



ERIE GAY NEWS

Serving the Regional LGBTQIA+ Community Since 1992



LGBT Funds of Erie Community Foundation welcomed representatives from several area organizations at the Community Conversation at Erie Community Foundation on January 13. Photo by Michael Mahler.

Last month's LGBT Fund event considered a major success

by David Gurzenki-Lukes

It was billed as a Community Convening that took place on January 13 at the Erie Community Foundation. Organized by the LGBT Fund of the Foundation, the event brought together leaders of local organizations, businesses, religious congregations, and others who serve and support the Erie region's LGBTQ+ community.

There were approximately 40 individuals in attendance at the gathering, for which Bill Gonda, chair of the LGBT Fund, was most pleased. "It was rewarding to see so many of the attendees talking to each other and exchanging information about the activities they had developed," said Bill. "I could almost feel that collaborative efforts would result from the evening."

While notice of the event was sent to all addresses on the Community Foundation mailing list, Bill said he was most grateful to Michael Mahler, editor of the Erie Gay News, who helped get the word out. "Because Michael attends so many activities in our community, he made sure that notice of our event was received by leaders of all LGBTQ+ organizations in the area."

The primary reason for the outreach program is to explore ways the LGBT Fund might help

strengthen the work these groups are doing to make life better for LGBTQ+ individuals in our region, according to Bill. The January 13th gathering began at 5:30 pm and was meant to wrap up by 7 pm, "but the exchange between attendees was going so well we could have been there until 10 pm." Unfortunately, not too much information was presented about how groups can apply for financial assistance from the fund. Bill suggested that those interested contact lgbt@eriecommunityfoundation.org. Applications for Erie Community Foundation grants will open in the fall to all 501 (c) (3) nonprofit LGBT organizations.

Dr. Tyler Titus elected president of Erie City Council

On Wednesday, January 7, Erie City Council unanimously elected Dr. Tyler Titus council president. With this election, they became the first openly transgender person in the commonwealth to hold that position. Titus, a former Erie School director, was elected to Erie City Council in 2023 and served as vice president in 2025.

Journey Winter Solstice

December 20th was Journey: Healing Together's 4th annual Winter Solstice event, a night of light and community. Folks from Erie County showed up to an office transformed: dark halls illuminated with hand-crafted paper lanterns and rooms full of

In This Issue...

Last month's LGBT Fund event considered a major success	1
Dr. Tyler Titus elected president of Erie City Council	1
Journey Winter Solstice.....	1
PFLAG Chautauqua Newsletter.....	3
In Memory of Char.....	3
David Duguay Obituary	4
Community Spotlight: ABCs of Building Better Lives.....	5
Housing Survey on Affordability & Stability in Pennsylvania's LGBTQ+ Community	
5	
“The Way We Were”: The Aging with Pride Legacy Project Interviews Begin	6
Meeting with Mayor Devlin.....	6
Calendar.....	8



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Erie Gay News

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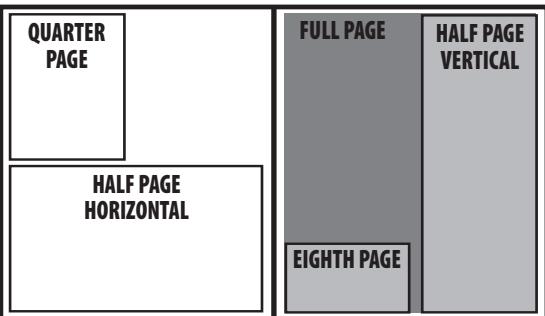
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The *Erie Gay News* is published monthly as a source of news, events, information, and support for gays, lesbians, bisexuals, transgender people (GLBTs), their families, friends, and supporters in the Erie PA area.

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.



Rates & Data



AD SIZE	PRICE/ISSUE	DIMENSIONS
EIGHTH	\$50 - \$45 Prepaid	15 1/8" high X 2 7/8" wide
QUARTER	\$80 - \$72 Prepaid	31/2" high X 2 7/8" wide
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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 HIRE'S. All hardcopy ads submitted will be reproduced as close as possible.

THANKS

From Your Friends at Erie Gay News

To Lake Erie Counseling Associates for hosting! Andrea Shaffer, Bobbie Fenno, David Perry, Deb, Holly Swope, Jeff Hill, Johauna, Kim Conti, Laurie Finch, Rex Apps, and Steve Siwiecki for folding; Andrea Shaffer, Brett Staskiewicz, David Perry, Jeff Hill, Johauna, Kim Conti, Rex Apps, and Steve Siwiecki for distribution; Whee! Design for logo. If you're interested in helping out, contact Michael Mahler at (814) 456-9833 or info@eriegaynews.com.

people and warmth.

Opportunities for creative expression were hosted with a focus on reflection and renewal. Additional luminaries were created to be placed along the hallways. Pinecone intentions were crafted, where goals and resolutions were written and slipped between the pinecone wings.

The night culminated in a communal bonfire ceremony. Pinecone intentions were thrown into the fire as participants shared thoughts, laughs, and company, keeping one another warm and grounded on another windy Erie night.

PFLAG Chautauqua Newsletter

Based in Jamestown, the PFLAG Chautauqua Chapter connects LGBTQ+ people, families, and allies across Chautauqua County. Each month via our newsletter, we share local community updates, advocacy news, upcoming events, and resources that support LGBTQ+ individuals and their loved ones. We also meet every 2nd Wednesday of each month for in-person support groups and starting in February we will be having in-person and online support groups! Sign up with the QR code provided to stay informed, connected, and supported locally.



In Memory of Char

by Dr. Tyler Titus and Dr. Shraddha Prabhu

Our community is mourning the loss of Char Brower on January 13, 2026, a 21-year-old non-binary person whose life was defined by compassion, curiosity, and a deep commitment to dignity for all. Char moved through the world with care and intention, making people (and animals) feel seen, valued, and safe.

Char held a deep love for learning and a natural understanding of justice, particularly disability justice and the ways class, race, gender, ability, and sexuality shape lived experience. Even at a young age, they carried a rare depth of insight that enriched every space they entered. Char instinctively centered consent, respect, and autonomy. No one felt othered in their presence; people felt honored, heard, and respected.

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Char believed all beings deserve gentleness, protection, and the right to live with dignity. This belief guided their advocacy, relationships, and quiet acts of care.

Char was deeply engaged in community life and carried a hopeful vision for a more just and humane world. They were profoundly loved, especially by their mother, Jessica.

If you met Char, you were changed. They had a rare ability to invite others to shed older versions of themselves and step into newer, more compassionate ways of being. In their presence, people felt less guarded, more human, and more whole. When Char left this realm, we lost a profound light and with them went the versions of ourselves shaped by their presence. What remains is the responsibility to grow forward.

Char is deeply missed. May we all strive to be more like Char. Their work is now ours to continue.



Char Brower

David Duquay



David Duguay Obituary

It is with profound sadness that we announce the passing of David A. Duguay, 49, of Cranesville, who passed away on Monday, December 22, 2025, at St. Vincent Hospital, surrounded by his family.

He was born on October 13, 1976, in Erie, to the late Norman and Patricia (Druse) Duguay.

Dave graduated from Girard High School in 1995. Following high school, he worked in a variety of positions, including bartending at local bars and working at several restaurants. He was also employed at the Erie International Airport, where he worked in ticket sales for Piedmont Airlines as well as in the airport restaurants. Dave later worked as a correctional officer at the State Correctional Institution in Albion and most recently at PHB Machining in Fairview.

He was an active man, venturing out almost always with friends, to breath and hike in the outdoors and kayak on Lake Erie. When home he took great care of his garden each year. He was independent and felt proud of keeping his space the way he saw fit. In quiet evenings he enjoyed music, a talented musician. Dave had a gift for most brass instruments, playing throughout his life, learning many songs. He also enjoyed working out and staying in shape, even competing in the Beast on the Bay obstacle course for years on end. Above all, Dave cherished spending time with his family.

In addition to his parents, he was preceded in death by his sisters, Lisa Duguay, Laura Duguay, and Renea Duguay; his brother, David Duguay; and his furry companion, Cisco, whom Dave loved very deeply.

Dave will be deeply missed by his family, including his sisters, Christine Pustelak (Gary) and Cathlene Duguay (Matt); his twin brother, Douglas Duguay; his brothers, Steven Duguay and John Duguay (Ethelia); and his “niblings,” Chloe, Caden, Morgan, Bobby, Dana, Dylan, Sadie, Benny, Bobbi Jo, Tricia, and Joey; his longtime neighbors and friends, the Crane Family.

The family would like to extend special thanks to the compassionate staff at AHN St. Vincent for the amazing care they provided him.

In lieu of flowers memorials may be made to the David Duguay Memorial Fund C/O Edder Family Funeral Home.

Per the family's wishes, a celebration of life will be held at a later date.



Community Spotlight: ABCs of Building Better Lives

by Bobbie Fenn

Dedicated to creating safe, affirming spaces for healing and growth, ABCs of Building Better Lives offers compassionate and inclusive support to people from all walks of life, including members of Erie's LGBTQIA+ community. Located at 4320 Dexter Avenue, this holistic counseling practice helps individuals, couples, and families navigate life's challenges with dignity, understanding, and professional expertise.

Founded in 2007 by Mary Lynn Rote, LPC, CADC, ABCs of Building Better Lives has grown into a trusted resource for mental health and wellness in Erie. With over three decades of experience, Rote leads a diverse team of licensed counselors and social workers dedicated to addressing a wide spectrum of concerns, from anxiety and depression to trauma and addiction. Their work is grounded in a whole-person approach that honors each individual's identity and lived experience.

ABCs offers a comprehensive range of services, from individual, couples, and family counseling to support with trauma, addictions, grief, and life transitions. Their practice is rooted in evidence-based techniques such as CBT, EMDR, DBT, and the Gottman Method, while maintaining a compassionate, client-centered approach. In addition to mental health counseling, ABCs also provides health and wellness services, educational offerings, and yoga classes. The organization further embraces alternative paths to healing through counseling experiences in nature and walking sessions.

What sets ABCs apart is its strong commit-

ment to inclusivity and culturally sensitive care. The practice includes clinicians with broad expertise who welcome clients of all sexual orientations and gender identities. Counselors bring experience working with both heterosexual and LGBTQ populations, ensuring that therapy is tailored to meet diverse needs. This includes affirming therapeutic spaces where clients can explore questions around sexual orientation, gender identity, self-esteem, relationships, parenting, and family dynamics without fear of judgment.

In a community where mental health resources matter deeply, ABCs of Building Better Lives plays an essential role. Whether through traditional in-office therapy or telehealth options, their team continues to provide a safe, welcoming space where every person can pursue healing, connection, and growth.

For more information about services, volunteer opportunities, or upcoming programs, ABCs of Building Better Lives can be reached at 4320 Dexter Avenue in Erie, by phone at (814) 825-2930, or by email at buildingbetterlives@gmail.com. Or visit their website at www.marylynnrote.com.

Housing Survey on Affordability & Stability in Pennsylvania's LGBTQ+ Community

On January 15, the Pennsylvania Equality Project will be starting year 4 of a five-year study on housing affordability and stability for Pennsylvania's LGBTQ+ and other marginalized communities. Participants can find the survey on our website paequality.com - click on the Survey button. All survey responses will remain confidential, and we will release only aggregated data following the survey without any identifying information about participants. The

survey will run through March 31; results from the survey will be available by May 15, 2026.

Analysis of the data from the first three years shows that 102 of 186 (54.8%) rented households can barely afford their current residence. In broader terms, 130 of the 186 (69.9%) of respondents who rent their current residence can either barely afford or not afford their housing expenses. While 7.1% of the entire population of Pennsylvania who rent are at risk for eviction, within the LGBTQ+ community, the 69.9% total potentially facing eviction is substantially larger than it should be.

For more information, email the Pennsylvania Equality Project at info@paequality.com.

“The Way We Were”: The Aging with Pride Legacy Project Interviews Begin

The Aging with Pride Legacy Project continues work on the development of a formal historical archive capturing the development and evolution of LGBTQIA+ culture in Erie. While newspaper articles, timelines and photographs set the historical stage of an archive, recorded oral histories add dimensions of personal experience, motivation and an emotional context connected to past events.

During the past month, the Legacy Project Team completed interviews with several Erie area residents specific to their experiences as members of the LGBTQIA+ community. Some participants described experiences prior to the presence of LGBTQIA+ gathering spaces and organizations in the Erie Area. Others reported experiences of “coming out” in an environment when supportive organizations and agencies were present. Housing, employment and healthcare were discussed in other interviews.

The AWP Legacy Project is interested in your Past/Present experiences as a member of the LGBTQIA+ community in Erie. If interested, please contact the AWP Legacy Project at awplegacyproject@gmail.com.

Meeting with Mayor Devlin

From Peter Genco: As a city of Erie resident, I had the opportunity to meet with our new Mayor, Daria Devlin, on January 9, 2026. I spent most of our time talking about Aging With Pride. Mayor Devlin was pleased with the work we are doing, including our monthly programs, Legacy Project, archives project,

our recognition awards, and our cooperation with organizations in other cities. She was also happy to hear about Bears Do Dinner, which has been meeting since 2013!



G2H2 held its monthly get-together on January 2 at Lavery Brewing Company, 128 W 12th St, Erie, PA. The next G2H2 will be on February 6 at Calamari's Squid Row, 1317 State St, Erie, PA.



Bears Do Dinner on January 7 at Golden Wok. The next Bears Do Dinner will be on February 11th at Wooden Ladle Ramen & Rice Bowl..

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Calendar

For latest updates, see www.eriegaynews.com

Live & Let Live is an LGBTQA-friendly AA meeting that meets every Sunday, at 7PM, at Mt. Calvary Lutheran Church, 1603 W 32 St. Erie PA 16508. For more information, visit www.aaeriepa.org or contact jmwiliams3603@aol.com or (814) (814) 844-2600.

Zone Monday Night Karaoke with DJ Nitro at The Zone, 133 W 18th St, 9 PM-midnight. No cover. 21+ with valid state-issued ID. Please drink responsibly.

Zone Tuesday Game Night, Doors open at 8 PM. Bring your own game or use ours. (Must submit an ID for us to hold while game is in use.) Happy hour 8-10 PM. \$1 off bottled beers. \$2 well drinks. No cover. 21 & over with ID.

Zone Wednesday Trivia Night, Think you're a trivia whiz? Prove it! Play night on your phone! New hosts! New challenges! Doors open at 8 PM. Happy hour 8-10 PM. \$1 off bottled beers. \$2 well drinks. No cover. 21 & over with ID.

Thursdays- LGBTQIA+ Discussion Group (UPMC Western Behavioral Health at Safe Harbor, 1330 W 26th St, Erie, PA) 1 PM. This is a no-cost group facilitated by an experienced moderator and member of the LGBT+ community. This is also a place to share our struggles, journeys, triumphs, and setbacks and an opportunity to find community and support each other. Mental health and substance use present unique challenges to our community. For questions contact Michelle Wolf at wolfmfe@upmc.edu or 716-465-8736

Zone Thirsty Thursday (Zone Dance Club, 133 W 18th St, Erie, PA 16501) 8 PM. Quench your thirst. Doors open at 8 PM. No cover. Cash only. 21+ with ID. Please drink responsibly. Browse to <https://thezonendanceclub.com/>.

*Fridays Starting Feb 6 - Prism After School Program for LGBTQ+ Program for Ages 13-18 (Third Independent Presbyterian Church, 1315 E Washington St, New Castle, PA 16101) 5 PM - 8 PM. Parents/guardians are invited to tour the facility & mingle with the staff & other parents in our auditorium. Programs include board games, themed arts & crafts, movies, lounge access, and much more! The facility will be closed to the public during this time, except for program participants & parents/guardians. * All Prism volunteers have appropriate clearances*

Zone Friday Night Flow, 133 W 18th St, 8 PM - 10 PM. Hosted by Ashen Grove. Doors open at 8pm. \$5 cover.

21+ with valid state-issued ID. The Zone is CASH ONLY! ATM on site.

Zone Saturday Night Dance Party With DJ Joe. Doors open at 8 PM. \$5 cover. Cash only. 21 and over with ID. Please drink responsibly.

Zone Sunday Chill. 8 PM. The Weekend Winddown. Doors open at 8 PM. No cover. Cash only. Happy hour 8 PM - 10 PM. \$1 off bottled beer, \$2 well drinks. 21 and over with ID.

Jan 23 (Fri) - Full Spectrum LGBTQIA+ Adult Group (Full Spectrum Community Outreach Center, 660 W Earle Ave, Youngstown, OH 44511) 5:30 PM - 7 PM. Group for adults who identify as LGBTQIA+ in a casual environment where we can discuss current events and get to know each other in this new and improved monthly group! Light refreshments and snacks available. FREE!

Jan 24 (Sat) - Aging with Pride Brunch (Give A Crepe. La CrepErie, 1909 Chestnut St, Erie, PA 16502) 11 AM - 1 PM. Aging with Pride, an organization of senior LGBT+ members and allies, is meeting for brunch. Everyone is on their own for the meal. RSVP to Peter at (814) 384-9785 (text or voice).

Jan 24 (Sat) - TransFamily of NWPA (Erie) Transgender Support Group meets (Compton's Table, 3104 State St, Erie, PA 16508) 2 PM - 5 PM. Come join us for our monthly support meeting at Compton's Table in the Central Outreach Building. Enter through the rear entrance. Light snacks and refreshments provided. Join us for a community in a comfy, no pressure environment! All are welcome!

Jan 24 (Sat) - The New Castle Prism Initiative Drag Bingo (Third Independent Presbyterian Church, 1315 E Washington St, New Castle, PA 16101) 6 PM - 9 PM. \$10 at the door. Hosted by: Gawdess Jodi. Co-hosted by: Gemini Starr. Special Performance by: Haley Comet. Come support your local queer community. Bring your friends, tip your performers, and shout BINGO!

Jan 27 (Tue) - Holocaust Remembrance Day Day to remember all of the victims of the Nazi era.

Jan 28 (Wed) - Meadville Queer Happy Hour (Julian's Bar & Grill, 299 Chestnut St, Meadville, PA 16335) 5:30 PM – 9 PM. Find community and fun at NWPA Pride's Meadville Happy Hour! Join NW PA Pride Alliance for drinks & laughs. Everyone welcome

Jan 29 (Thu) - G.A. Family Services Queer Youth support group meets (James Prendergast Library Association, 509 Cherry St, Jamestown, NY 14701) 5 PM. For ages 12-21. Please contact Kaden Mason at (716) 720-8712 or kmason@lutheran-jamestown.org or Lisa Schmid-Miller at (716) 338-8702 or lschmidmiller@lutheran.jamestown.org with any questions.



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At Journey's Winter Solstice on December 20. Photo by Michael Mahler.

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Jan 31 (Sat) - Erie Queer Community Warm Coats & Boots Drive (Journey To A Trauma Informed Life, 201 W 11th St, Erie, PA 16505) 11 AM - 1 PM. A broad coalition of regional Queer and allied organizations will be collecting new and gently used warm coats and boots for Community Shelter Services. All clothing and other donations are gratefully accepted! Please enter by the rear door off of the 11th Street parking behind Journey.

Jan 31 (Sat) - Who Wants To Be A Drag Star - Season 2 Round 2 (Voodoo Brewing Co, 834 Bessemer St, Meadville, PA 16335) 8 PM - 11 PM. Watch five drag performers battle it out for their spot in the spring finale! Drag Star is back for season two! Hosted by Cherry Falwell featuring performances by head judge Lady Travesty and guest judges Poundcake and Priscilla Godzilla. Also featuring season one winner Hydroxyzine, season two round one champ Ophelia Payne, and wild card pick Marina Flowers. DOORS: 7PM, SHOW: 8PM. 18+ to enter, 21+ to drink.

Jan 31 (Sat) - Prism Night at Le Resto (Le Resto, 14 N Mercer St, New Castle, PA 16101) 8:30 PM - 1 AM. Join us for an unforgettable night of drag, community, and celebration at Le Resto! Prism Night brings fabulous performances, vibrant energy, and a welcoming space to celebrate LGBTQIA+ artistry and joy. Hosted by: Ophelia Bottom. Performances by: Kitty K Bottom, Adele Pickle, & Eden Hearts. Special Event Menu: Le Resto will be featuring a special cocktail menu along with a limited appetizer menu available during the event. Kitchen closes at 11:00 PM, so arrive early to enjoy food and drinks! Doors Open: 8:30 PM. Show Starts: 9:00 PM. Bar Open Until: 1:00 AM. Cover: \$10 Door Fee. This is a 21+ event.

Feb 1 (Sun) - Aging with Pride planning meeting (Lake Erie Counseling Associates, 1932 W 8th St, Erie, PA 16505) 1 PM. Planning meetings are open to anyone interested in helping to plan activities for Aging with Pride.

Feb 2 (Mon) - Monthly Free HIV Testing at Full Spectrum (Full Spectrum Community Outreach Center, 660 W Earle Ave, Youngstown, OH 44511) 1 PM - 4 PM. Free Condoms, HIV Prevention and support. Tests are confidential and use a small finger prick. Tests are provided by The Warren City Health Department.

Feb 2 (Mon) - Full Spectrum Transgender & Non-conforming Round Table (Full Spectrum Community Outreach Center, 660 W Earle Ave, Youngstown, OH 44511) 6 PM - 7:30 PM. Trans led group that provides an accepting and inclusive space for transgender, nonconforming, and gender questioning adults, to find support and make connections with others. 18+ only please - Light Snacks and refreshments provided.

Feb 4 (Wed) - Erie Queer Happy Hour (Zone Dance Club, 133 W 18th St, Erie, PA 16501) 6 PM - 8 PM. Join the NWPA Pride Alliance at Erie's premier LGBTQ+ nightclub, Zone Dance Club, for our monthly social.

Feb 5 (Thu) - Compton's Table Chat & Chill Group (18+) (Compton's Table, 3104 State St, Erie, PA 16508) 6 PM - 8 PM. Looking to boost your social skills, make new connections or just hang out in a chill, judgment-free zone? Chat N Chill is the place to be! We're all about creating a relaxed, sober space where you can be yourself, whether you're introverted or outgoing. It's a safe haven for the Queer community, where everyone's welcome and respect is the vibe. Join us to build confidence, learn new social cues, or simply enjoy good conversation with great people. Chill vibes, real connections, all in a space that celebrates you. 18+ groups are every first Thursday of each month from 6-8 pm. Each month will have a different theme to keep the conversation going. Registration required to be sure that enough supplies are available. Register at <https://comptonstable.org/chatnchill>

Feb 5 (Thu) - Lotz of Tea with Mona 7 PM. With co-host Large Marge. Live streaming on Facebook, YouTube, and TikTok. <https://www.facebook.com/LotzofTea>.

Feb 7 (Sat) - National Black HIV/AIDS Awareness Day February 7 is National Black HIV/AIDS Awareness Day (NBHAAD), a national HIV testing and treatment community mobilization initiative targeted at Blacks in the United States and the Diaspora. NBHAAD was founded in 1999 as a national response to the growing HIV and AIDS epidemic in African American communities. #NBHAAD

Feb 7 (Sat) - LGBT Venango Support Group meets (Franklin Public Library, 421 12th St, Franklin, PA 16323) 11:30 AM. Peer-led support group for LGBTQ+ adults. We meet once a month upstairs at the Franklin Library

Feb 7 (Sat) - Compton's Closet Affirming Attire (Compton's Table, 3104 State St, Erie, PA 16508) 12 PM - 2 PM. A free resource for Queer and Trans folks. It is a safe place for LGBTQIA people to get donated clothes for free. Whether you're looking for a specific outfit or gender-affirming pieces, we are here to help! Use the doorbell at either the front or back of Compton's Table to be let in.

Feb 7 (Sat) - New To The Spotlight (Third Independent Presbyterian Church, 1315 E Washington St, New Castle, PA 16101) 7 PM. Presented by The New Castle Prism Initiative. Get ready to cheer on incredible local talent as they take the stage and SHINE! New to the Spotlight is a drag showcase celebrating queer

expression, creativity, and community, and you're invited! Doors Open: 7:00 PM. Show Starts: 8:00 PM. \$10 Admission. Hosted by: Gawdless Jodi. Featuring performances by: Cherry Poppinz, Gawdless Jodi, Lady Lawless, Bella Deball, Haley Comet, plus a mystery hot spot performer!

Feb 7 (Sat) - Star Sirch Productions Karaoke (Sneakers, 100 W Harrison St, Jamestown, NY 14701) 9 PM - 1 AM.

Feb 8 (Sun) - Make Up Class (Third Independent Presbyterian Church, 1315 E Washington St, New Castle, PA 16101) 10 AM - 1 PM. MAKEUP CLASS at The New Castle Prism Initiative! Join us for a fun, affirming, and beginner-friendly Makeup Class in a welcoming and supportive space! This workshop is perfect for beginners and makeup enthusiasts alike, with a focus on affirming makeup techniques and self-expression. Please bring your own makeup and supplies. The first 25 people to RSVP will receive a FREE gift bag filled with brushes and various makeup items! A.

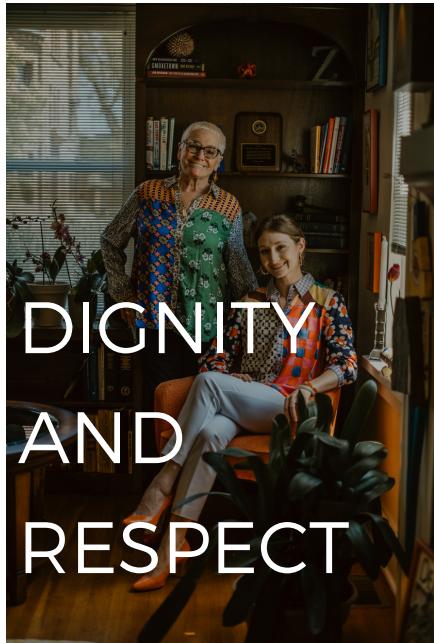
Feb 8 (Sun) - Bricks & Booze: An Adult LEGO Building Night (Zone Dance Club, 133 W 18th St, Erie, PA 16501) 9 PM. Join our friends from the Northwest Pennsylvania LEGO User Group (NWPALUG) for a casual, creative night here at The Zone. Bring the cool

sets you just bought, show off your finds, and just relax with other adult builders. You can bring your own bricks or just come and play with ours! This is a 21+ only night, please bring your ID. No cover charge to build and hang out! The bar is cash only.

Feb 10 (Tue) - Book Club (Third Independent Presbyterian Church, 1315 E Washington St, New Castle, PA 16101) 6 PM - 8 PM. Each month, we'll dive into a new novel to read and discuss together. This month's pick: Carmilla by Sheridan Le Fanu. Bring your thoughts, your favorite snacks to share, and an open mind! Book Club is free and open to everyone.

Feb 10 (Tue) - TransFamily of NWPA (Meadville) Transgender Support Group meets (Empowerment with Grace, 941 Federal Ct Ste 104, Meadville, PA 16335) 6:30 PM - 8:30 PM. Join us for our monthly Crawford Support Group meeting! Please use the side entrance of the building on 296 Chestnut. It will have signage as Empowerment with Grace but this may not show up on your GPS.

Feb 11 (Wed) - Bears Do Dinner #136 (Wooden Ladle Ramen & Rice Bowl, 4753 West Lake Rd, Erie, PA 16505) 6 PM. Join the Bears for a casual dinner of food and conversation! Dinner is on your own. Contact: Peter Genco (814) 384-9785



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Feb 11 (Wed) - PFLAG of Chautauqua meeting (Secret Undisclosed Location, 100 E 2nd St 2nd Floor, Jamestown, NY 14701) 6 PM. This is a safe, inclusive space where allies and queer community members can come together for support, discussion, and connection. We welcome folks from the surrounding area, as well as the CHQ area. Whether you've attended before or are joining us for the first time, we'd love to have you with us. Let's continue building our community, sharing our stories, and supporting one another. Please visit our Facebook page - direct messaging is welcome: <https://www.facebook.com/pflagchq>. And email us at pflagchq@gmail.com

Feb 12 (Thu) - Aging with Pride Game Night (Werner Books & Coffee, 3608 Liberty St, Erie, PA 16508) 5 PM - 8 PM. Bring games and/or cards with you, or just come to play what others bring.

Feb 12 (Thu) - ASCEND Erie Queer Scouts Climbing Club (ASCEND Erie, 426 State St, Erie, PA 16501) 6 PM - 8 PM. Queer Scouts is a LGBTQ+ climbing club, with the goal of creating connection and a safer and more inclusive outdoors community. Just look for the Queer Scout mascot, the tiny rainbow unicorn! Please check in at the front desk upon arrival. Not an ASCEND member? Enjoy a discounted \$15 Club Day Pass while attending these meetups.

Feb 13 (Fri) - Masquerade: A Drag Tribute to Phantom of the Opera (Boro Bar, 117 Meadville St, Erie, PA 16412) 9:30 PM. Hosted by Pissi Gabune

Feb 15 - 21 (Sun - Sat) - Aromantic Spectrum Awareness Week An aromantic is someone who doesn't experience romantic attraction. Arospec is the shorthand name for people who identify anywhere on the aromantic spectrum, including aromantics. Aro Awareness Week is for anyone on the aromantic spectrum, regardless of where they lie there or sexual orientation.

Feb 15 (Sun) - Deadline for Erie Gay News March 2026 print edition (#364) (Erie Gay News, 1115 W 7th St, Erie, PA 16502-1105) Please have all articles, ads, and submissions in by this date. This issue will be released on the evening of Tuesday, February 24. For a complete list of upcoming deadlines and release dates, check the print edition schedule at www.eriegaynews.com/printedition/deadlineschedule.php

Feb 15 (Sun) - Aging with Pride planning meeting (Lake Erie Counseling Associates, 1932 W 8th St, Erie, PA 16505) 1 PM. Planning meetings are open to anyone interested in helping to plan activities for Aging with Pride.

Feb 15 (Sun) - Full Spectrum FREE Food Pantry (Open to Anyone) (Full Spectrum Community Outreach Center, 660 W Earle Ave, Youngstown, OH

44511) 2 PM - 4 PM. Join Full Spectrum community for our free monthly Food Party. This pantry is open to everyone not just members of the LGBTQIA+ Community. NO RSVP REQUIRED.

Feb 17 (Tue) - Erie County HIV Task Force meets (Hybrid) (Erie County Department of Health (ECDH), 606 W 2nd St, Erie, PA 16507) 1 PM. The Erie County HIV Task Force is a collaboration of local organizations and individuals dedicated to educating, supporting, and advocating for people living with HIV/AIDS and preventing the spread of infection

Feb 17 (Tue) - Radiant Faith (Cathedral of St Paul, 134 W 7th St, Erie, PA 16501) 6 PM. 6:00 P.M. Gather around our table with the support of Compton's Table. This shared meal is more than nourishment-it's a time of fellowship, connection, and belonging. 7:00 P.M. Radiant Faith: A queer-centered gathering of worship, wonder, and welcome. Our gatherings are for spiritual seekers and offer a Christian-rooted encounter with the Divine-one who dwells within us and in the sacred connection we share with one another.

Feb 19 (Thu) - Queer Open Mic (Compton's Table, 3104 State St, Erie, PA 16508) 6 PM - 10 PM. Hosted by Alex and Savannah. All Queer performers welcome. Suggested donation of \$5 payable at event or by online donation at comptonstable.org.

Feb 19 (Thu) - Lotz of Tea with Mona 7 PM. With co-host Large Marge. Live streaming on Facebook, YouTube, and TikTok. <https://www.facebook.com/LotzofTea>.

Feb 20 (Fri) - Erie VA LGBTQ+ Veterans Coffee Social (Erie VA Medical Center, 135 E 38th St, Erie, PA 16504) 10 AM. The Erie VA Medical Center will have a coffee social for LGBTQ+ veterans in the 2nd floor conference room at 135 E 38th St., Erie, PA 16504. Times are subject to change based on availability. The Coffee Social is meant to bring Erie's local LGBTQ+ Veterans together to connect and foster ongoing relationships of support and friendship. Veterans will learn about VA services available including: Hormone treatment, Substance use/alcohol treatment & tobacco cessation treatment, Treatment and information on prevention of sexually transmitted infections/PrEP, Mental Health, and Fitness (Diet and Exercise). For more information, contact Brittany Miklos at 814-844-5944. This event is open to all LGBTQ+ Veterans in all counties served by the Erie VA. LGBTQ+ Veterans interested in enrolling in VA Healthcare are encouraged to attend.

Feb 20 (Fri) - Game Night (Journey: Healing Together, 201 W. 11th Street, Erie, PA 16501) 5 PM. Part of Journey: Healing Together's Wellness Weekend.

Feb 20 (Fri) - Full Spectrum LGBTQIA+ Young

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Adult Group (Full Spectrum Community Outreach Center, 660 W Earle Ave, Youngstown, OH 44511) 5 PM. Sponsored by Natura Behavioral Healthcare! For young adults 18-24 who identify as LGBTQIA+ and questioning. FREE! Doors open at 5pm, light refreshments and snacks available! With Reanna Torres, LPC with Natura Behavioral Health and Katie from Full Spectrum Community Outreach

Feb 19 (Thu) - Aging with Pride Dinner #30 (Royal Chopstix Asian Cuisine, 3444 W Lake Rd, Erie, PA 16505) 6 PM - 8 PM. Aging with Pride, an organization of senior LGBT+ members and allies, is meeting for dinner. Everyone is on their own for the meal. RSVP to Peter at (814) 384-9785 (text or voice).

Feb 20 - 22 (Fri - Sun) - Erie Sisters & Brothers Cabin Fever 2026 (Sheraton Erie Bayfront Hotel, 55 West Bay Road, Erie, PA 16507) Sheraton Reservation link: <https://book.passkey.com/e/51177800> Wine on the Lake website: <https://wineonthelake.com>

Feb 20 (Fri) - Game Night (Journey: Healing Together, 201 W. 11th Street, Erie, PA 16501) 5 PM. Part of Journey: Healing Together's Wellness Weekend.

Feb 20 (Fri) - Full Spectrum LGBTQIA+ Young Adult Group (Full Spectrum Community Outreach Center, 660 W Earle Ave, Youngstown, OH 44511) 5 PM. Sponsored by Natura Behavioral Healthcare! For young adults 18-24 who identify as LGBTQIA+ and questioning. FREE! Doors open at 5pm, light refreshments and snacks available!

Feb 20 (Fri) - Prism Open Stage (Third Independent Presbyterian Church, 1315 E Washington St, New Castle, PA 16101) 8 PM - 11 PM. Join us for Prism Open Stage, an inclusive evening celebrating bold talent, fierce performances, and queer joy. \$10 Cover. All talents welcome!

Feb 20 (Fri) - DIVAS: Michelle's 50 & Fabulous Birthday (Zone Dance Club, 133 W 18th St, Erie, PA 16501) 10 PM. Michelle Michaels is turning 50 and claiming the microphone. She takes over hosting duties for a special birthday bash featuring the Miss Erie Sisters and plenty of surprise guests. Come help her ring in the big 5-0 with style.

Feb 21 (Sat) - Journey: Healing Together - Crafternoon (Journey: Healing Together, 201 W. 11th Street, Erie, PA 16501) 11 AM - 2 PM. Part of Journey: Healing Together's Wellness Weekend.

Feb 21 (Sat) - Aging with Pride Book Club - P.S. Your Cat is Dead by James Kirkwood (Werner Books & Coffee 3608 Liberty St, Erie, PA 16508) 1 PM. Werner Books offers a 20% discount on books purchased for the book club.

Feb 21 (Sat) - 9th Annual Full Spectrum Winter

Gala (DiVieste's Banquet Centre, 754 N River Rd NW, Warren, OH 44483) 6 PM - 10 PM. Hosted by Denise Russell.

Feb 21 (Sat) - Star Sirch Productions Karaoke (Sneakers, 100 W Harrison St, Jamestown, NY 14701) 9 PM - 1 AM.

Feb 24 (Tue) - Erie Gay News folding/distribution work party (Lake Erie Counseling Associates, 1932 W 8th St, Erie, PA 16505) 7 PM. Help us get out the print edition of Erie Gay News. Volunteers are very much welcome and needed!

Feb 25 (Wed) - Meadville Queer Happy Hour (Julian's Bar & Grill, 299 Chestnut St, Meadville, PA 16335) 5:30 PM - 9 PM. Everyone welcome!

Feb 26 (Thu) - G.A. Family Services Queer Youth support group meets (James Prendergast Library Association, 509 Cherry St, Jamestown, NY 14701) 5 PM. For ages 12-21. Please contact Kaden Mason at (716) 720-8712 or kmason@lutheran-jamestown.org or Lisa Schmid-Miller at (716) 338-8702 or lschmidmiller@lutheran.jamestown.org with any questions.

Feb 27 (Fri) - International STAND UP to Bullying Day International STAND UP to Bullying Day is a special event in which participants sign and wear a pink "pledge shirt" to take a visible, public stance against bullying.

Feb 27 (Fri) - Full Spectrum LGBTQIA+ Adult Group (Full Spectrum Community Outreach Center, 660 W Earle Ave, Youngstown, OH 44511) 5:30 PM - 7 PM. Group for adults who identify as LGBTQIA+ in a casual environment where we can discuss current events and get to know each other in this new and improved monthly group! Light refreshments and snacks available. FREE!

Feb 28 (Sat) - TransFamily of NWPA (Erie) Transgender Support Group meets (Compton's Table, 3104 State St, Erie, PA 16508) 2 PM - 5 PM. Come join us for our monthly support meeting at Compton's Table in the Central Outreach Building. Enter through the rear entrance. Light snacks and refreshments provided. Join us for a community in a comfy, no pressure environment! All are welcome!

Feb 28 (Sat) - Everything Is Actually Romantic Drag Show (French Creek Coffee and Tea Co., 285 Chestnut St, Meadville, PA 16335) 8 PM. Calling all Brats and Swifties - you won't want to miss this one! Join us for a night of Charli XCX and Taylor Swift, drag style. Featuring performances from Snarebear, Veronica Ville, Marina Flowers, and a special guest or two from round two of Who Wants to be a Drag Star. \$5 cover / 18+. Doors 8 PM, SHOW 9 PM.



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The Red Zone

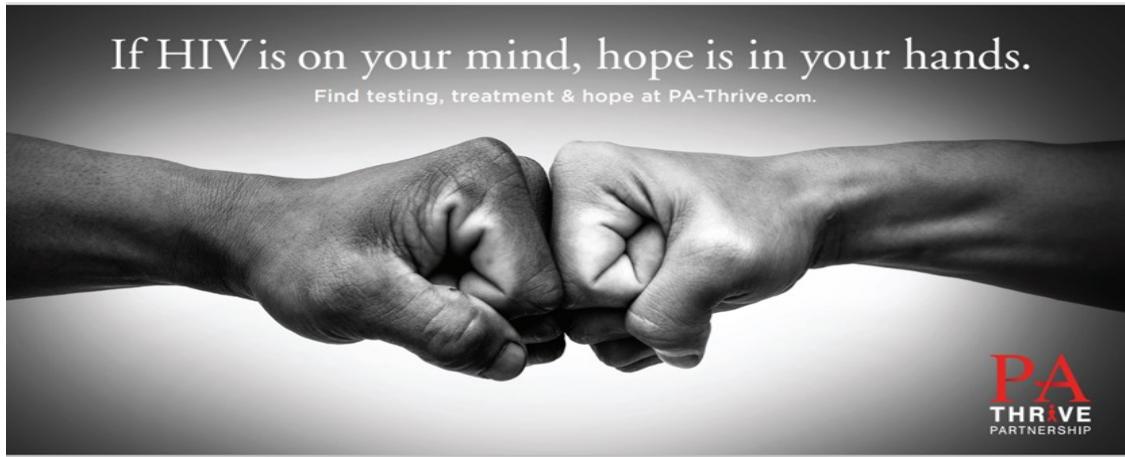
The "Red Zone" is a critical and often overlooked period on college campuses, referring to the first six to eight weeks of the academic year when students, particularly freshmen, are at the highest risk for sexual assault. This period is marked by a convergence of factors that make new students especially vulnerable, including their unfamiliarity with campus resources, a desire to fit in, and increased social activity, often involving alcohol.

During the Red Zone, incoming students are navigating new social environments and building relationships, which can sometimes lead to situations where boundaries are crossed. The pressures of adapting to college life can also make students less likely to recognize or avoid risky situations.

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