth only called Sex Education for Queer Bodies. Simultaneously, adults were participating in the Ask the Doc panel discussion that included Dr. Will Koehler, Dr. Katherine Dalk, and Dr. Brad Fox. During this discussion adults were able to ask for insights from these professionals and gather information on additional resources.

Following a mid-morning movement break guided Jennifer Dennehy we heard from the Keynote speaker, GeXella. GeXella is a signer, rapper, DJ and community organizer from Jacksonville, FL. GeXella lead a discussion about what it means to be an ally. They discussed with the group how to create safe space in our community and what it means when people say Black Lives Matter.

The afternoon breakout sessions included a

guided art project facilitated by Heather Denning from Mercyhurst University. Prior to the summit preregistered youth received a packet in the mail that included some swag and the materials to participate in the art project. While the youth were creating the adults were discussing Caring for Queer Youth with Sara Rosso from Hugh Lane Wellness Foundation.

The group came back together for a "book break" by Tammy Blount from Erie County Blasco Library. The book break gave youth some ideas for authors and readings they may find interesting.

The summit wrapped up with a live performance from Ryan Cassatta. Ryan Cassatta is an award-winning singer-songwriter and actor, performer, published writer, LGBTQ activist based in Los Angeles. Ryan returned to Erie virtually for the summit and gave us a memorable show that included question and answers with the youth participants

Due to the community support of financial sponsors, grants and dedicated volunteers the entire youth summit was provided free for all participants!!

Corporate sponsors included ERIE Insurance, National Fuel Gas, NW PA Pride Alliance, State Farm Agent Natalie Braddock, Dale Allgeier & Lake Erie Counseling, Penelec, MacDonald Illig Attorneys Jay Alberstadt, Jenna Bickford, and James Toohey, Journey to a Trauma Informed Life, Engel O'Neill and the Northwest Alliance.

The summit was also supported by grants from Erie County Gaming Revenue Authority (ECGRA) and the LGBT Community Endowment at the Erie Community Foundation.

Very special thanks to Jennifer Kubiak, Margo Wolfe, MaLinda Luthy and Tyler Titus for their dedication to LGBTQ Youth in Erie County and to ensuring the summit was a great success!

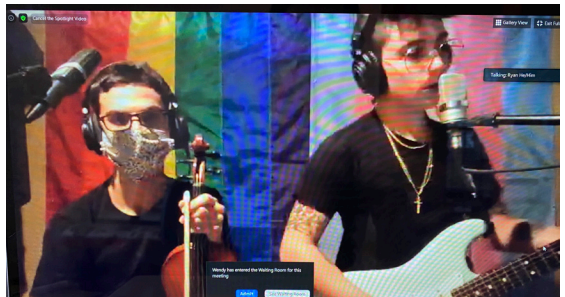


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Community News

Transphobic Sign in Waterford

On Wednesday, December 9, a message board in Waterford maintained by Dwyer Plumbing and Excavation Co. read, “Don’t let a man in a dress rules us Waterford.” The sign targeted openly transgender Pennsylvania Secretary of Health Dr. Rachel Levine, who has been working to contain the spread of COVID-19. The derogatory sign generated controversy, and there was a Change.org petition. Erie News Now aired a story on December 10. The business owner changed the text to read “Happy Holidays. Please wear a mask.” The business owner chose not to speak on camera but expressed frustration with restrictions currently in place. Two Waterford residents interviewed disapproved of the sign. Erie City School Board President Tyler Titus said in a follow-up story the next day that transgender and gender-expansive people should not feel that their validity and lived experience are negated by this sign or other signs that don’t make the news. And that their lives have worth and value.

On Wednesday, December 16, the Erie Times-News published an opinion from Rt. Rev. Sean Rowe, Bishop of the Episcopal Dioceses of Northwestern Pennsylvania and Western New York. On Wednesday, December 16, Rt. Rev. Sean Rowe, Bishop of the Episcopal Dioceses of Northwestern Pennsylvania and Western New York. The editorial was titled “Scapegoating Dr. Levine won’t end the pandemic.” Rowe spoke of the dignity and humanity of transgender and gender-expansive people and how Dr. Levine’s common-sense measures are very much needed to maintain the health and safety of Pennsylvanians.



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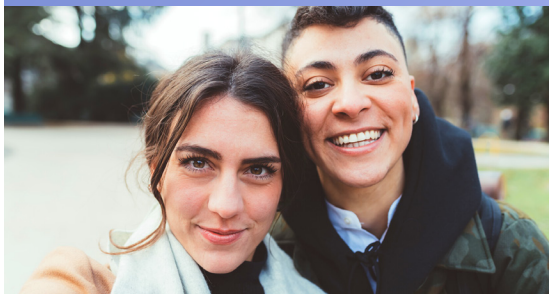
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Calendar

For latest updates, see www.eriegaynews.com

Dec 26 (Sat) - TransFamily of NWP (Erie) Transgender Support Group meets (Zoom) 2 PM. Currently meeting via Zoom. Please message via Facebook page for meeting info.

Dec 30 (Wed) - Eric Reiche 2021 Vision Card Workshop for LGBTQ+ 12-15 year olds (Journey To A Trauma Informed Life, 2230 W. 8th St. #2, Erie, PA 16505) 3 PM - 5 PM. Vision cards are mini vision boards with a twist. The program is for LGBTQ+ 12-15-year-olds. Eric Reiche is a queer-identifying grad student studying art therapy at Edinboro University. You must register to attend, via Google meet link or in-person (provided it is safe). Limit 8 people in-person. We are assembling "vision art packs" for participants to use. They will have various things to create their own vision card. They will need to provide their own scissors, and they can also participate without having the "vision art pack." Pick-up or Delivery with enough advance notice. Phone: (833) 487-5769. Email: ERandazzo@4urjny.com. Browse to <https://www.atraumainformedlife.com/>. RSVP/Register/Tickets at <https://www.atraumainformedlife.com/registration-for-educational-groups>.

Jan 1 (Fri) - RuPaul's Drag Race Season 13 Premiere (VH1) 8 PM. After winning six Emmy Awards this year and solidifying itself as the most awarded reality competition show in history, the highly anticipated new season is bringing together thirteen fabulous queens as they vie for the title of "America's Next Drag Superstar" and a cash prize of \$100,000. Browse to <http://www.vh1.com/shows/rupauls-drag-race>. Browse to venue web site <http://www.vh1.com/>.

Jan 11 (Mon) - Erie County Democratic Party LGBTQIA+ Caucus meets (Zoom) 7 PM. General meeting on Zoom. Contact Michael Mahler at (814) 456-9833 or mmahler@eriedems.com.

Jan 12 (Tue) - Youngstown PFLAG meets virtually (Zoom) 7 PM - 8:30 PM. Youngstown Area PFLAG's support group meeting will gather virtually. Any person who would like to join us can request the zoom link from youngstownareapflag.org Contact: Toni Schilderout. Email: youngstownareapflag@gmail.com. Browse to <http://www.youngstownpflag.org/>.

Jan 16 (Sat) - "Power, Love & Presence: The Joys of Getting Older" Workshop (Zoom) 4 PM - 6 PM. Although the workshop will be on ZOOM, it will be an interactive experience: participants will be actively par-

ticipating and talking both with different men individually (through the use of breakout rooms) and the whole group of twenty. To keep it easy and fun to participate, the workshop is limited to a maximum of 20 men. The fee for the workshop is \$25. The workshop will run for 2 hours with a 15 minute break midway. Contact: Michael Dale Kimmel. Phone: (619)-955-3311. Email: beyondtherapy@cox.net. Browse to <https://www.life-beyondtherapy.com/>. RSVP/Register/Tickets at <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/power-love-presence-the-joys-of-getting-older-tickets-129354676319>.

Jan 16 (Sat) - Dragapalooza (mySongBird) 9 PM. A concert film featuring international celebrity Drag Queens performing LIVE (in your living room) to Stream Exclusively on mysongbird.com Browse to <https://mysongbird.com/>. RSVP/Register/Tickets at <https://shop.mysongbird.com/collections/dragapalooza/products/dragapalooza-livestream>.

Jan 19 (Tue) - Erie County HIV Task Force meets via Zoom 1 PM - 2:30 PM. Zoom Meeting ID: 927 9128 9996. Passcode: 940728

Jan 23 (Sat) - TransFamily of NWP (Erie) Transgender Support Group meets (Zoom) 2 PM. Currently meeting via Zoom. Please message via Facebook page for meeting info.

Jan 26 (Tue) - Erie Gay News folding/distribution work party (Lake Erie Counseling Associates, 301 W 10th St, Erie, PA 16502) 7 PM. Limited number of volunteers welcome. You must wear a mask and practice social distancing.

Jan 28 - 31 (Thu - Sun) - Creating Change Virtual Conference The four-day long event, run by the National LGBTQ Task Force, is a space for learning, connecting, and growing as LGBTQ activists, leaders, allies, and changemakers from across the nation join together. For the first time in its 33 year history, The Creating Change Conference will hold all day long institutes, workshops, keynotes, and caucus sessions online. Phone: (202) 393-5177. Browse to <https://www.thetaskforce.org/creatingchange.html>.

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