



# BURGH

QBurgh.com

Spring / Summer '26

FREE

## A Future Built on Joy



# 2026

## PITTSBURGH PRIDE GUIDE

+ Dreams of Hope

& We are FAMILY

PRIDE IS  
PRIDE IS  
PRIDE IS  
PRIDE IS  
PRIDE IS  
PRIDE IS  
PRIDE IS  
PRIDE IS  
PRIDE IS  
PRIDE IS



Community.



**CENTRAL OUTREACH**  
WELLNESS CENTER™

127 Anderson St STE 101, Pittsburgh, PA 15212

CentralOutreach.com | 412-322-4151



# P\*TOWN BAR PRIDE WEEKEND

FRIDAY  
**JUNE 5**  
OPEN 6PM | \$5 AT DOOR



**LEZ PARTY**  
WITH DJ KK. LESBIAN HAPPY HOUR FROM **7-10PM**  
**PRIDE THROWBACK DANCE PARTY**  
WITH DJ KK FROM **10-2**  
**JOCKS & COC\*S**  
CLOTHING OPTIONAL PARTY IN THE BAUM SHELTER FROM **10-2**

SATURDAY  
**JUNE 6**  
OPEN 6PM



**THE UNLEASHED BAND**  
OUTSIDE \$10/DOOR **6-9PM**  
**ENVY SINN COMEDY**  
**9-10PM**  
**PRIDE KARAOKE**  
WITH DJ BARRY BRAYLEO **10-1:30AM**  
**DANCE UNDER THE STARS**  
WITH DJ ICONIC (OUTSIDE) **10-2AM**  
**COLOR CODED**  
GRAB YOUR HANKY AND WEAR IT PROUD IN THE BAUM SHELTER **10-2AM**

SUNDAY  
**JUNE 7**



**OPEN AT 1PM**  
**AFTER THE PARADE!**  
DRINK SPECIALS ALL DAY!  
**PRIDE AFTER PARTY AND DRAG SHOW**  
8PM \$5 AT DOOR | HOSTED BY ENVY SINN AND SAVANNAH RAY





ON THE COVER:  
Members of Dreams of Hope theatriQ after the final performance of their spring original production "OH MY GOD!" Photo by Ava Grace.



For the forgotten,  
the unwanted, the  
abandoned and alone.  
For all outsiders.

QBURGH LLC  
JEFF FREEDMAN,  
Co-Creator  
JIM SHEPPARD,  
Co-Creator

Info@QBurgh.com  
412.353.9759

223 Fourth Avenue  
Floor 10  
Pittsburgh, PA 15222

Ads@QBurgh.com  
QBurgh.com/Advertise

**Staff**  
ALASDAIR BLACKWELL,  
Digital Editor  
BILLY JO MOLINARI,  
Design & Layout  
NICK TOMMARELLO,  
Video Host  
MICHELANGELO PELLIS,  
Video Host  
KAY WINDER,  
Video Producer  
SILAS MAXWELL SWITZER,  
Archivist

**Photography**  
AVA GRACE  
MAYA LOVRO

**Contributors**  
JASON SHAVERS  
AARON VALENTIC  
SEA COMBAR  
JOSIE BYZEK  
CARLOS ROA  
MICHAEL BUZZELLI  
CHRISSY COSTA  
MIRACLE JONES

**Spring/Summer 2026,  
Volume 5, Issue 1  
ISSN 2831-9451**

© 2026 All rights reserved.  
No part of this book  
may be reproduced  
or transmitted in any  
form or by any means,  
electronic or mechanical,  
including photocopying,  
or recording whatsoever  
without express written  
permission from the  
publisher, QBurgh LLC.  
QBurgh and the "Q" icon  
are registered trademarks  
of QBurgh LLC.

# Contents

30

**Dreams of Hope**



From The Co-Creators.....04  
 Pittsburgh Pride Schedule .....08  
 What's Queer & Going On.....09  
 Letters from Governor & Mayor.....12  
 Rian Out Loud!.....14  
 Taste the Rainbow: PGH's Biker Chicks..18  
 Pride Parade Route.....21  
 Pride Grand Marshals.....22  
 Pride Month Itinerary .....26  
 Letters from Elected Officials (1).....28  
 Art as Liberation: Dreams of Hope.....30  
 Trans Liberation Through Fitness.....38  
 Letters from Elected Officials (2).....43  
 Let's Kiki; Monthly LGBTQ Parties.....46  
 We are Family.....50  
 Chris Girman: Delving Into The Soul.....56  
 Pittsburgh's LGBTQ+ Bar Scene .....62  
 Joe Dombrowski Levels Up.....66  
 Pittsburgh Pink Pages.....70



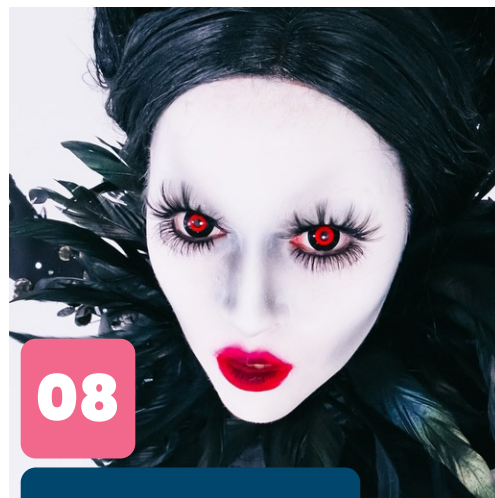
14

**RIAN OUT LOUD!**



38

**DONNY DONOVAN**



08

**PRIDE LINEUP**



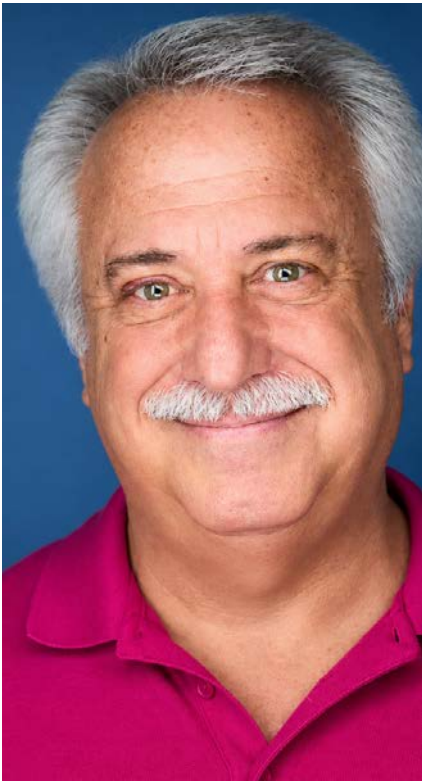
50

**WE ARE FAMILY**



18

**PITTSBURGH'S BIKER CHICKS**



# EXISTING PROUDLY

# FROM THE CO-CREATORS

The amazing part about being around and active in our community for over 40 years is the perspective it gives you. From the early days of organizing LGBTQ events as a co-founder of the Steel City Softball League back in 1981, to my volunteer work today as the co-owner of QBurgh, I've had a front-row seat to how we've changed.

I have watched us grow from a small, brave group of people looking for a place to belong into the huge, diverse family we see today. It hasn't always been easy, and we've faced many uphill battles along the way, but seeing so many different people finally find their place under our flag is the best reward for all those years of hard work.


This year's theme, **"Existence is Resistance,"** really hits home for me because I've seen it in action for decades.

Over the last forty years, I've learned that simply living your life openly and being exactly who you are is one of the most powerful things you can do. Whether you are out in the streets marching with a sign or just living your truth quietly and authentically at home, you are making a difference and helping to move us forward.

Pride has evolved into many things. It's a party, a protest, and a family reunion all at once, and it reminds us that our joy is just as important as our fight for our rights.

**At the end of the day, it doesn't matter how you choose to celebrate as long as we continue to show up for each other.**

# QBURGH



We all have different stories, different backgrounds, and different ways of expressing ourselves, but our real strength has always come from our ability to support one another.

As you enjoy the festivities this year, take a look at the people standing around you, from the newcomers to us old folks, and remember that we are all part of the same long, proud history. Let's keep celebrating together, standing tall together, and showing the world that we aren't going anywhere.

nywhere.

In solidarity,

**Jeff Freedman**

**Co-Creator**

**QBurgh**

**DAILY NEWS  
ON QBURGH.COM**



# PRIDE IS BUILT, NOT BOUGHT

What we forget when we talk about Pride

FROM THE  
CO-CREATORS

**T**his year, I've been hearing something different.

I've heard people say, "Pride feels canceled." I've heard people say that without a big headliner at Stage AE, something is missing. I've heard people say we should strip it all back and return to a simple picnic in the park.

And I get it. I really do.

It's easy to measure Pride by its biggest, most visible moments. The stages, the lights, the artists, the energy of thousands of people packed together, singing and dancing in a space that feels entirely ours. Those moments are powerful. They matter. They're part of what makes Pride feel like Pride.

But Pride has never been just a concert.

At the same time, it's just as easy to imagine a version of Pride that's simpler. More grassroots. Less complicated. A return to something that feels more intimate, more community-driven, more "authentic."

But here's the truth we don't always say out loud. There has never been a version of Pride that didn't require work or coordination or, most of all, resources.

Even a picnic in the park needs permits. It needs security. It needs infrastructure. It needs people, often volunteers, giving their time, their energy, and their care to make sure the rest of us have a space to gather safely. What looks simple on the surface is almost always the result of invisible labor underneath.

Pride is not a product. It's not something we can measure solely by what we get from it, like the size of a stage or the name on a lineup. But it's also not effortless. It doesn't just happen because we want it to.

It lives somewhere in between.

Pride is something we build. Together. Imperfectly. Year after year.

# URGENT

It's shaped by who shows up, who contributes, who supports it, and by the resources we're able to bring into it.

So when we reduce Pride to a headliner, we miss its heart. And when we imagine it as something that can exist without investment, we miss its reality.

The truth is, Pride might look a little different this year. And that can feel uncomfortable. But different doesn't mean diminished. It definitely doesn't mean canceled.

It might just mean we're being asked to engage with it differently.

To look beyond the biggest stage. To show up for local artists, performers, and organizers. To support the spaces and people doing the work, often without the spotlight. To remember that Pride doesn't only live in one venue, on one night, or in one moment.

It lives in our bars and our streets. In our parks and along our rivers. In every space we carve out for each other, again and again.

Pride has always been a balance of joy and effort, celebration and commitment, visibility and vulnerability. That hasn't changed. What can change is how we show up for it.

Pride isn't "canceled," but it is calling on us to participate, to support, to look around and see not just what's different, but what's still here and what's still possible.

Pride has never belonged to a stage or a sponsor. It belongs to us. And it always will.

With pride,

**Jim Sheppard**

**Co-Creator  
QBurgh**



# PITTSBURGH PRIDE 2026 SCHEDULE

## SUNDAY MAY 24

Bigger Gayer Picnic (18+ / 21+)

## FRIDAY JUNE 5

Pittsburgh Pride Prom at the Aviary (21+)  
Pittsburgh Pride Kiki Ball (18+)



## SATURDAY JUNE 6

Pittsburgh Pride Festival Day 1 starting at 12:00 PM  
Allegheny Commons Park West

**CHRISSY CHLAPECKA at 5 PM**

**EMM at 6pm**



## SUNDAY JUNE 7

Pittsburgh Pride March & Parade

Line up begins at 10 AM

Step off at 12:00 PM

New 2026 route crossing the Roberto Clemente Bridge

Pittsburgh Pride Festival Day 2 starting at 12:00 PM

**CAIN CULTO at 6 PM**

# WHAT'S QUEER & GOING ON?



**16**  
**FROCKTAILS 2026:  
DRAG BINGO**  
  
Acclamation Brewing  
7:00-9:30pm

**18**  
**MONDAY NIGHT  
FEVER**  
  
P\*Town Bar  
11:00pm

**21**  
**DYKE MIC**  
  
Blue Moon Bar  
8:00-10:00pm

**21**  
**Can We DRAG  
You to Church?**  
  
Calvary UMC  
5:00pm-Late

**23**  
**SZR: SAPHIC  
DAY PARTY**  
  
5801  
4:00-8:00pm

**QMNTY 5K  
SAFE RACE 24**  
Three Rivers Heritage Trail  
9:30-11:30am  
**2026 BIGGER GAYER PICNIQ**  
810 Arch St  
1:00pm-7:00pm  
**PRIDE OF P\*TOWN PAGEANT**  
P\*Town Bar  
8:00pm-Late

**28**  
**GLITZBURGH  
PRIDE PAGEANT**  
  
5801

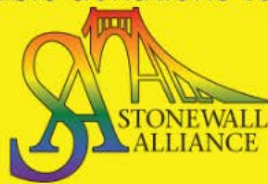
**29**  
**THE BIRD CAGE:  
A Millvale Pride Fundraiser**  
Harold's Haunt 8:30-11:00pm  
**30 GARFIELD  
PRIDE**

## STONEWALL

On behalf of the Stonewall Alliance Board, we would like to extend a heartfelt

*Thank You!*

to all Stonewall Sports Players, Sponsors, Contributors; Social Scene Attenders and all those who support our effort to bring inclusive sports and charitable donations to Pittsburgh.



# MORE PRIDE EVENT DETAILS: **PAGE 26**

**JUNE**

## **PGH PRIDE WEEKEND** JUNE 5-JUNE 7

**4**  
**5801 PRIDE  
WEEKEND KICKOFF**  
  
5801  
Evening

**5**  
**PRIDE PROM**  
6:00pm-11:00pm  
  
**5801 PRIDE  
BLOCK PARTY**  
ALL DAY

**6**  
**PGH  
DYKE MARCH**  
  
**5801 STARLIGHT  
SHOWCASE**  
  
**PITTSBURGH PRIDE  
CHOIR: UNSTOPPABLE**  
Point Park Uni. Playhouse  
7:30pm-9:30pm

**7**  
**PITTSBURGH PRIDE  
MARCH & PARADE**  
Line-up Starts at 10:00am  
  
**5801 PRIDE BRUNCH  
& PRIDE AFTER PARTY**  
5801  
ALL DAY

**11**  
**PRIDE NIGHT  
AT THE PIRATES**  
  
PNC Park  
6:40pm-10:00pm

**12**  
**TWIRL:  
PRIDE EDITION**  
  
Bottlerocket  
9:00pm-2:00am

**14**  
**GLOVES AND  
GLITTER**  
  
Steel City Softball League  
Les Getz Memorial Park  
12:00pm-3:00pm

**20**  
**PGH PRIDE  
IN THE PIT**  
  
The Funhouse at  
Mr. Smalls  
2:00pm-6:00pm

**27**  
**WESTMORELAND  
PRIDE PROM**  
  
The Westmoreland  
Museum of American Art  
6:00pm-9:00pm

**30**  
**FAMILY PRIDE  
NIGHT AT THE  
PITTSBURGH ZOO**  
  
The Pittsburgh Zoo  
6:00pm-9:00pm

# HAVE YOUR EVENTS LISTED!

[QBURGH.COM/SUBMIT-EVENT](http://QBURGH.COM/SUBMIT-EVENT)

# JULY

4

## THE ROCKY HORROR PICTURE SHOW

Row House – Hollywood!  
10:30-11:59pm

5

## SNOOZEFEST

P\*Town Bar  
10:00pm

16

## EDDIEOKIE

P\*Town Bar  
9:30pm-1:30am

18

## JOHNSTOWN PRIDE

Central Park,  
Downtown Johnstown, PA.  
2:00pm-9:00pm

25

## SZR: SAPHIC DAY PARTY

5801  
4:00-8:00pm

27

## MONDAY NIGHT FEVER

P\*Town Bar  
11:00pm

# AUG.

2

## BIG GAY RIVER FLOAT

Cedar Creek Park  
Boat Launch  
Belle Vernon, PA.  
11:00am-5:00pm

# Do what's true to you.

Every community, every person  
has value at Dollar Bank.

# DollarBank®

Let's get you there.



## FROM GOVERNOR JOSH SHAPIRO

are creating a Commonwealth that is committed to supporting these individuals and beyond by creating environments of greater diversity and inclusion for our collective well-being. My record on LGBTQ+ rights and nondiscrimination has been clear; as long as I am Governor, Pennsylvanians will have the right to marry who they love and be who they are. I applaud QBurgh for advocating for LGBTQ+ acceptance and non-discrimination through education, social involvement, and outreach endeavors. This organization and its partners have touched the lives of countless people and continue to uphold our Commonwealth's core principles. We must remain committed to continue working together to support LGBTQ+ Pennsylvanians by advancing legislation, breaking down barriers, and celebrating diversity and who we are as a Commonwealth.

I encourage all Pennsylvanians to celebrate this important observance and continue to work toward liberty and justice for all—keep showing up!

As Governor, and on behalf of all Pennsylvanians, I am honored to welcome everyone to the Pittsburgh Pride Month Celebration. Please accept my best wishes for a memorable event and continued success.

GIVEN under my hand and the Seal of the Governor, at the City of Harrisburg, this fifth day of June two thousand twenty-six, the year of the Commonwealth the two hundred fiftieth.

A blue ink signature of Governor Josh Shapiro, written in a cursive style.

Governor Josh Shapiro

**I**t is my honor to welcome everyone gathered for the 2026 Pittsburgh Pride Month Celebration.

William Penn founded our Commonwealth on the principles of fairness and tolerance, and I believe we must continue to be a place that pays faithful tribute to those core values. LGBTQ+ Pennsylvanians have been instrumental in the development of our state's economic, cultural, spiritual, and political industries. Together, we



## FROM MAYOR COREY O'CONNOR

We are grateful to the leaders of the LGBTQIA+ community who have worked for years, and continue to work, to pave paths for so many to live without fear, especially our youth. In 2016, I stood with my colleagues on City Council to be the first city in Pennsylvania to ban Youth Conversion Therapy. The City has also committed to protecting the community through providing gender affirming benefits for city employees, providing LGBTQ Liaisons in Public Safety and established the LGBTQIA+ Commission, with whom my administration works closely. We know there is still work to be done together.

protect members of the LGBTQIA+ community, its young people, and future generations. As mayor, I am committed to supporting the community and being a welcoming city for everyone. I will be present and my door is always open to you. Thank you for what you do for Pittsburgh. Have fun this Pride Month, be safe and I'll see you at the festivities.

Corey O'Connor  
Mayor  
City of Pittsburgh

**A**s we begin Pride month, I am proud to stand with the LGBTQIA+ Community as we celebrate the history and accomplishments of the community in Pittsburgh, nationally and worldwide. As Mayor, I plan to make sure that your voices are heard and that Pittsburgh is your first choice to call home.

We all know that in 2026, the LGBTQIA+ community still faces adversity, despite your contributions to our great city. It's important that we work together to uplift and





HAPPY

Pride

PITTSBURGH

THE CITY OF PITTSBURGH IS HIRING



Excellent Health Benefits  
Paid Time Off  
Retirement Pension  
Professional Development  
Community Engagement  
Commuter Discounts  
Celebration of Diversity & Inclusion  
Health and Wellness Initiatives

**Apply Today!**  
**PGHJOBS.NET**

WORK FOR THE CITY THAT YOU LOVE

# RIAN OUT LOUD!

Ryan-Louis McNeil Is Amplifying Black Queer Pittsburgh

By Michael Buzzelli | Photos by Maya Lovro  
Styled by Ja'Cobi Lawrence Clothing: Bad B\*tch Thriftin



**R**yan-Louis McNeil (Rian-Louis on the pod and after hours) is a Pittsburgh-based cultural curator, creative, and community advocate. He is the creator and host of “RIANOUTLOUD!” McNeil amplifies Black LGBTQ+ voices through podcasting and live events.

McNeil went from a Bright Young Person in 2024 to a Fab Forty in 2026 in two years. McNeil said, “I was still processing Bright Young Person when I got on the Fab Forty nomination. I’m incredibly grateful.”

On the podcast, which has over one hundred episodes in six years, Rian has interviewed artists, musicians, and filmmakers.

In 2025, McNeil hosted a live event, “RIANOUTLOUD: Live Experience” at TLC Libations, Pittsburgh’s first Black woman-owned distillery, 7800 Susquehanna Street, Pittsburgh, PA 15208. His guests for the live recording of the podcast included Catherine “CC” Calhoun, an educator and creative; Miracle Jones, an advocate and organizer; and Manny Dibiachi, a rapper, curator, and sonic visionary.



McNeil was born in Washington, D.C., but moved to Monessen, PA, at an early age. He is an Outreach Specialist at Amachi Pittsburgh, where he supports youth and families of incarcerated individuals and has contributed to initiatives.

One of them is HERE4U, a bus that delivers Amachi Pittsburgh’s social services directly to impacted neighborhoods. McNeil was named an Allies for Health + Wellbeing 2024 Bright Young Person for his leadership, representation, and community impact. This year, he was nominated to be one of the New Pittsburgh Courier’s Fab Forty Under Forty, alongside Brittany L. Ezell, President & CEO of The Pittsburgh Foundation, Ross Marlin Johnson, Vice President, Business Banking Recruiting Manager, PNC Bank, Jatara McGee, Anchor, and Investigative Reporter, WPXI, and thirty-six other prominent professionals in the Black community.

Catherine C.C. Calhoun, Director of Education and Community Engagement, August Wilson African American Cultural Center, and the creator of Pride & Joy, a celebration that honors the unique experiences, identities, and contributions of the Black LGBTQIA+ community, which is held annually at the August Wilson African American Cultural Center, said,

**“Rian is a pillar of the Black LGBTQIA+ community. He is working to change the narrative in Pittsburgh.”**

Calhoun listed a series of traits that she admires about McNeil. She said, “He’s kind, generous, and big-hearted. He is full of joy and full of life. Even when he’s having a bad day, he makes sure that you are taken care of.”

Calhoun and McNeil serve on the Urban League of Young Professionals Greater Pittsburgh, a networking organization dedicated to empowering communities and changing lives.

McNeil has been a guest on other podcasts, including ThatBlackBoyJoy with cohosts Lord Devery and Derwin King,

and the Masters of Creation (MIC) podcast with Tre Tipton.



McNeil is an author and podcast host working on his novel, “Flawsome,” about a New York City DJ returning to Pittsburgh after a family tragedy. Describing it as a blend of friendship, music, love, and family, he hopes to engage readers’ curiosity and excitement about his expanding media projects.

McNeil had a Wattpad series called “Forever Young,” about young gay Black men navigating their lives. The series garnered 45,000 views on the platform.

McNeil described the qualities that make him an ideal podcaster and Emcee. He said, “My empathy is my mutant superpower.”

The congenial host can get his guests to feel comfortable revealing themselves.

The name, RIANOUTLOUD, comes from an incident with his grandfather. McNeil said, “The first iteration of the show was called ‘Drinks and Conversations,’ but morphed into ‘RianOutLoud’ after his grandfather stubbed his toe and called out, ‘Oh, for crying out loud!’”

**It was a spark of inspiration.**

McNeil has spoken with LGBTQIA+ queer artists across America. He said, “I started it because of my love of music.” McNeil expanded the pod to include actors, writers,

performers, and every stripe of LGBTQIA+ performer, amplifying underrepresented voices, particularly Black Queer creatives.

McNeil beamed, "I had a Grammy winner on the podcast," explaining that one guest, Durand Bernar, won a 2026 Grammy for Best Progressive R&B album for "Bloom," beating out Coco Jones, Teyana Taylor, Lucky Daye, and Mahalia.

He said, "RIANOUTLOUD! grew into something bigger than me." The podcaster has emceed several local events, including Pittsburgh Pride.

McNeil is expanding Out Loud Productions. The podcaster is hoping to leverage additional media platforms, expanding into books and film. He and author Donnie Love are planning another podcast celebrating friendship, tentatively titled "But Mind You..." an expression he and Love lob around when chatting.

McNeil is a proud Pittsburgher, but admits, "There's so much more work

to be done, but the city is bursting with possibilities." McNeil is a self-proclaimed doer. When he sees that something needs to be done, he gets in there and does it.

He hasn't had much time for romance lately. The Pride emcee and podcaster admitted, "I'm as single as a one-dollar bill!"

**"RIANOUTLOUD!" can be found on most podcast platforms, including Spotify and Apple Podcasts.**



# GLOVES & GLITTER

A DRAG SOFTBALL FUNDRAISER

w/ special guest, Dixie Surewood



Sunday, June 14, 2026



Gates Open 12:00PM  
First Pitch 1:00PM



Les Getz Memorial Park  
Swissvale, PA

\$10 suggested donation  
\$100 tent space available / includes 2 tickets

Visit [www.steelcitysoftball.org](http://www.steelcitysoftball.org) for more info!

PRESENTED BY:



TICKETS:



SHARE

FOLLOW



CONTACT

SAVE



**Annual Home  
Services**

**Subscription**

**Remodels  
Handiwork**

**Interior/Exterior**

**We are here for you.**

**Bad weather or  
Political oppression - neither  
will stop us from bringing  
our safe space to yours!**

**Email for 30% off Consultation**

**[qburghad@briannasmobileworkshop.com](mailto:qburghad@briannasmobileworkshop.com)**



# TASTE THE RAINBOW: PITTSBURGH'S BIKER CHICKS KEEP THE VANGUARD ROLLING

By Josie Byzek





**T**he Pittsburgh Pride Parade is about to kick off and a pack of motorcyclists rev up the crowd with a roar. Anyone in Pittsburgh's LGBTQ+ community who wants to ride in the vanguard are welcome, a tradition almost as old as the parade itself, and a pack of bikers have answered the call.

Rainbows are everywhere here in the Strip District, with Liberty Avenue stretching like a runway.

The bikes don't like idling in the heat, all that stop-and-go's not good for them, so the riders want

to get going. When they finally do, it sounds like thunder.

As they stream past, listen very closely: Amy Reis is bringing up the rear on her Can-Am three-wheeler, and you'll hear her shout, "Taste the rainbow," as she and her wife, Stephanie, gleefully toss 14 pounds of Skittles into the crowd.

"I'm the bitch on the back," says Stephanie, a sweet-looking woman sporting curly light brown hair and glasses. And then amends it to, "Babe. I'm the babe on the back, however you want to consider it."

She points to her wife, Amy, and says, "And this is a true biker chick."

### **The Biker Chicks at Home**

They live in a lovely South Hills home on a corner lot. The cheerful pale-yellow walls showcase rainbow-themed art by a local, and the place feels clean and comfy. The cats come to check me out, of course, and Amy shows her Biker Chicks vest, laying it almost reverently on the back of the couch. She sports short salt-and-pepper hair and looks a bit tough, until she talks, and her own soft side shows.

Amy grew up around motorcycles as her mother kept a white one in the basement. “I never saw her ride, but apparently she did. We used to sit on it as kids and just pretend we were riding.” But owning one had to wait until she could afford it later in life.

Finding one short enough to touch the ground flat-footed was a puzzle. She purchased a Harley Sportster, then a Softail Slim, and loved both. But as she got older and started taking Stephanie along, the stop-and-go of city riding made her nervous. Gravel driveways and restaurant parking lots, especially, “If my leg slips out from underneath me, I can’t grab the motorcycle.” In 2021 they sold the two-wheeler and got the Can-Am. “I miss the leaning,” she says, “but the safety makes up for it.”

“I was terrified when I first rode a motorcycle. I never thought I’d get up to interstate speed,” she says. “It takes a while to gain that confidence, but once you — you should always ride fearful. Never think that it’s completely safe.”

Asked what she enjoys most about being a biker, she says, “It’s just very freeing, and it doesn’t matter who I take on a ride.” She took Stephanie’s mom out once. “Mama G’s in her seventies and can’t wait till spring for me to take her out for another ride. My granddaughter, when she was 10, I took her along. She was afraid at first and then loved it.”



Stephanie and Amy have been with Pittsburgh Biker Chicks since the beginning, around 2000. They were part of the East Coast Biker Chicks, a New England-based organization. “That kind of fell through,” says Stephanie. “So us girls decided to form our own group.”

It started small, a dozen members in a private Facebook group, then a public one. People joined them on rides. “A lot of good girls in the group,” she says.

The club has slowed down some in recent years. Fewer members are showing up for rides and there don’t seem to be as many younger women. Amy has a few thoughts about why that is.

“You have to have the desire to want to ride a motorcycle,” she says. “I grew up around motorcycles and I wasn’t even able to afford one until later in life. So yeah, I don’t think a lot of young women ride motorcycles, but I might be mistaken.”

There are plenty of young guys flying up and down the road, doing wheelies and crazy stuff like that. “But it would be nice to have more bikers safely ride with us.”

A lesbian couple they know just bought a Can-Am after taking a ride on Amy’s, and they’ll be in the parade this year. “We’re constantly trying to encourage people to come down,” Amy says.

Every June, thunder rolls down Liberty Avenue and Skittles fly, and somewhere in the crowd, somebody gets the idea. Maybe they grew up sitting on a motorcycle in a basement, just pretending. Maybe they never thought about it at all — until now.

**If you ride, show up at the parade. Join the vanguard.**



## PITTSBURGH PRIDE PARADE

Sunday, June 7, 2026

New Route for 2026

The Pittsburgh Pride Parade steps off from Liberty Avenue and 11th Street Downtown at 12:00 PM. The parade travels down Liberty Avenue to 6th Street and crosses the Roberto Clemente Bridge, up Federal Street and around South to West Commons to the Pittsburgh Pride festival at Allegheny Commons Park West.

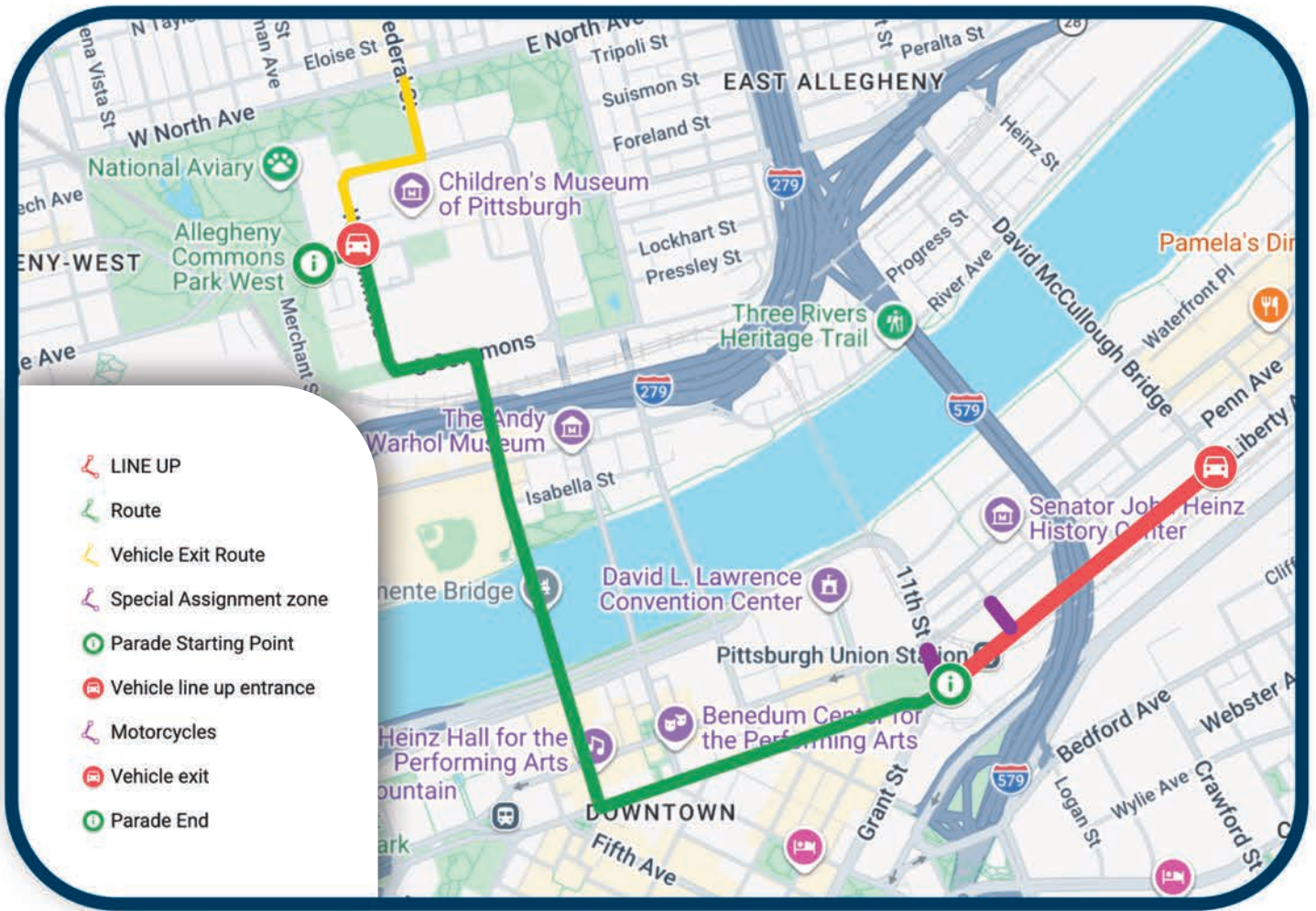
Line-up begins at 10 AM.

**Motorcycles come Ride with Pride Info:**

Come help lead the Pittsburgh Pride Parade! No need to register in advance, just show up.

Report directly to Penn Avenue and 11th Street by 11:00 AM.





**American  
Red Cross**

All are **welcome** in our mission

Learn more: [RedCrossBlood.org/LGBTQ](https://RedCrossBlood.org/LGBTQ)



# FOUR LGBTQ COMMUNITY LEADERS TO SERVE AS PITTSBURGH PRIDE GRAND MARSHALS!

As LGBTQ Rights Face Attacks,  
Pittsburgh Pride Chooses Unity

By Michael Buzzelli | Courtesy Photos



From left to right: Maria Montaña, Sara Rosso, Dr. Ken Ho, MD, and Reverend Deryck Tines.

This year, a fantastic foursome of community leaders will serve as grand marshals for the Pittsburgh Pride March & Parade. The lineup includes Sarah Rosso, Maria Montañó, Reverend Deryck Tines, and Dr. Ken Ho.

On Sunday, June 7, at noon, the four grand marshals will march through the streets of Pittsburgh, across the Roberto Clemente Bridge, ending at Allegheny Commons Park West on the North Side, the site of the Pittsburgh Pride festival. The four are being recognized for their accomplishments in the LGBTQIA+ community.

LGBTQ and Labor advocate Maria Montañó was the first trans woman to serve as a press secretary in Pittsburgh and now works as the Manager of Public Affairs in the Allegheny County Treasurer's Office. Montañó also serves as a commissioner on the Pennsylvania Commission on LGBTQ Affairs and the City of Pittsburgh LGBTQIA+ Commission.

Sara Rosso is the executive director of the Hugh Lane Wellness Foundation, a community health organization serving LGBTQ and HIV-affected Pennsylvanians.

Dr. Ken Ho, MD, is an Associate Professor of Medicine, the Medical Director of the Pitt Men's Study, Multicenter AIDS Cohort Study, co-chair of AIDS-Free Pittsburgh, and president of 412Step, Pittsburgh's LGBTQ country two-step, waltz, and line dance group. Dr. Ho's research focuses on biomedical strategies for HIV prevention, and in particular, HIV pre-exposure prophylaxis (PrEP) and microbicide development.

Reverend Deryck Tines is an ordained minister of 45 years with the Free Holiness International Fellowship of Churches & Ministries, Inc., a musician, and a public-performance gospel singer in venues throughout Pittsburgh and beyond. Reverend Tines also runs Deryck Tines Consignments, a new consignment shop at 625 Smithfield Street in downtown Pittsburgh.

Rosso said, "It's exciting to be with this great group of people."

For Rosso, it was a full-circle moment. She said, "When I was an undergrad, in the early 2000s, I served as a volunteer for the Pride committee and helped organize the parade and assist in choosing the grand marshal."

Montañó said, "I am incredibly honored to serve as one of the grand marshals for Pride. There are four of us this year. It's a beautiful reminder that it takes all of us. [Our enemies] want to separate us, but we can show them that we stand together. We are united."

Dr. Ho said, "I'm honored that the community has considered having me represent them during Pride. I am so thankful."

Montañó said, "Right now, LGBTQIA+ rights are under attack. There is a national and international conversation on trans rights. Legislators are trying to repeal our rights. Luckily, Governor Josh Shapiro will veto any legislation attacking our rights, but there is a coordinated attack to erase us. That's why we must show the world that we stand together. We must keep showing up at Pride. We must show everyone that we are here. We must show our young people – especially trans and nonbinary people – that we are fighting for their future. That we will never stop fighting for the future."

Dr. Ho said, "With the political climate, there has been a lot of stress and worry. The importance of Pride is that we come together and find healing in our community."

Rosso said, "It's important that we come together. It's more important than ever."

Reverend Tines emphasized Rosso's words. He said, "In times of trouble, it's important to show up. Everyone wants to be part of Pride when times are good, but it's important to show up when times aren't so good."

Dr. Ho is hoping everyone has a happy and healthy Pride. He mentioned a recent uptick in Mpox cases and added, "Stay hydrated. Stay safe. Protect yourself and the people around you (with flu shots, Mpox vaccine, and PrEP)."

Reverend Tines said, "For me, as a faith leader, showing up and representing is the right thing to do." The reverend added, "Don't let anyone tell you that you don't belong. We are all God's children. We all belong."

ALIGNING. CONFIRMING. EMPOWERING.

GENDER CONFIRMATION CENTER  
San Francisco, California

NO BMI RESTRICTIONS

90% INSURANCE SUCCESS RATE

BOOK YOUR FREE CONSULTATION TODAY

We believe cost, insurance, BMI and geography should never stand between you and the care you need. We help patients travel from across the country – and around the world.

GenderConfirmation.com • 415-780-1515 • San Francisco, CA



## THANK YOU TO THE 2026 PITTSBURGH PRIDE SPONSORS!



As of April 7, 2026. Check [Pittsburghpride.com](http://Pittsburghpride.com) for a full, updated list of sponsors.

# Healthcare for everybody.



**Metro Community  
Health Center**

**Medical • Mental Health • Dental**

**ALL INSURANCE ACCEPTED, NOT REQUIRED**

# ENTERING YOUR

# PRIDE ERA



**FROM MAY TO SEPTEMBER, CELEBRATE YOUR TRUE COLORS WITH PRIDE EVENTS OF EVERY SIZE**

- May 24** Bigger Gayer PicniQ
- May 30** Garfield Pride
- May 31** Ross Pride
- June 5** Pittsburgh Pride Prom
- June 6** Pittsburgh Pride Festival Day 1 & FREE Evening Concert
- June 7** New Castle Pride in the Park
- June 7** Pittsburgh Pride March & Parade
- June 7** Pittsburgh Pride Festival Day 2 & FREE Evening Concert
- June 11** Pride Night with the Pittsburgh Pirates
- June 13** Lawrenceville Pride
- June 13** Mt. Lebanon Pride
- June 13** Morgantown Pride
- June 13** Wheeling Pride
- June 13** Scottsdale, PA Pride
- June 14** Vandergrift Pride
- June 14** Erie Pride Parade
- June 20** Millvale Pride
- June 20** Mr. Small's PGH Pride in the Pit
- June 27** Westmoreland Pride Prom
- June 27** Sewickly Pride
- June 27** Hazelwood Pride
- June 27** Bellevue Pride
- June 27** Erie Pride in the Park
- June 28** Dormont Pride in the Park
- June 28** Forest Hills Pride
- June 29** Fox Chapel Pride in the Park
- June 30** Family Pride Night at the Pittsburgh Zoo
- July 11** Monroeville Pride
- July 18** Johnstown Pride
- July 25** Pittsburgh Black Pride
- Sept. 12** Brookline Pride

**JUNE  
4-7**

5801 PRESENTS

**21+**

**JIMBO**  
THE DRAG  
CLOWN

**KERRI  
COLBY**  
DJ SET

**ADAMUSIC**

# PRIDE WEEKEND '26

3 DAYS OF THE MARYLAND AVE **BLOCK PARTY, OUTDOOR STAGE,**  
AND A **STACKED LINEUP ALL WEEKEND LONG!**

DJ EESH • HUNY XO • DJ RONNIE • AARON PFEIFFER • AQUA • DJ JACK • ROJO  
DJ KAYDENCE MCQUEEN • DIXIE SUREWOOD • THE CAST OF THE STARLIGHT SHOWCASE



**OUR BIGGEST PRIDE  
WEEKEND EVER!**

  @5801VIDEOLOUNGE

5801



## FROM COUNTY EXECUTIVE SARA INNAMORATO

ted, and celebrated. This month, we not only acknowledge our strides in achieving this aim but also reaffirm our efforts to continue its advancement.

Every time you go into the street to protest, every time you wave your flag high, and every time you celebrate pride, you are proving that existence is resistance.

Pride is not just a word; it is a declaration of your determination to exist freely as you so choose. It is a call to action for diversity, equity, inclusion and love for all. It is the glue that keeps communities together, and its power is immense. For it is not something that can simply be broken by oppressive acts, bigotry, or hateful rhetoric.

So, continue to show your pride. Not just this month, but every day of the year. Express yourself and encourage others to do the same. Because being distinct is what makes Allegheny truly great. We wish you all a happy, exciting, and joy-filled Pride!



Sara Innamorato  
Allegheny County Executive

**W**e in Allegheny County continue to commit ourselves to the goal of building bridges to give LGBTQIA+ people a safe space where they are recognized, welcomed, accep-



## FROM STATE REP. LA'TASHA D. MAYES

mission and served as its first Vice Chair. This past summer, I held the City of Pittsburgh accountable for the June 2025 raid of P Town by hosting community forums in the aftermath and continuing to work and resolve this with the City Council and new mayoral administration. After being elected as a State Representative, I've continued my activism by defending our access to healthcare on the House Majority Health Committee, sponsoring bills such as The Fairness Act (House Bill 300), Marriage Equality Act (House Bill 1800), and Preserving Access to Reproductive Efforts Non-Traditional (PARENT) Act (House Bill 836), and securing nearly \$200,000 in state support for Pittsburgh Pride in 2025.

presidential administration is fueling the fire. Despite it all—despite the constant threats to our freedom and security as American denizens—we still exist. Every single day, we choose to wake up and exist as our beautiful, unapologetically proud selves. Resistance looks different to everyone. Some folks resist by protesting, others resist by supporting those in need, and others more make their own ways to resist. But regardless of how resistance looks to you, what we all have in common is our innate drive to push through the flames and continue to exist as LGBTQ+ people.

**I**t is truly an honor to represent Pennsylvania's 24th Legislative District in the PA House of Representatives. Whether I'm writing legislation in Harrisburg, voting on the House floor, or meeting with constituents in Pittsburgh, I guide my words and actions by the needs and concerns of our neighbors, friends, and loved ones.

This Pride Month, and every day after that, remember that your existence, regardless of how you choose to exist, is an inherent resistance to the hatred and opposition you may face. And, as your State Representative, I will fight with and for you and your existence all the way to the finish line

As the first out lesbian to ever serve in the Pennsylvania General Assembly, I understand how important it is that our legislators represent us in all facets of our identity. In turn, I am proud to be a long-time LGBTQ+ organizer and activist in Pittsburgh. I co-led the effort to create the Allegheny County Human Relations Com-

Proudly,  
State Representative  
La'Tasha D. Mayes

# family PRIDE NIGHT

**JUNE 30**  
**6-9PM**



PITTSBURGH ZOO  
& AQUARIUM

Tickets at [pittsburghzoo.org](http://pittsburghzoo.org)



**JEWISH  
FEDERATION**  
GREATER PITTSBURGH

# משפחה

*Mishpacha • Family*

The Jewish Federation of Greater Pittsburgh is proud to support the LGBTQ+ community in Pittsburgh, not just during Pride, but every day! Our vision is a flourishing Jewish community where everyone feels included, supported, and inspired.

**JOIN US AT THE PITTSBURGH PRIDE MARCH ON JUNE 7!**

Register by scanning the QR code or visit [jewishpgh.org/event/pride-march](http://jewishpgh.org/event/pride-march)  
Celebrate pride with us as we march together in support of the LGBTQ+ community.

**For questions & accommodations:** contact Beth Vander Stoep at [bvanderstoep@jfedpgh.org](mailto:bvanderstoep@jfedpgh.org) or 412-992-5208





# ART AS LIBERATION:

How Dreams of Hope Nurtures Queer Futures

By Chrissy Costa | Photos by Ava Grace



**For more than two decades, Dreams of Hope has empowered LGBTQ+ youth in Pittsburgh through storytelling, performance, and collective care.**

Dreams of Hope is a queer arts organization centering queer youth and empowering them through various art forms. Through the power of the arts, Dreams of Hope provides the region's lesbian,

gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, questioning, intersex, asexual, and allied (LGBTQIA+) youth a welcoming environment to grow in confidence, express themselves, and develop as leaders.

In 2003, Susan Haugh, now an emeritus board member, founded the organization after recognizing the need for creative outlets and positive queer role models for the youth of Pittsburgh. She invited youth to choose a name and for 23 years, Dreams of Hope has been providing a welcoming, creative

environment for queer and Trans young people.

Dreams of Hope first started as a performing arts ensemble with eight young people ages 13 to 21 and four supporting artists, including Haugh. The young members wrote their own theatrical works, songs, poems, and performed for community members, friends, and family. For over two decades, their performing arts ensemble, now known as **theatriQ**, has been nurturing and celebrating the creativity of queer and trans youth.

Since then, Dreams of Hope has expanded, developing programs such as Qamp, speaQ, sQool, and their Queer Youth Advisory Council (QYAC) and has partnered with Kelly Strayhorn Theater to establish a physical space to call home. In the first decade, they didn't have a physical space and moved many times to various rehearsal and office locations.

**speaQ** is an intergenerational space for queer and trans creatives to honor their inner voice through exploring, creating, and sharing with community members.

**sQool** is designed to provide youth visibility and community through queers arts programming. Youth and adults are engaged in schooling environments, community centers, and other education venues throughout the region.

**Queerness & Nature (Queerness is Nature)** is an artist residency inspired by an understanding of land as a friend and teacher, centering queerness and kinship with nature.

Malakai Koehler (she/they) joined Dreams of Hope as a Programming Assistant in August 2022. Kai is now currently the Marketing & Outreach Steward, but still works heavily with programming as she says, "in the nonprofit world, you wear many hats."

Kai came to Pittsburgh in 2020 during the pandemic while working with AmeriCorps. After serving a couple years, Kai began to look for a steady job and discovered Dreams of Hope through Nonprofit Talent and was

immediately drawn to their values.

"You don't always see protecting young people from harm and honoring our lineages on a nonprofit website or in a job description, so I said yes, sign me up!"

Another draw for Kai was theatriQ being one of the main programs because she did theatre for over a decade in her youth. Kai says she didn't know she was queer when she was young and isn't sure if being in a program such as Dreams of Hope would have helped her come out sooner but it is definitely something she wished existed in her younger years.

A lot of her theater experience was very cliquey, and there was favoritism even in the community theater, which is supposed to be open to everyone. "Dreams of Hope is just so different. It's a collective process, everyone is working together and there's a lot of collaboration and it's really beautiful."

Win Nunley (all pronouns) started theatriQ when they were 14 years old because they were a young queer person and didn't know how to meet other young queer people as there's not much out there for queer youth to get involved with. Win's mother knew Bekezela Mguni who recommended that Win check out Dreams of Hope and Win has been part of the ensemble for nine years now. Win also served on the Queer Youth Advisory Council, was a delegate at the International Congress of Youth Voices, as well as briefly serving on the board as a youth member.

*Continues onto next page*



## love is inclusion. inclusion is what love looks like in action.

KeyBank believes inclusion is how we help our communities thrive. We embrace the spirit of Pride, and we're proud to help support the LGBTQ community in Pittsburgh.



Learn more at [key.com](https://www.key.com)

©2026 KeyCorp®. All rights reserved. KeyBank Member FDIC 260324-4255228

Win believes Dreams of Hope is a very important space within the city. "I definitely think it shaped me a lot as a young teen because they really model what community can and should be like. It shows a lot of healthy behaviors, a lot of checking in with each other and communication happening on both the side of adults who are facilitating as well as the ensemble members. It provides a healthy space and a lot of genuine care, and the care extends outside of just the programming as well. You're welcomed in and even outside of this, they're always rooting for you, always looking to help you."

Both Kai and Win praise their community programs for being intergenerational. "It's invaluable to have intergenerational relationships so lessons can be passed on, but also so queer youth have people to talk to who are older and surviving and thriving and doing things they may want to also do in the future," said Win.

Before 2021, the youth programs primarily served ages 13-21. It is now ages 13-26 as young people, especially queer young people, need as much support and involvement within the community as possible.

Bekezela Mguni (she/they) is the Artistic Director at Dreams of Hope, where she's been employed since 2017, but has been involved with the community programs since 2003, making her "an OG at Dreams of Hope," she joked. She was first invited to Dreams of Hope by Adil Mansoor, one of their previous Artistic Directors, to attend their open mic/writing circle and be a guest poet.

That open mic/writing circle grew to be a vibrant space for queer and trans performers who wanted to share, and became what is now known as speaQ. From that place, Bekezela and Adil shared ideas for shaping Dreams of Hope. They collaborated to create an apprenticeship program for their school,

which paired established teaching artists with emerging teaching artists to add a mentorship component to the work. That led to a few different school partnerships and a semester of classes and residencies through the pilot program. A year later, Bekezela became one of the Programming Directors at Dreams of Hope.

Bekezela says it's necessary for queer art history and culture to be a focal point in curriculum. "It's a false curriculum if it doesn't include the contributions of queer and trans people. It also creates a level of erasure for all children and young people in schools because it doesn't reflect people who have contributed to their legacies and communities. We provide opportunities for critical thinking and for expansive histories to be learned. We always want to have conversations with young people about what is important to them at that moment in time, and we want to provide a safe space for them to express and be themselves."



As for how Dreams of Hope is received, Bekezela said, "We know that the work we do in schools and in the community is necessary because of the response that we receive from LGBTQ young people. We are often sought out by supportive educators or caregivers and parents who are looking to support young people in their lives."

Of course, there have been challenging experiences and folks who may not feel so welcoming to having queer and trans educators in classrooms, but overall Bekezela says it's been a positive experience. She also says there's been a shift on their part, as well as the culture of community, on how folks engage.

"We have tolerance in our mission, and we have this idea that we have to help people accept LGBTQ people, but I think we've come to understand that it's important that we accept and love and celebrate ourselves and really look for the people who want to be in deep solidarity and real solidarity with us."

One of Kai's wishes for the future is that people consider supporting arts programming because it's not being funded as much as it once was.

**"Art is such an important tool when it comes to advocacy, and organizing, and the resistance, the fight for liberation. I think it's so important because sometimes what we're dealing with feels unbearable, and the art makes it a little more bearable."**



# QBURGH PODCAST

QBURGH.COM/PODCAST

← SCAN TO DONATE!

TOP DOG COCKTAILS

CHEERS!

BLOOD ORANGE MARGARITA

BORN THIS WAY

LOVE IS LOVE

PROTECT THE DOLLS

Tequila, Blood Orange & Lime

12.5% Alc/Vol 1 CAN = 1 Y 12 FL. OZ (355 ML)

CELEBRATE @MILLIEHOPE MCDONALD 2026

DIG UP MORE AT: [TOPDOGCOCKTAILS.COM](http://TOPDOGCOCKTAILS.COM)

PLEASE DRINK RESPONSIBLY

© 2014 TOP DOG BREWING CO. ALL RIGHTS RESERVED. MADE IN THE USA.

CANNED BY BOARDROOM SPIRITS, LLC | LANGDALE, PA FOR BIG CHEF COCKTAILS

## PGH PRIDE DRINK SPECIAL BY TOP DOG BREWING



pride since 1989

# Join Our Monthly Support Meetings:

2nd Wednesday of each month virtually  
6:30 - 8:00 pm

2nd Sunday of each month in person  
2:00 - 4:00 pm

*PFLAG Pittsburgh exists to support, educate, and advocate for members of the LGBTQ+ community and their allies.*

info@pflagpgh.org 412-339-6113 pflagpgh.org

## CAN SOMEONE WHO IDENTIFIES AS QUEER...



### BE A CHRISTIAN?

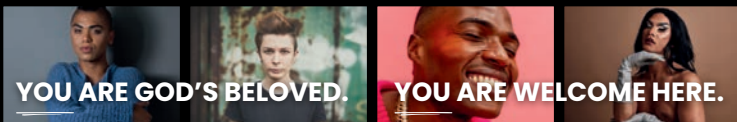
**Absolutely.** Your queerness does not disqualify you from faith. The love of Christ is for everyone—and so is Calvary UMC. You are loved. You are valued. You belong.

### BELONG IN THE CHURCH?

**Yes. Fully. Joyfully. Without exceptions.** At Calvary UMC, we believe Scripture teaches **All Means All**. That means you—no matter your sexual orientation, gender identity or expression or relationship status—are welcomed, affirmed and invited into the full life, ministry and mission of our church.

### FIND YOUR PEOPLE

Connect through our **Queer Events**, where community, faith, and joy come together. Scan the QR code or visit [calvarypgh.com](http://calvarypgh.com) to explore events, ministries and ways to get involved. Contact the church office to join our Queer Events list.



**Calvary United Methodist Church**  
971 Beech Avenue, North Side, Pittsburgh, PA 15233  
CalvaryPgh.com • 412-231-2007

Calvary United Methodist Church proudly presents



Featuring Guest MC Dixie Surewood!



## A Night of Sass, Sparkle & Celebration!

An all-ages, family-friendly show supporting & uplifting the Trans & Drag Queen communities!

**FRIDAY, MAY 22**

Spaghetti Dinner 5-7 PM  
Pageant 7 PM-?

**CALVARY UMC**

971 Beech Ave, North Side  
Pittsburgh, PA 15233

Experience Lively Drag Performances by Pittsburgh's (AND Calvary's) Finest!

Silent Auction & Celebrity Judges!

Who will be crowned Miss or Mr. Calvary 2026??

Questions? Want to perform?  
Email [CalvaryPGH@gmail.com](mailto:CalvaryPGH@gmail.com)!



**GET TICKETS NOW!**

Scan or visit  
[CalvaryPgh.com](http://CalvaryPgh.com)

\$20 - Dinner Only

\$15 - Pageant Only

\$30 - Dinner & Pageant

THE FOLLOWING **FESTIVAL** HAS BEEN APPROVED FOR  
**QUEERS WITH TASTE**  
BY VOLUNTEERS AT **REEL Q**

PGH's 41<sup>st</sup> ANNUAL LGBTQ+ FILM FESTIVAL

	<b>OCT. 2nd-10th 2026</b>
	HIGH CAMP, INDIE BUDGETS, AND CULT CLASSICS IN THE MAKING

[reelq.org](http://reelq.org)



@reelqpg

Looking for the perfect historical roommate?



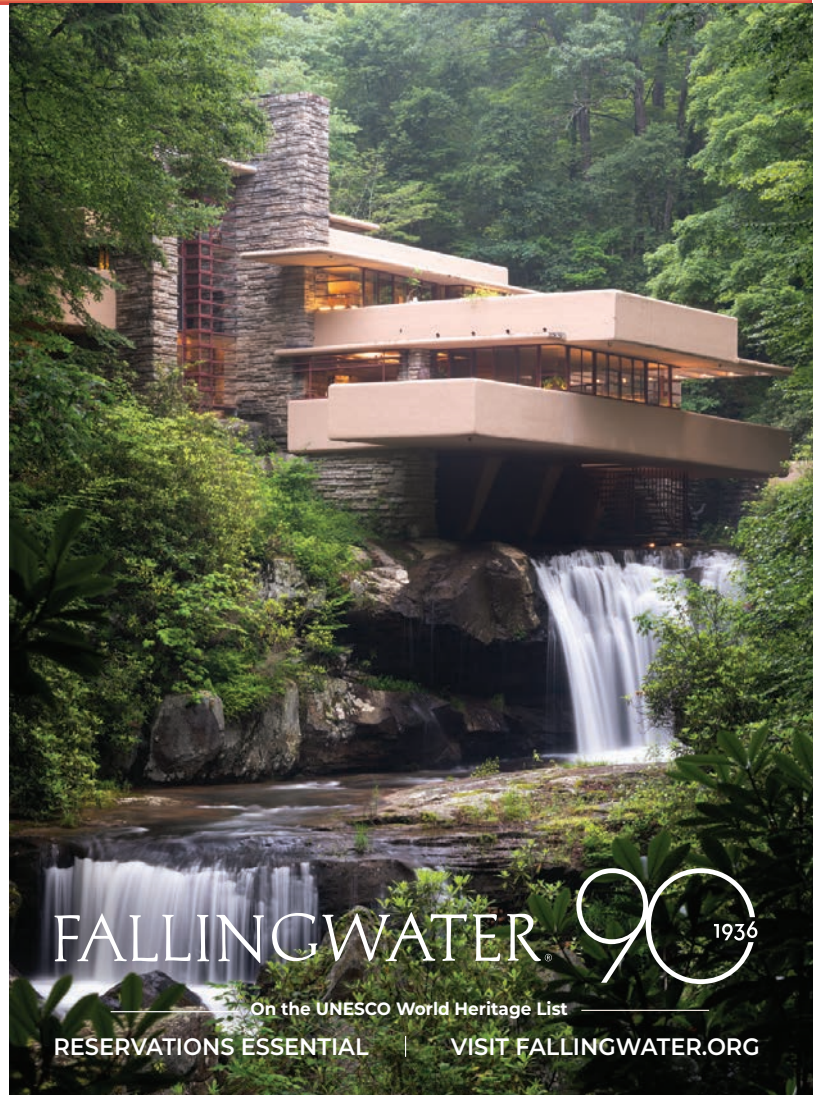
COFFEE BOOKS ART COMMUNITY

The  
**Soft  
Spot**

A Sapphic Space



Now Open at 5407 Penn Avenue, Pittsburgh, PA 15206



FALLINGWATER 

On the UNESCO World Heritage List

RESERVATIONS ESSENTIAL

VISIT [FALLINGWATER.ORG](http://FALLINGWATER.ORG)



# RESIST LOUDLY LIVE BRAVELY

The creative digital agency for *future-focused* brands, *liberal* issue advocacy, and *Democratic* political campaigns.



If you're reading this  
*please know you belong here.*

The Urban Redevelopment Authority of Pittsburgh (URA) is working to build a prosperous and equitable economy for all of Pittsburgh — where every LGBTQIA+ resident has the opportunity to put down roots, grow, and flourish.

Scan the QR code to explore inclusive URA programs that offer financing, technical assistance, and legal resources for small businesses, homebuyers, and renters.



[ura.org](http://ura.org)

Sixth Presbyterian Church works for equal rights & equal rites for all God's children.

Since 1997, Sixth has supported the **full inclusion of LGBTQIA+ people** into the whole life and ministry of the church.

This means that Sixth: unites us in marriage, platforms us in leadership, affirms us from the pulpit, amplifies our voices in worship, and marches in the streets with us

Sixth doesn't just tolerate us  
or welcome us, **Sixth is us.**

WORSHIP 11:00 AM  
SUMMER 9:30 AM  
FORBES & MURRAY  
SQUIRREL HILL  
[SIXTHCHURCH.ORG](http://SIXTHCHURCH.ORG)



**God Created You.**  
**God Loves You.**  
**Be Yourself.**

 **East Liberty**  
**Presbyterian Church**  
[www.ELPC.church](http://www.ELPC.church)



**Wil Forrest, Coordinator of LGBTQIA+ Ministry**  
116 South Highland Avenue ■ Pittsburgh 15206 ■ 412.441.3800

# BUILDING TRANS LIBERATION THROUGH FITNESS:

Donny Donovan's Vision for Inclusive Wellness

By Chrissy Costa | Photos by Maya Lovro



## **Pittsburgh trainer and community advocate Donny Donovan is creating affirming wellness spaces where queer and trans people can reconnect with their bodies through movement, autonomy, and care.**

**F**or Donny Donovan (he/they), owner and founder of Free Will Health and Wellness, fitness goes beyond the physical realm.

Donny was born and raised in Pittsburgh and is a member of the LGBTQIA+ trans community. Growing up, he was very athletic, playing soccer, lacrosse, and running track. He received a Bachelor's Degree in Exercise Science from Mercyhurst University and a Master's Degree in Exercise Physiology from the University of Pittsburgh. He is currently in a program at Yale University for a Master's of Public Health, which he says will allow him to pivot into a systematic role within public health. "I will always be an advocate for our community and try to push policy as best as I can." He is also a member of the City of Pittsburgh LGBTQIA+ Commission.

While Donny's background includes extensive physical fitness and education, he was also a musician in his 20s, in both a grunge band and an indie pop band. "Being in the music scene definitely helped a part of my authenticity bloom because of how diverse and supportive the community is, especially being part of the queer and trans community. That was a big part of my life as well, and still is."

Donny has been a personal trainer since 2011, and in 2015, he started Free Will Health and Wellness, a Pittsburgh-based company that specializes in personal training,

muscle activation, gender affirming fitness, health coaching, and exercise programming.

In March of 2020, Donny launched the brick-and-mortar version of Free Will Health and Wellness, which still resides in Pittsburgh's East End, despite opening at the beginning of a global pandemic. The studio is dedicated to functional, inclusive, and equitable health and wellness.



Within a week of opening, pandemic regulations forced the business to close for three months. In that time, Donny held virtual sessions with clients, which helped everyone get through some of the many challenges during that time. "It was rough. So many times I wanted to quit, but I kept pushing through and here I am. 2020 was a huge year for everybody, but it was also the year I chose myself, and my community. I knew I needed to open a physical wellness space."

However, Donny states that his business is for everybody, including allies. "Half of my clientele is queer, and about 25% are part of the trans/non-binary community. I work with everybody, but I definitely have a service and space for people in the queer community, especially being who I am."

Donny acknowledges the need for a safe space for trans and non-

binary people who want physical fitness. "In the trans community, it's already hard to go to the doctor and wonder if they will affirm you or if you will have to disclose all of your surgeries and medications. There's always this uncomfortable moment of 'will they see me, or will they treat me a certain way?' We want competency in our doctors, but we also want to be seen and appreciated and not feel shamed or judged."

Donny says being trans is a huge part of his identity. "The main thing that has helped me through all the challenges with being part of the community is having autonomy and authority of my body, having access to gender-affirming care, and just doing the work that I do within our community. Personal training, physical activity and wellness has been a big part of my life." He expressed the desire to have a larger studio space someday.

Currently, he sees approximately 40 to 50 studio sessions a week. Free Will Health and Wellness offers mainly personal training, but also focuses on small group classes, mechanotherapy, health coaching, and exercise programming. Donny was accepted into Ascender's business development program and is in the process of creating an app called TRANSFORM for the trans and non-binary community. The app will provide remote training for clients while allowing Donny to be able to assist more people.

Statistics show less physical activity and more chronic diseases and the trans community suffers a lot, especially with addiction. "My goal is to make sure our community is healthy. When you don't feel safe in your own body because of the government or your family, my goal is to be a representative, showing that you can feel safe and there is access to move your body. With my experience with our community, there's such a dissociation because the body is so about the gender to the point where there's a high prevalence of eating disorders, especially in the trans

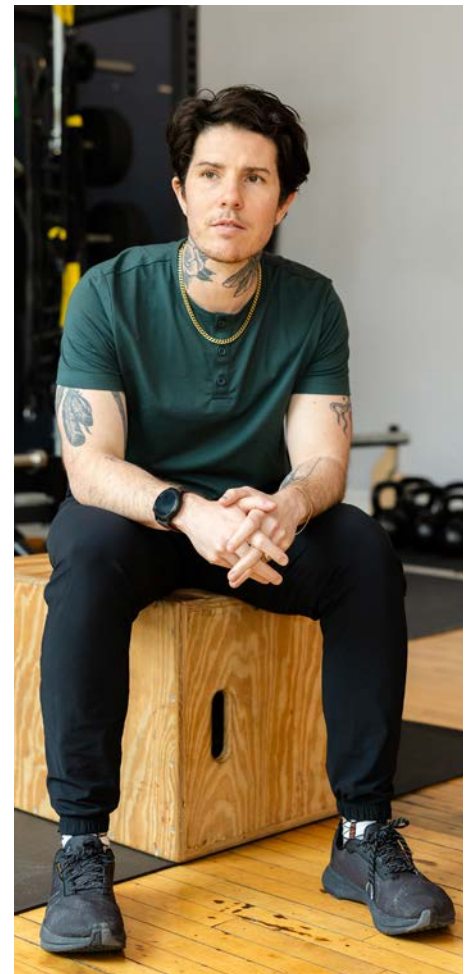
masc community. I want to keep advocating for preventative care and safe spaces where everyone can be themselves. Especially with wellness, which can be more binary.”

Running is a significant part of Donny’s life. He raised money for Point of Pride and ran on an all trans team in the Los Angeles Marathon this past March. “Being trans is already hard, but when you do something physically hard with your body, whether it’s running a marathon or showing up to the gym, there’s something that gives you empowerment, and I think our community needs that more than ever.”

There’s a vulnerability and danger that the LGBTQ community faces. According to the Bradbury-Sullivan LGBT Community Center, one of the top concerns for the trans community is violence. Having the strength to defend oneself, or at least to physically move one’s body out of danger, is very important.

Donny has a background in trauma-informed care and lived experience as someone who is neurodivergent, which he says helps people feel a little more comfortable when reaching out for assistance.

As for the future, Donny says, “I want to build support, connect more deeply with the community, and create space for liberation. I want to be a resource for people who need it.”



**WEBSITE: [FREEWILLPGH.COM](https://www.freewillpgh.com)**

**INSTAGRAM: [@FREEWILLPGH](https://www.instagram.com/freewillpgh)  
AND [@TRANSFORMTRAININGAPP](https://www.instagram.com/transformtrainingapp)**



## Integrity. Innovation. Excellence. **Inclusiveness.**

Since day one, community has been our foundation.



Downtown Pittsburgh | [pointpark.edu](https://pointpark.edu)

**POINT  
PARK**  
UNIVERSITY



# PREP

## THAT FITS YOU!

DAILY PILL OR  
LONG-ACTING INJECTION?  
ALLIES WILL HELP YOU CHOOSE!

**Allies**  
for health + wellbeing



412.345.7456  
ALLIESPGH.ORG

# GARFIELD PRIDE

Saturday May 30th

## LIVE MUSIC

BEV RAGE AND THE DRINKS  
FERNANDO SILVERIO SOLIS  
LEZ PAUL

## DJS

CARRIE SOURS  
MALZOF  
KIERNAN LAVEAUX

MARY MACK  
WILLIAM PARNELL  
OATMILK PRINCESS

## DRAG

CHERRI BAUM  
JOEY YOUNG  
WARREN MUNROE

**MORE TO BE  
ANNOUNCED SOON!**

FOR MORE INFO, FOLLOW  
[@garfieldpridepgh](https://www.instagram.com/garfieldpridepgh) on Instagram

**CALLING ALL VOLUNTEERS,  
SPONSORS & VENDORS!**

Email us at [Garfieldpridepgh@gmail.com](mailto:Garfieldpridepgh@gmail.com)



## FROM STATE REP. ABIGAIL SALISBURY

ward to seeing West Park adorned in rainbow colors this June. I also appreciate both our family at QBurgh and the Pride Guide for making this year's Pride celebrations even more accessible for everyone in the Pittsburgh area and beyond.

In the House, we are constantly making strides on LGBTQ+ legislation. We are continuing the crucial work to pass The Fairness Act, which aims to update current laws to prohibit discrimination based on sex, sexual orientation or gender identity or expression. Passage of The Fairness Act would bring Pennsylvania in line with other states, adding more protections for our community.

Additionally, I recently co-sponsored a resolution recognizing March 31, 2026 as "Transgender

Day of Visibility" in Pennsylvania, celebrating the transgender community's contributions and encouraging transgender individuals throughout our great state.

I support everyone participating in this year's Pittsburgh Pride and am also glad to support QBurgh's mission of providing up to date news and information on LGBTQ+ topics. In a time when we continue to fight for our future, your impassioned voices are invaluable. I wish all a very happy Pride 2026.

Sincerely Yours,

Abigail Salisbury  
State Representative

**O**n behalf of the 34th Legislative District, it is my honor to welcome 2026 Pittsburgh Pride with the QBurgh family.

As a proud member of the LGBTQ+ community myself, I love all that Pittsburgh Pride represents. It's a true celebration of the arts, culture, events and camaraderie that brings us together. From this year's Picnik and Pride Prom to the annual Pride Parade, I look for-



## FROM STATE REP. JESSICA BENHAM

the PA Legislative Equality Caucus, I am proud of the ways we are fighting to move our Commonwealth forward. Again this session, we have passed legislation through the PA House to protect marriage equality, because no matter what happens at the federal level or in the courts, love should remain the law of the land in Pennsylvania. We are also continuing to push for the Fairness Act, long-overdue legislation that would finally enshrine comprehensive nondiscrimination protections for LGBTQ+ Pennsylvanians in employment, housing, and public accommodations. The Fairness Act, alongside bills prohibiting the LGBTQ+ Panic Defense, reforming name change procedures, decriminalizing HIV, and fighting back against hate crimes, passed out of the House Judiciary Committee this session, and we are working to get these bills a vote on

the House floor.

This progress and these efforts are not happening in a vacuum. They are the result of decades of advocacy, organizing, and care from people who showed up, spoke out, and refused to be erased. Pride is built on that legacy, and it is sustained by what we do next. In difficult times, it can be tempting to retreat, but Pride calls us to do the opposite: to show up more boldly, to care for one another more deeply, and to fight more fiercely for a future where everyone can thrive. Our joy, our love, and our visibility are powerful forms of resistance, and we are part of a community that is resilient, vibrant, and unbreakable. Happy Pride!

Jessica Benham  
State Representative District 36

**P**ride has always been both a celebration and a declaration of joy, of resistance, and of our collective commitment to each other. This year, that dual purpose feels especially urgent. Across the country, LGBTQ+ people are facing an unprecedented wave of attacks on our rights, dignity, and ability to live openly and safely. It would be easy to feel overwhelmed by the scale of it all, but here in Pennsylvania we are choosing a different path rooted in courage, community, and progress.

As a queer woman and co-chair of

# STAY AND PLAY IN THE HEART OF PITTSBURGH



THE LANDING HOTEL

777 CASINO DRIVE, PITTSBURGH, PA 15212

RIVERSCASINO.COM



Must be 21 years of age or older to be inside Rivers Casino.

# Soup can.

Words don't do it justice.

**see it at the warhol:**

[warhol.org](http://warhol.org)

# LET'S KIKI; Pittsburgh's Monthly LGBTQ Happy Hours & Parties

By Aaron Valentic



Within the last ten years or so, Pittsburgh has gone through a renaissance of nightlife and cultural establishments in and around the city. From local dive joints to high-end experiences, Pittsburgh truly has a little bit of something for everyone to enjoy.

When it comes to finding a great local happy hour or party, the queer community of Pittsburgh surely has you covered. Deep dive into the surrounding happy hours and parties that help elevate the Pittsburgh nightlife scene into an inclusive, KIKI-inducing party for all.

## CRUSH HOUR

Starting off strong, Crush Hour is a monthly Friday Happy Hour event, specifically for Pittsburgh's Queer Ladies and Non-Binary individuals. Patrons can expect a relaxed, mixer setup where they can meet people, catch up with friends, and connect with members of the community over drinks. Crush Hour started in 2019 as a women-focused LGBTQ+ happy hour and has since popped up across the city, often teaming up with queer-owned businesses and local makers.

## G2H2

Located at a new venue every month, Gay Guy Happy Hour (G2H2) takes place on the second Friday of every month at a different location in Pittsburgh. Hosted by JR, Wayne, Michael, and Daniel,

it's a great way to meet new people and relax with friends in a different atmosphere every month!

G2H2 brings the party to local businesses that open their doors to the LGBT community, as well as providing LGBTQ+ professionals, and our colleagues and friends, the opportunity to meet, network, or just hang out.

## HEAVEN

There isn't anything quite like heaven (like we'd know), but for the Pittsburgh after-hours party, Heaven, it's pretty darn close. Hosted the third Saturday of every month, Club Pittsburgh opens its second floor to this trans-centered, after-hours dance party.

With complimentary open bar and clothing-optional freedom, Heaven blends celebration and intimacy in a way that few parties dare to. The result? Something distinctly Pittsburgh: scrappy, inclusive, sensual, and powered by care.

## HOT MASS & HONCHO

Pittsburgh's dance music rager for homos and friends, Hot Mass and Honcho are programmed in the spirit of today's pioneering parties such as San Francisco's Honey Soundsystem, London's Horse Meat Disco and WRECKEDnyc. Providing an environment that sheds inhibitions, Hot Mass/Honcho has revived the queer party as a keystone of dance music culture.

Held on the first Saturday of every month, with in-house resident DJs from Aaron Clark, boo lean & Gusto, Hot Mass is a nightlife cooperative organized by Honcho, Humanaut, Detour, Cold Cuts, and f(x). Location available with advanced tickets only.

## HOT STUFF DISCO

Were you born in the wrong era? Are you completely obsessed with the 70s and 80s? How about wishing you could strut your stuff through Studio 54?

Have no fear, Hot Stuff Disco is here to save the day. This retro dance party features bangers, anthems, and deep cuts from the 70s and 80s; we're talking disco, funk, soul, freestyle, and so much more.

Hosted by Twirville, their aim is to create a super groovy time capsule of a dance party inside Brillo-box in Bloomfield. Get your dancing clothes ready to groove and sashay the night away.

## JELLYFISH

Jellyfish is an escape from the outside world, where together in dance and heat we make new worlds where each of us find home. Jellyfish is a queer party for members across the queer and trans spectrum and all allies.

Hosted by Adam Shuck, Ricky Moslen, and Stephanie Tsong, Jellyfish offers a wide array of music and beats, ranging from new wave, italo disco, post-punk, disco, as well as synth-pop. And the music doesn't stop as the sun comes up, head to their local Sound Cloud account for a never ending playlist of bangers and beats.

## MAKE OUT CLUB

In the modern era, we can't help but get nostalgic from time to time and yearn for days past. Make Out Club, a modern take on the famed speed-dating model, but with a twist; start your night in a small group for games and discussions. As the night progresses, pair off into a more intimate setting for a one-on-one conversation.

What sets this group apart? Make Out Club honors all types of connections – from romantic, platonic, physical, intellectual and more. So why not log off the dating apps for a night and enjoy a night with the real-life counterpart?

## STEEL CARABINER

Lesbian, Dyke & Sapphic appreciation Party, Steel Carabiner is held on the first and third Thursday of every month at Blue Moon in the Lawrenceville neighborhood of Pittsburgh. Featuring local Kings and Queens of drag, Steel Carabiner offers an entertaining spin on classic nightlight for our femme queens. Think killer music, entertainment, and a local dive-bar to end the night on a high note.

## SZR

SZR, Sapphic Club Night for the Pittsburgh Queer Ladies, aims to bring queer ladies from all over the region to show that the girls can draw just as much business as the boys.

Hosted by Mostbeautifullest (The MoB), a Pittsburgh-based black, femme, queer nightlife collective, SZR aims to bring a "Dykey Studio 54" vibe to their parties and to foster an environment where members of the queer/femme community can gather and party in a safe space all their own. It's giving kikis, club culture and cuntiness; QTBIPOC to the front.

## TWIRL

After being on hold (indefinitely) due to prior venue changes, Twirl is back and better than ever. Now showcased at Bottlerocket Social Hall,

Brought to you by Twirlville, a QBIPOC affirming music + events collective, TWIRL isn't just a dance party. It's a tribute to house music, underground dance culture, and its roots. Their function is to give BIPOC, LGBTQ+ individuals, and allies a sacred space for self-expression, freedom of movement, and flamboyance. As for the dance floor? No hate, judgment, and absolutely no BS.



# SUPPORT LOCAL LGBTQ+ JOURNALISM

QBurgh is LGBTQ+ owned, operated, and reader-supported. Join monthly supporters who keep Pittsburgh-based LGBTQ+ journalism free for everyone.



**BECOME A MONTHLY SUPPORTER**  
**QBURGH.COM/SUPPORT**

# FORGE COLORFUL TRADITIONS

As the sun rises, the streets come alive with song and dance, beckoning the city to celebrate in full color.

Happy Pride, Pittsburgh!



**VISIT  
PITTS  
BURGH**  
  
visitpittsburgh.com



SEPT 19-OCT 11 '26

MAIN STAGE

## IN CLAY

Book and Lyrics by Rebecca Simmonds  
Music and Lyrics by Jack Miles

NOV 14-DEC 6 '26

MAIN STAGE

## GEORGIANA AND KITTY: CHRISTMAS AT PEMBERLEY

By Lauren Gunderson and Margot Melcon

JAN 23-FEB 14 '27

MAIN STAGE

## BOBBY ROBOTOWITZ AND ALLISON PORTCHNIK

By Matt Schatz

MAR 13-APR 4 '27

MAIN STAGE

## LAUGHS IN SPANISH

By Alexis Scheer

MAY 1-MAY 30 '27

LILLIE THEATRE

## THE PUNCHLINE

Written and Performed by Christopher Rivas

Learn more and subscribe at [CityTheatreCompany.org](http://CityTheatreCompany.org)





Where you are loved, fed, and affirmed as your whole self because Jesus welcomes all.



## Hot Metal Bridge Faith Community

HOT METAL IS A PROGRESSIVE, AUTHENTIC, UNCONVENTIONAL (EVEN A BIT SCRUFFY) FAITH COMMUNITY OFFERING "COME AS YOU ARE" WORSHIP SERVICES WITH A COMMITMENT TO LIVING THE GOSPEL OF CHRIST.

### WORSHIP SERVICE

SUNDAYS AT 10.30AM

SPARTAN COMMUNITY  
CENTER, HAZELWOOD

134 E. ELIZABETH ST.  
(ONE BLOCK EAST OF  
SECOND AVENUE)

& ON ZOOM

### A PLACE OF RADICAL INCLUSION

WELCOMING  
EVERYONE TO  
THE TABLE.



WHOEVER YOU ARE, YOU HAVE A SPACE AND A PLACE AT HOT METAL BRIDGE FAITH COMMUNITY.

412.481.4010 (OFFICE) 412.347.1745 (PASTOR)

# WE ARE FAMILY

By Josie Byzek



### *Profiles of four Pittsburgh-area families with queer parents*

What does it mean to build a queer family? For these four Pittsburgh-area families, the answers are as different as the people themselves — and as universal as love, stubbornness, and showing up. Their stories follow.

### Through Their Eyes

I caught up with Travis Simpson-Hunt as he was dropping one of his sons off at an activity. "Bye, love you," called out Michael, and Travis answered the same. A car door shut, and the boy was off. That easy back-and-forth was sweet.

For Travis, the best thing about being a father to Michael and Parker is seeing the world through his sons' eyes, like the time they camped in Yosemite. "It's a little like coming through the Fort Pitt tunnels into Pittsburgh," Travis says. "You come through a tunnel inside the park, and when it opens up, the whole valley is there with three waterfalls pouring into it, and the rivers."

"It doesn't look like it should be real," said Travis' son, Parker.

"No, it doesn't," replied Travis. "Seeing it fresh through his eyes will always stay with me."

Travis and his husband Stephen work hard to give their sons that kind of wonder. The boys have steered sailboats in Marbella, crossed the Golden Gate Bridge on foot, spotted dolphins off the coast of Florida. "There's dolphins! There's dolphins!" Travis laughs, remembering them jumping up and down.

The dads have made deliberate choices about how their sons spend their time. The boys don't own cell phones or video games. Instead, Michael plays piano and bass guitar, and serves as youth elder at St. Paul Episcopal Church. "They just elected him to that position," Travis says proudly, then makes sure to mention that Parker does theater, sings, and serves as ethics coordinator for two Scout troops. Both are working toward their Eagle badges.

Both Travis and Stephen take community service to heart. Travis is a minister and deacon who makes himself available around the clock. "I put my number out for people to call," he says. "Sometimes a woman needs baby formula or food and we'll run it to her in the middle of the night. Or someone on hospice, and we get up, take off and go. It's service above self." Stephen is one of the chairs of the Rotary national youth exchange program. The boys are watching all of it, learning what service looks like up close.

"Above all else, be kind," Travis says. "Love your children. Love your neighbors."



## We Expect You to Protect Them

Carol and JoAnn Chonoska's kids struggled at the beginning of their relationship. Both women had been married to men, and the children ranged from elementary to high school.

"It was rough going for a while because they had to deal with divorces and splitting time between us and their dads," says Carol. "Adjusting to the divorce was harder for them than to our relationship," adds JoAnn. They've been together 27 years and are coming up

"It was rough going for a while because they had to deal with divorces and splitting time between us and their dads," says Carol. "Adjusting to the divorce was harder for them than to our relationship," adds JoAnn. They've been together 27 years and are coming up on their 16th wedding anniversary. "Now the kids are pretty good friends and think of themselves as family."

Being able to marry mattered. "We knew what it meant legally, economically, socially, and also emotionally — what the commitment to each other felt like," says Carol. It also mattered to the kids. "It made a difference that the other adult was a stepparent," says JoAnn. "It carried a little more authority and made it more difficult for them to deny our position within the family."

Faith has always been central to who they are, and finding a church community that accepted them was essential. "It made such a difference in our life," says Carol. But acceptance wasn't easy to find. Their original congregations weren't supportive and staying meant navigating what JoAnn calls "macro and micro aggressions."

The church struggle hit the kids hard. "The way the churches treated us really made it difficult for them to accept going to church," says JoAnn. One June, her daughter noticed vacation bible school had come and gone without JoAnn teaching crafts, something she'd done for years. "I had to say I wasn't allowed to," says JoAnn. "Those kinds of direct things just made it difficult."

Still, Carol and JoAnn didn't hide from the contradiction. "We could very openly say to our kids: our church is wrong on this," says JoAnn. "They're just wrong about this right now." Eventually they found East Liberty Presbyterian, which boasts "radical hospitality" and has an amazing LGBTQ community.

The kids had their own journey, learning how to navigate having two moms, figuring out what to tell friends, and whether to defend their parents. To help ease their path, Carol and JoAnn went to the guidance counselors at their schools before anything could go wrong.

"We said, 'This is who we are, these are our kids, and if one of them comes to you, we want you to know so they don't have to explain,'" says JoAnn. "We expect you to protect them."

Now adults with spouses and children of their own, the kids take great joy in telling everyone about their two moms.

*Continues onto next page*



## Becoming Mom

**W**hen DJ Stemmler flew to Russia to bring home her new adopted son, she found a six-year-old boy who weighed 19 pounds, was still in diapers, and had multiple untreated medical issues.

“He wouldn’t have lived another year if he’d stayed there,” she says.

Getting there at all was a Herculean task. DJ uses a wheelchair, and she was in a same-sex relationship when she kicked off the adoption process. Both things almost disqualified her. “Even in the US at the time you couldn’t adopt or get married as a gay couple,” she says. To get around the homophobia, she adopted as a single person, leaving her partner off all the paperwork. Project Star, a Pittsburgh adoption agency that places children with disabilities, did a home study that made them sound like the ideal placement and pushed it through.

Coming home was a joy — over 50 people met them at the airport, many of whom are still in their lives. Then the family moved to Harrisburg, where things fell apart. “I hated Harrisburg, I was alone out there, I had no friends,” DJ says. “Then she decided we should split up.” So she and Sergei moved back to Pittsburgh, where she knew people and had queer community.

They eventually landed in Allison Park, renting the first floor of a farmhouse with an acre of yard and a good school district for disabled kids. They stayed 17 years.

Sergei came out as gay as a teenager, and had his own hot fireman moment. When his Access van got rear-ended, he called her to the scene. A firefighter asked which kid was hers. “The one that doesn’t shut up,” she said. “Oh yeah, he’s in there.” He got lifted out by the firefighter, and DJ heard about how handsome that man was for weeks afterward. Mother and son still swap pictures — she sends hot guys, he sends back memes of animals and crocheting.

Today Sergei lives in Swissvale and runs his own life, the person everyone gathers around. DJ calls him the most thoughtful person she knows. “That was unexpected by me,” she says. “Nurturing didn’t come naturally to me. But it does to him.”

It took her a while to get out of his way. “I might have been the biggest deterrent to him actually becoming independent,” she says. “I had a lot of plans for him and he didn’t want any of those things.” When she finally let go, he flourished.

“He’s one of my closest friends right now,” she says.

## Being with the Fullness of Her Partner

Lauren isn't family," the child announced one day. She is Lauren's partner Kyrie's daughter, referred to here only as "Kiddo" at her family's request. It was a statement rooted in what she'd absorbed from school, books, TV. Family had a shape, and Lauren didn't fit it.

Her mom asked her to think about it. What is family? She worked it out slowly. "People who live in the same state?" Her mom pointed out relatives out West. "Well, Lauren can't be family because I don't call her parents grandma and grandpa."

Lauren Steele, a therapist who thinks carefully about belonging, heard all of this and sat with it — then wrote about that moment in a recent essay for Public Source.

She hadn't planned on having children, but she'd been with her partner Kyrie for four years, and Kyrie has a child. So, here Lauren was, living with her, responsible for her, loving her, without a word that quite fit what she was. "You're coming in mid-story a little bit," she says, "and that can bring up a lot internally." For a queer person, the feelings aren't unfamiliar, the sense of not fitting in, not belonging, wondering if you have a place here.

She leaned on presence, showing up day in and day out, meeting Kiddo where she was. Not with long explanations but with playfulness, silliness, and paying attention to what makes her feel seen. "It's thinking about what does this child respond to, not what I respond to," Lauren says. "You gotta pay attention." She let the relationship emerge from consistent effort, even without a guarantee that it would. It was a long, slow burn.

Then last year at Disney World, Kyrie was exhausted by evening and went back to the hotel. Lauren and Kiddo decided to hit the short lines, riding Dumbo and Aladdin's Magic Carpet and Astro Orbiter through the warm Florida night. After the fireworks, Kiddo looked up at Lauren and said her mom would have loved that. It was the kind of moment you can't manufacture, only wait for.

Is it worth it? "Yeah. Yes," Lauren says. "I see it not just as a relationship with this kid, but my partner is a mother and that's part of who she is. It's a big part of her identity and how she sees the world and thinks about kids, how to treat them, how society treats them. It's being with the fullness of my partner as well."

When Lauren went looking for resources for queer stepparents early on, she found straight stories and conventional families, none of which reflected her experience. Queer people, she believes, have had to reimagine family structures out of necessity, and that

hard-won expansiveness is something worth sharing. So, she founded Building Blended Bonds (buildingblendedbonds.com). "Being queer helps us see through the matrix a little bit," she says.

It takes hard conversations and real self-reflection, examining the patterns and instincts you bring with-out thinking. Learning, failing, trying again. It can bring up a lot of pain.

"Anyone who's feeling that," she says, "I want to validate that's normal and part of the process and it's good and worthy work. And that they're not alone."



**91.3 WYEP**  
*Neighborhood*  
Concert Series  
Bringing free concerts to our neighbors this summer!

<b>July 10</b>	South Park Amphitheater	<b>Aug. 29</b>	Tall Trees Amphitheater
<b>Aug. 2</b>	Hartwood Acres Park	<b>Sept. 12</b>	Settlers Cabin Park
<b>Aug. 14</b>	Allegheny RiverTrail Park	<b>Sept. 19</b>	Carnegie Music Hall in Carnegie



One place to heal your  
mind, body & spirit



PSYCHOTHERAPY

SPA SERVICES

YOGA CLASSES

**Worship with us Saturday evening  
before the Sunday PRIDE Events!**

**Saturday, June 6, at 7 pm**

**Community of Reconciliation Church**

100 N. Bellefield Ave., Pittsburgh 15213

Corner of N. Bellefield Ave. and Fifth Ave., next to the  
old stone belltower

**Open and affirming Christian church  
Multi-denominational and multi-racial  
LGBTQ+ pastor Rev. Michael Airgood**

For info email: [office@corpgh.org](mailto:office@corpgh.org)

Website: [corchurchpgh.org](http://corchurchpgh.org)

*Weekly worship services are on Sundays at 11 am.*

2910 McKelvey Rd.  
[www.elementspgh.com](http://www.elementspgh.com)  
[info@elementspgh.com](mailto:info@elementspgh.com)  
412.587.6020  
[@elementspgh](https://twitter.com/elementspgh)

See all that we  
have to offer!



**GOD LOVES US ALL**



**LAMP**

LGBTQIA+ AFFIRMING MINISTRIES OF PGH

Envisioning a Pittsburgh  
where all LGBTQIA+  
people are nurtured,  
connected and KNOW  
they are loved by God.



Look for us at  
**PRIDE** on  
June 7, 2026.



**Volunteers make  
the difference.**

**Join us today!**

**[cancer.org/volunteer](https://cancer.org/volunteer)**

“In a world where our LGBTQ+ community is constantly under attack, one where it’s harder and harder to find nontoxic places in which to exist, the American Cancer Society is a safe haven. ACS empowers me to volunteer my way and with my passion. I consider the time I spend as an ACS volunteer to be a privilege and an honor. Join me in helping to end cancer as we know it, for everyone.”

John Larkin, Pittsburgh Area Volunteer



# CHRIS GIRMAN: DELVING INTO THE SOUL (AND THE BODY) OF LATINO MEN

Desire, vulnerability, and the courage  
to turn intimacy into narrative

By Carlos Roa | Courtesy Photos



**“Perhaps I am walking along a street at night, in some strange city, before I have found companions.”**

—Tom Wingfield, in *The Glass Menagerie* by Tennessee Williams

**M**y first impression of Chris Girman was of a tall, lean, easygoing guy in a flowery shirt, standing in the middle of a living room during a friend’s birthday celebration.

Later, I learned he is a highly regarded nonfiction writing professor at Point Park University in Pittsburgh. I also found that his first recognized work was daringly titled *Mucho Macho*, with the not-so-subtle subtitle *Seduction, Desire, and the Homoerotic Lives of Latin Men*.

What defines his work is audacity.

He does not keep the recommended distance from the subject he observes. He gets close, becomes involved, and even falls in love with it. Yes, I mean Latino men. But he also turns the lens on himself, making his own experience the core of the story.

Bringing sex, emotion, and desire into a master’s thesis sounds like a recipe for disaster, but the result is the opposite: a compelling, honest work.

Far more than a meticulous observer of Latino men, Girman explores in essays like *Tennis Lessons*, 1983 and *What’s Left of You*, topics such as his own queer adolescence, vulnerability, and recovery from an accident that left him single-sided deaf (SSD) and without a sense of smell.

After reading this second essay, Tennessee Williams’s *The Glass Menagerie* came to mind, leaving me with the aftertaste of “bits of a shattered rainbow,” as the character Tom Wingfield puts it in his final monologue. Yes, we know that rainbows can shatter.

*Your interest in Latino men began on a personal level, but academic research requires long-term commitment. Why did you devote so much time to this work?*

It started accidentally. I grew up on the west coast of South Florida, where there weren’t many Latinos at the time. Spanish classes in high school led me to continue studying it in college as part of an international affairs program. I’d always been drawn to the idea of the world beyond the U.S.



At one point, someone suggested I study Spanish in Guatemala. I wasn't out yet and didn't feel fully myself. A traveler I met there introduced me to backpacking, a world I hadn't even known existed. The experience offered a different way of being with other men—warm, open, physically expressive, but not sexual—and I wanted to stay close to that.

That trip stayed with me, and in many ways, I've been revisiting it for the last 30 years.

*Your work challenges a major academic boundary; you're personally involved in what you study. How did you reconcile that?*

It happened in reverse. The experiences came first; the academic framework followed. I studied international relations and

then law, both very structured and objective. Later, Latin American studies and anthropology offered me new perspectives, but authority to compete with established scholars still felt out of reach.

What I did have were my own experiences—falling in love, transformative moments—that I couldn't imagine removing from my work. I wanted to be honest about that.

*What has that approach taught you over time?*

I'm proud that my work has entered conversations around Latin American queer studies and masculinity. But the bigger change is that more scholars are now open to the personal.

In many ways, it confirms what

feminists and queer theorists have said for decades: the personal is political. That said, I wish I'd trusted myself more. At times, I held back, thinking it wasn't my place to speak. Maybe I should have gone further.

*On a personal level, were you in love with Latino men?*

Yes. But it raised questions. I realized that this could be idealizing a culture, a community. When you put people on a pedestal, you stop seeing them clearly.

But in Latin America, I felt seen. Confidence grew. Even now, when traveling, it feels like stepping into a different version of myself, more open, more alive. And that feeling has stayed.

Your essays seem to explore a wider universe beyond that.

Initially, my focus was on American perspectives on Latino men, but essays like *Tennis Lessons, 1983* delve into being a queer teenager, not recognizing your own strengths. Those reflections are deeply personal.

*Do you still carry any of that teenager with you?*

I don't think that ever goes away. Gay men, and women too, often carry early insecurities because so much of life is about navigating and overcoming them. I was always a skinny kid, and even after building muscle or gaining weight, I still see that version of myself.

Internalized homophobia or discomfort with oneself also lingers in many gay men. Even confident or flamboyant men often overcompensate. That's partly why I focus on masculinity studies: so many of us spend years questioning how we walk, talk, and present ourselves.

*In Tennis Lessons, 1983, you reflect on which balls to hit and which to let go. How do you apply that today?*

Over time, you learn which battles to fight and which to let go. I try to release the pressure to be perfect or overachieve, focusing instead on what feels authentic: enjoying sports, reading, writing, and connecting with people.

Life is about staying in the game, hitting the balls you can, and letting the rest go. Even as you age, you can still be sexy, funny, interesting, and stylish in the gay world.

*What are you focusing on in your current writing?*

I've recently published essays on topics like the Supreme Court. Drawing from my legal background, I try to combine personal narrative with professional insight. My goal is to write for myself and communities I care about, particularly Latino communities.

I've also considered writing about undocumented minors at the border, based on my experience in Texas. These stories highlight humanity, law, and systemic issues.



*Are you engaging with immigration through literature?*

Yes. I'm interested in immigrant narratives and would like to teach a class on them. I've worked with books like *Solito* by Javier Zamora, *The Undocumented Americans*, and Daisy Hernández's *The Kissing Bug*.

I'd like to start writing reviews of these books. That feels like a meaningful way to contribute.

*You've spoken about wanting to "offer something" to the Latino community. What does that mean now?*

That question has stayed with me for a long time. What do I really have to offer? This community has shaped so much of my life: my relationships, my research, my confidence.

There are small, tangible ways I try to give back, but I still wonder what my larger role is.

*Has that search influenced the direction of your writing?*

Definitely. My work has shifted toward more personal and, I think, more mature topics: raising a teenage nephew or writing about

my parents and dementia.

I'm trying to figure out what I can say that will resonate. If that intersects with Latino or Latin American experiences, that's important, but it doesn't have to define everything I write.

*Looking back on your relationships and friendships with Latino men, what would you say to them today?*

I'd say, "Thank you for inviting me into your lives, for trusting me to appreciate, honor, and become friendly with your friends and family. I remember our time together, hanging out, going places, being there for one another. Thank you for helping an introvert like me feel more comfortable, to trust myself and be who I wanted to be."

For a few I didn't pursue romantically but probably should have. I'd add, "I wish I had been more open, slowed down, accepted invitations, and embraced the wonderful experiences we could have shared."



Garden Party

# Gothic

Mattress Factory

06.12.2026



## Shepherd Wellness Community

*Helping people living with  
HIV/AIDS improve their wellness*

Serving the Poz community in  
Southwestern Pennsylvania

- Wellness Dinners served Mon/Wed/Fri
- HIV Support Groups
- Peer Counseling Phone Calls
- Wellness Programs
- Transportation Assistance
- Quality of Life Outings

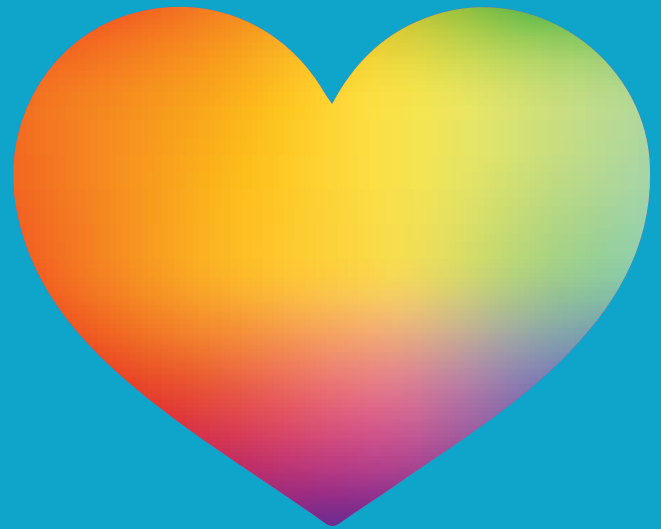
*Volunteers Welcome!*



4800 Sciota St, Pittsburgh, PA 15224  
(412) 683-4477 - [www.swconline.org](http://www.swconline.org)

square  
café

Made with



Always local and always  
made with love.

Good vibes and fresh eats at our  
East Liberty location 7 days a week!



134 S HIGHLAND AVE, PITTSBURGH, PA 15206  
[square-cafe.com](http://square-cafe.com) [squarecafepgh](https://www.instagram.com/squarecafepgh) Square Cafe

# Pride Weekend 2026

Club Pittsburgh 1139 Penn Ave



Friday

YINZFUR

Saturday

CUMUNION 8PM W/ROOFTOP FOAM PARTY  
MEATSPIN AFTER HOURS  
MIDNIGHT UNTIL 5AM

Rooftop foam party sponsored by:



Sunday

BEARUNION W/  
FLOOR 2 DUNGEON  
@8PM

Check out our new web app

CLUBPITT.COM

Pittsburgh Commission on Human Relations

YINZ BELONG

Report discrimination: 412-255-2600

YOU BELONG in the City of Pittsburgh. Discrimination in employment, housing, public services, or the delivery of city services is illegal.

Report discrimination today.



Pittsburgh Commission On Human Relations  
Education · Collaboration · Enforcement



HUGH LANE

# FIGHTING FOR PRIDE

Providing services, resources and programming  
for LGBTQ+ youth, adults and HIV communities.



   @hughlanewellnessfoundation

 [www.hughlane.org](http://www.hughlane.org)

# A VISITOR'S GUIDE TO PITTSBURGH'S LGBTQ+ BAR SCENE

By Aaron Valentic



Pittsburgh's queer nightlife scene is a little gritty, a little glamorous, deeply community-rooted, and wildly more diverse than outsiders often expect. From historic dive bars and sweaty dance floors to queer ghost-themed lounges and neighborhood karaoke spots, the city offers visitors a nightlife ecosystem shaped by resilience, chosen family, drag artistry, kink culture, and local weirdness.

Immortalized in queer pop culture through Queer as Folk, Pittsburgh has long carried a reputation for having a nightlife scene that punches far above its size. And while the city's LGBTQ+ spaces have evolved over the years, what remains consistent is that each venue has its own distinct personality. Whether you want a packed dance floor, a relaxed patio cocktail, drag brunch chaos, goth night energy, or a no-frills dive where everyone somehow knows everyone, there's a place for you here.

**Here's your guide to the 'LGBTQ+ bar scene in and around Pittsburgh.**

## 5801 VIDEO LOUNGE AND CAFÉ

If Pittsburgh has a "grand dame" of queer nightlife, it's 5801. Opened in 2005 in the heart of Shadyside, this longtime staple remains one of the city's most accessible and visitor-friendly LGBTQ+ destinations.

The biggest draw? Space. Unlike many city queer bars squeezed into tiny storefronts, 5801 offers both expansive indoor seating and one of the most beloved outdoor patios in the city. In warmer months, the patio becomes a social hub where you'll find everyone from drag performers and leather folks to graduate students and suburban lesbians catching up over cocktails.

5801 also stands out for its full kitchen — a rarity among queer bars — making it an easy choice for

visitors who want dinner and nightlife in one stop. Expect comfort food, pizza, rotating specials, and a broad drink selection that ranges from craft beer to strong mixed drinks.

**Best for: First-time visitors, patio hangs, mixed crowds, low-pressure nightlife.**

## BLUE MOON

Blue Moon is one of those bars people talk about with genuine affection. Frequently described as a "no attitude" queer bar, it's a beloved Lawrenceville institution known for cheap drinks, themed nights, and a welcoming crowd that cuts across generations and identities.

The space itself feels deeply Pittsburgh: casual, unpretentious, and proudly weird. One night might feature drag, another karaoke, another dance music spilling onto Butler Street.

Blue Moon also holds a special place in drag history. Performers like Alaska Thunderfuck and Lydia B Kollins were connected to the venue before becoming internationally recognized through RuPaul's Drag Race.

**Best for: Dive bar lovers, drag fans, affordable nights out, local queer culture.**

## BREWER'S BAR

Brewer's is widely considered the oldest continuously operating gay bar in Pittsburgh and remains a cornerstone of the city's nightlife history.

What makes Brewer's special isn't trendiness, it's endurance. For decades, the bar has served as a refuge, celebration space, and community gathering point through political shifts, cultural changes, and

waves of redevelopment.

The atmosphere leans classic queer dive bar: inexpensive drinks, drag performances, open-air energy, and an intergenerational crowd that reflects Pittsburgh's broader LGBTQ+ history. Brewer's regularly hosts drag and ballroom-adjacent events while also stepping into a community care role during holidays and difficult times.

**Best for: Queer history lovers, classic drag nights, longtime community vibes.**

## LUCKY'S (REAL LUCK CAFE)

Known affectionately as Lucky's, The Real Luck Café has long been one of Pittsburgh's most iconic queer nightlife spaces.

The venue essentially operates in two moods: downstairs dive and upstairs dance party. Depending on when you arrive, you might encounter a laid-back neighborhood crowd or a packed dance floor featuring DJs, dancers, and go-go boys.

Lucky's has survived dramatic redevelopment throughout downtown and the Strip District area, holding its ground as luxury apartments and corporate investment reshape the neighborhood around it. If you want the most chaotic "classic gay bar night" Pittsburgh can offer, Lucky's is usually somewhere on that itinerary. Bring cash, singles will do.

**Best for: Dancing, nightlife hopping, late-night energy, classic gay bar chaos.**

## MARY'S

One of the newer additions to Pittsburgh's queer nightlife landscape, Mary's has quickly become a favorite among queer creatives, goths, punks, service industry workers, and neighborhood regulars.

The instantly recognizable neon pink signage on Penn Avenue signals exactly what kind of place this is: playful, campy, welcoming, and deeply online in the best possible way.

Programming changes constantly. One night may feature goth dance music, another Bravo trivia, another drag or camp cinema. Unlike larger clubs, Mary's intentionally leans into intimacy and familiarity. It's less about spectacle and more about building a queer neighborhood living room.

**Best for: Alternative queer nightlife, themed events, camp energy, younger crowds.**

## P\*TOWN BAR

Since opening in 2007, P Town has maintained a reputation as one of Pittsburgh's most reliable all-purpose queer nightlife venues.

The bar shifts easily between relaxed neighborhood hangout and energetic nightlife destination depending on the evening. Visitors can expect karaoke, drag entertainment, game nights, themed parties, and rotating community events.

Its location near Oakland also means the crowd often includes students, medical workers, academics, and longtime locals all mixing together.

**Best for: Karaoke lovers, casual nights out, mixed-age crowds, group outings.**

## HAROLD'S HAUNT

Harold's Haunt represents a newer generation of queer nightlife spaces that center inclusivity, creativity, and identity experimentation over traditional bar culture.

Self-described as a space for "awkward beans," "witchy weirdos," and queer nerds, Harold's embraces an intentionally eccentric atmosphere. Think themed cocktails called potions, drag performances, watch parties, spooky aesthetics, and deeply queer DIY energy.

Importantly, Harold's also prioritizes non-alcoholic options and alternative social experiences, making it especially welcoming to sober or sober-curious visitors.

And yes, if you ask nicely, Athena may tell you the ghost story.

**Best for: Queer nerds, sober-friendly hangs, alternative aesthetics, themed events.**

## CLUB PITTSBURGH

No guide to Pittsburgh queer nightlife would be complete without mentioning Club Pittsburgh, the city's longtime bathhouse and one of the last remaining spaces of its kind in the region.

For decades, Club Pittsburgh has occupied a unique role within the local LGBTQ+ ecosystem: part nightlife venue, part cruising space, and part social refuge.

Located between Downtown and the Strip District along Penn Avenue, the multi-level space includes private rooms, lounge areas, steam rooms, saunas, and themed event nights that attract everyone from long-

time locals to curious visitors passing through the city.

Club Pittsburgh continues to serve as a distinctly adult space within the broader nightlife landscape while maintaining its status as a recognizable Pittsburgh queer institution.

**Best for: adult nightlife, cruising culture, late-night experience**



Saturday, June 6, 2026 7:30P.M.

Tickets: [PittsburghPrideChoir.org](https://PittsburghPrideChoir.org)

DO YOU LIKE HOCKEY?  
GET INVOLVED WITH US!

PITTSBURGH LGBTQ+ HOCKEY  
IS WAITING FOR YOU AT THE RINK.

find out more online at  
[pittsburghlgbtq.hockey](https://pittsburghlgbtq.hockey)

JOIN US TO  
WATCH GAMES,  
LEARN TO PLAY,  
& GET ON A TEAM!

SCAN TO CHECK  
US OUT ON  
SOCIAL  
MEDIA

TIGERS  
TIGER SHARKS

# Beyond Pittsburgh:

## LUCY'S PLACE

About an hour outside Pittsburgh, Lucielle's Place — often called Lucy's — remains the only LGBTQ+ bar in Johnstown.

Housed inside a historic downtown building, Lucy's functions as both entertainment venue and vital queer community space for the surrounding region. Visitors will find drag performances, dance nights, and a proudly welcoming atmosphere that embraces everyone willing to celebrate and party respectfully.

**Best for: Regional queer nightlife adventures, drag entertainment, road trips.**

## RAINBOW UNICORN

Located near the Pennsylvania-West Virginia border, Rainbow Unicorn is part event venue, part community gathering space, and part symbol of newer queer visibility efforts happening outside major cities.

The venue hosts both all-ages and 21+ events, offering a space where LGBTQ+ people across generations can gather safely and openly.

**Best for: Community-centered events, younger queer crowds, regional LGBTQ+ gatherings.**

## BABYLON NIGHTCLUB

Though technically outside Pittsburgh, Babylon in Morgantown has quickly become part of the broader regional queer nightlife ecosystem.

Opened in 2024 following a change in ownership from Vice Versa, the venue intentionally references the iconic club from Queer as Folk and positions itself as a destination for both West Virginia locals and Pittsburgh visitors.

Expect drag performances, dance nights, and a strong college crowd energy.

**Best for: Weekend trips, dance floors, drag fans, college nightlife.**

# Tips for Visiting Pittsburgh's Queer Nightlife Scene

- Pittsburgh bars are spread across multiple neighborhoods, so rideshares are often your friend.
- Many venues host wildly different events depending on the night — always check Instagram before going.
- Drag, karaoke, goth nights, leather events, and themed dance parties rotate frequently.
- Queer nightlife here tends to feel more community-oriented and less image-focused than larger coastal cities.
- Don't underestimate the dive bars. Some of Pittsburgh's most iconic queer experiences happen in places that look tiny from the outside.

Pittsburgh's LGBTQ+ nightlife scene isn't about exclusivity or velvet-rope aesthetics. It's about survival, joy, chosen family, weirdness, performance, resilience, and finding your people in unexpected places. Whether you're here for a weekend or building community long-term, there's almost certainly a bar stool, patio table, karaoke mic, or dance floor waiting

**PRIDE  
IS POWER**

So is a financial plan

Love boldly.

Build wealth intentionally.

Retire on your terms.

Plan for modern lives, families, and futures.

You deserve strategy, not assumptions



**EdiFi**  
FINANCIAL

**Corina Wack**  
Financial Advisor

**724-740-5558**

Corina Wack, Registered Representative offering securities through NYLIFE Securities LLC, Member FINRA/SIPC, a Licensed Insurance Agency, 225 West Station Square Drive, Suite 300, Pittsburgh, PA 15219, 412-392-3600.

Financial advisor offering investment advisory services through Eagle Strategies LLC, a Registered Investment Adviser. EdiFi Financial is not owned or operated by NYLIFE Securities LLC or its affiliates.



# FROM CLASSROOM CHAOS TO NEW DAD LIFE, JOE DOMBROWSKI LEVELS UP

The breakout comedian pivots from viral teacher humor to raising a newborn — and discovering he didn't know kids quite as well as he thought

By Kelli Dunham | Courtesy Photos



During a recent interview with comedian Joe Dombrowski about his upcoming special “Dad on Arrival,” he was, fittingly, in the middle of it all — juggling new fatherhood in real time. At one point, the conversation turned into a kind of live demonstration: Could Dombrowski feed a highly kinetic infant while delivering funny, thoughtful answers?



The answer, unequivocally,

**was yes.**

Raised in Michigan and now based in Seattle, Dombrowski first broke out online with comedy rooted in his life as an elementary school teacher, spinning classroom stories into cathartic, laugh-out-loud moments for educators everywhere — the kind that make you briefly forget about grading backlogs, that mysterious smell in the back of the room and the latest email from the superintendent about cell phone policy. His profile got a major boost after Ellen DeGeneres invited him on her show following his viral spelling-bee prank, but he’s been building a following with both teacher and non-teacher material for more than a decade. His debut 2023 special, “Don’t Eat the Crayons,” leaned fully into classroom chaos and the strange anthropology of parent-teacher conferences.

“Dad on Arrival,” available now on YouTube, marks a shift.

He’s still talking about school. Still talking about students, parents and the general absurdity of being responsible for other human beings. The difference now: that he’s one of the parents — and a brand-new one at that. The material opens up accordingly, moving easily from fertility clinics to colonoscopies to Midwest food cravings to the cultural whiplash of relocating from Michigan to Seattle. Like the best comics, Dombrowski delivers big laughs while sneaking in something deeper: a perspective shaped in real time, somewhere between the classroom and the nursery.

*Of course I know better, but when I watched your appearance on “The Late Show with Stephen Colbert” on YouTube ahead of this interview, I couldn’t stop myself from taking a peek at the comments. There were so many lovely ones, including from your frat brothers! One after another saying you were the same person they knew back then. It felt like your entire life was showing up there.*

I guess I’m just a mystical gay charmer. [Laughs.] Yeah, the frat. My frat brothers really did pop their heads in on that one, which was funny. They were all on a golf outing the day that aired. Overall, the comments were really positive. I was surprised! There were some loser comments mixed in, but I mean, let the trash take itself out.

*Some people just don’t have enough to do.*

Exactly.

*I was also struck by how many people from different parts of your life were chiming in.*

I know, I love that. If you meet somebody who knows me, they say I’m the same person that you see on stage, off stage. I’m the same person that I’ve always been. And I take pride in that. It’s not a persona, this is just what I do.

One of the things about my comedy is that when you come to my show, no matter who you are, you’re never out of the joke. My show is gay because I am. I’m just talking to you about life. It happens to be through the lens of a gay guy. And when you look out in the audience, it’s a very diverse mix of people.

*Even with a newborn, you’re still touring — that’s impressive! How are you doing it?*

Yeah. I don’t know how. God bless the grandmas, who are coming in to save the day when I go on the road.

*What’s the biggest difference between “Don’t Eat the Crayons” and “Dad on Arrival”?*

The evolution from teacher to parent is really unique. I thought I understood kids as a teacher. Now I’m a parent [gulps]. It’s funny when I watch “Don’t Eat the Crayons,” I’m like, “Oh, you really thought you knew, didn’t you?”

*I was thinking about that while watching the bit about parent-teacher conferences. I wondered if you’re going to be a different parent in that room than the parents you used to deal with.*

Oh, for sure. Because being a teacher was such an eye-opening experience — you see people for who they are at all walks of life. You have these parents come in who are a little jaded, who have a chip on their shoulder.

But now, having to go into parent-teacher conferences — we’re already doing that, interviewing preschools that he’s gonna end up going to — I have to catch myself and be like, “Oh hey, you are that asshole now. Do you remember how those assholes used to talk to you when you were getting paid \$25,000 a year?” And now, as a parent, I’m like, they just want the absolute best for their child. It’s the most important thing in the world.

*Before the baby arrived, what were you most excited about? And now that the baby is here, what’s been the most exciting — or terrifying — part?*

I think that I had rose-colored glasses on more than I ever should have. I didn’t really focus on just how hard it was gonna be. You know all these people who are parents, and you have your own parents, and you’re like, ->

“Well, they survived.”

But holy shit, I'm dying. I've never been this tired in my life, and I was not expecting that. You quite literally stop everything. There's nothing else you can do during that time that they're awake except be their parent. And it took a quick adjustment. But once you succumb to that, it's beautiful. And then, it's really cool to just ignore everything else that's going on in the world — especially now when there's such craziness happening — and just focus on your family.

*Some of the funniest parts of the special are straight out of the fertility clinic waiting room. What surprised you most about this process for your family?*

We found that even in Seattle, the system is clearly built for straight couples. You are quickly reminded you're living in somebody else's world. My husband's name is Morgan and people would say, “Oh well, when she gets here...” I'd be like “Oh yeah, her and her huge clit will be here in just a second.”

You start to realize so many different nuances of being a gay parent: being billed twice on accident because we're both men and they don't know who's the dad. So they're billing both of the people. For the most part, people are curious, and we don't make anyone feel stupid for asking questions. But you are very quickly reminded that we as LGBTQ+ people are out of the loop most of the time, and you just have to navigate that. In my case, it made for hilarious stories that went into the special.

*What joke in the special gets the most unexpected but consistent laugh?*

There's one from the first special where I talk about moving to Seattle from Michigan, and I say, “My husband and I were very liberal, we're very open-minded, but when we moved to Seattle, we looked

at each other and said, “Are we Republicans?” That never fails. And from the current special, when I tell people I had to get a colonoscopy and the doctor said, “Hey Joe, this might hurt a little,” and I said, “I think we're fine.” Never fails. You've also released two crowd-work specials. How did you get good at crowd work?

I'm an extrovert who's riddled with ADHD. But also, people categorize comedians as crowd-work comics, and that's not really a thing. If you're a comedian and you can't do crowd work, you're not a comedian. We're live performers, and anything could happen in the room at any moment. If someone volleys at you, you volley it back.

Being a teacher helped because you never know what's going to happen in the classroom, and you just have to roll with the punches. My students were basically little drunk adults, and comedy clubs are drunk adults who act like 5 year olds.

*You talk in the special about your dad encountering Seattle culture for the first time. Have those conversations with your parents changed over time?*

We've been here almost nine years now. In the beginning, it was pretty much like walking them around and saying, “Hey, we're not in a zoo. Just keep to yourself.” But the thing I never thought I'd hear both my parents say is that now that they have their first grandbaby, they realize we are in the best place for us and for our family.

As weird as Seattle might be to them, they know that for the vast majority of people, my baby living with two dads is generally accepted.

*What do you miss most about the Midwest?*

Jet's Pizza with ranch dressing, more than anything. Oh my god,

that used to run through my veins. Also, the food in general. We don't have Arabic food over here in Seattle, which is crazy. My mom's from Dearborn — I grew up on that.

*Lastly, if a young gay kid watches your special, what do you hope they take away from it?*

It's so cliché, but it's so true: If you want to do something, you can. You're going to get a lot of no's along the way. But you will find a way to get a yes if you want to get a yes.

**So the only person who can ultimately tell you a final no is you. So you might as well keep hustling, sister.**



**Look for even more from QBurgh coming soon!**



**PUBLISHER**

**QBURGH LLC**  
JEFF FREEDMAN, Co-Creator  
JIM SHEPPARD, Co-Creator  
**CONTACT**

Info@QBurgh.com  
412.353.9759

223 Fourth Avenue  
Floor 10  
Pittsburgh, PA 15222

**ADVERTISING**  
Ads@QBurgh.com  
QBurgh.com/Advertise

# Love makes a family.

Thousands of kids in Pennsylvania are waiting for a family.

Every child deserves the love, stability, and support of a family.

Right now, across Pennsylvania, thousands of kids are waiting to be seen, chosen, and loved. They're dreaming of someone cheering from the sidelines. Of hugs after hard days. Of the everyday moments that make a family a family.

Ready to meet the kids?

Visit [AdoptPAKids.org](https://AdoptPAKids.org) to learn more, see waiting children, and start your journey.



# Pittsburgh Pink Pages

## YOUR GUIDE TO LGBTQ PITTSBURGH

LGBTQ Non Profits, Groups, Charities, Leagues

### Advocacy & Resources

#### BroThers Pittsburgh

211 Smithfield Street  
Pittsburgh, PA 15222  
412-297-0548  
Sisterspgh.org/brotherspgh

#### Gay 4 Good Pittsburgh

pittsburgh@gayforgood.org  
Gayforgood.org/pittsburgh

#### Hugh Lane Wellness Foundation

*North Side*  
925 Brighton Road  
Pittsburgh, PA 15233  
412-626-3812  
Hughlane.org  
*East Liberty*  
421 N Highland Avenue  
Pittsburgh, PA 15206

#### Lebo Pride

Contact@LeboPride.org  
412-419-1678  
Lebopride.org

#### Love Diamond Project

(412) 807-0503

#### Nuns of Steel

Sister6p@nunsofsteel.org  
(724) 400-3825

#### The Open Door

P.O. Box 99243  
Pittsburgh, PA 15233  
info@opendoorhousing.org  
opendoorhousing.org

#### Pennsylvania Youth Congress

413 Walnut St  
Harrisburg, PA 17101  
(717) 743-1035  
payouthcongress.org

#### PFLAG Greensburg

506 Strangford Rd  
Blairsville, PA 15717  
(724) 459-8532  
pflaggbg@gmail.com

#### PFLAG Pittsburgh

PO Box 5406  
Pittsburgh, PA 15206  
(412) 833-4556  
pflagpgh.org

#### PGH Equality Center

info@pghequalitycenter.org  
(412) 422-0114  
pghequalitycenter.org

#### Pittsburgh Black Pride

PO Box 7514  
Pittsburgh, PA 15213  
info@pghblackpride.org  
pghblackpride.org

#### Pittsburgh Leather Pride

steelcitylthr@gmail.com  
pghlpw.com

#### Pittsburgh Pride Group

525 East Ohio St  
Pittsburgh, PA 15212  
info@pittsburghpride.com  
pittsburghpride.com

#### Proud Haven

525 East Ohio St  
Pittsburgh, PA 15212  
(412) 346-1324  
proudhaven.org

#### QMNTY Center

525 East Ohio St  
Pittsburgh, PA 15212  
(412) 953-4666  
qmntycenter.org

#### QMNTY Closet

517 East Ohio St  
Pittsburgh, PA 15212  
(412) 953-4666  
qmntycenter.org

#### Queer Family Planning Project

PO Box 2084  
Lower Burrell, PA 15068  
info@  
queerfamilyplanningproject.org

#### Rangoli Pittsburgh

rangolipgh@gmail.com  
rangolipittsburgh.com

#### SisTers Pittsburgh

211 Smithfield Street  
Pittsburgh, PA 15222  
412-297-0548  
Sisterspgh.org

#### Three Rivers Business Alliance

1735 E. Carson St. #403  
Pittsburgh, PA 15203-1705  
724-205-0752  
3rba.com

#### Trans Buddy Pittsburgh

transbuddypgh@gmail.com  
(412) 944-4261  
transbuddypgh.org

#### Trans Pride Pittsburgh

transpridepgh@gmail.com  
transpridepgh.blogspot.com

#### Trans YOUning

525 East Ohio St  
Pittsburgh, PA 15212  
(412) 346-1324  
transyouningpgh.org

#### True T Pittsburgh

1632 Forbes Ave  
Pittsburgh, PA 15219  
(412) 291-8196  
truetpgh.com

#### Washington County Gay Straight Alliance

59 E. Strawberry Ave  
Washington, PA 15301  
724-213-0096  
wcgsa.org

#### Washington PA Pride

59 E. Strawberry Ave  
Washington, PA 15301  
(724) 835-4285  
washpapride.com



**Marked Moon Ink**  
Tattoos Marked by Magic

**Happy Pride Everyone!**  
From Marked Moon Ink

Tattoo/Piercing Shop  
in New Stanton, PA  
LGBTQ+ owned and operated

Learn More about us here



## The Arts

### 412Step

412StepContact@gmail.com  
412step.com  
LGBTQ line dancing

### Dreams of Hope

P.O. Box 4912  
Pittsburgh, PA  
15206-0912  
(412) 361-2065  
dreamsofhope.org

### Glittersty

glittersty@gmail.com  
glittersty.com

### Hot Metal Hardware Pittsburgh

hotmetalhardwarepgh@  
gmail.com  
(412) 345-3464  
hotmetalhardware.blogspot.  
com

### Junior Chamber of Commerce Players

jccppgh@gmail.com  
jccppgh.com

### Reel Q

P.O. Box 81237  
Pittsburgh, PA 15217  
(412) 422-6776  
reelq.org

### Renaissance City Choir

president@rccpittsburgh.com  
412-345-1722  
rccpittsburgh.com

### Steel City Squares

squaredancepittsburgh  
@gmail.com  
steelcitysquares.org  
LGBTQ square dancing

## Health & Wellness

### AIDS Free Pittsburgh

625 Liberty Ave, Ste. 2500  
Pittsburgh, PA 15222  
412-773-1120  
AIDSFreePittsburgh.org

## Allies for Health + Wellbeing

5913 Penn Ave  
Pittsburgh PA 15206  
412-345-7456  
AlliesPGH.org

### Central Outreach Wellness Center

*Aliquippa, PA*  
2360 Hospital Drive, Upper  
Suite 1 Aliquippa, PA 15001  
724-707-1155  
*North Side*  
127 Anderson Street, Suite 101  
Pittsburgh, PA 15212  
412-322-4151  
*Washington County*  
817 Jefferson Ave  
Washington, PA 15301  
724-993-8000  
CentralOutreach.com

### Metro Community Health Center

1789 South Braddock Avenue,  
Suite 410 Pittsburgh, PA 15218  
412-247-2310  
MetroCommunity  
HealthCenter.org

### Pitt Men's Study

P.O. Box 7319  
Pittsburgh, PA 15213  
412-621-1643  
PittMensStudy.com

### Shepherd Wellness Community

4800 Sciota St  
Pittsburgh, PA 15224  
412-683-4477  
SWCOnline.org

## Political

### Steel City Stonewall Democrats

P.O. Box 44061  
Crafton, PA 15205  
steel-city.org

## Seniors

### Hugh Lane LGBTQ+ Senior Group

421 N Highland Avenue  
Pittsburgh, PA 15206  
hughlane.org

### Pittsburgh PrimeTimers

pittsburgh\_pt@yahoo.com  
412-212-6464  
pittsburghprimetimers.com

## Social Groups

### Barons of Steel

contact@pghlpw.com  
pghlpw.com

### Fort Pitt Bears

fortpittbears@gmail.com  
412-444-5032  
fortpittbears.com

### Singles Out Pittsburgh

singlesoutpgh@yahoo.com  
facebook.com/profile.  
php?id=100068146232873  
A dining out/activity group for  
LGBTQ community.

### Steel City Pups

instagram.com/steelcitypups  
linktr.ee/steelcitypups

### Three Rivers Leather Club

PO BOX 5298  
Pittsburgh, PA 15206  
info@trlc.net  
trlc.net

## Sports

### Pittsburgh Frontrunners

Pittsburgh-frontrunners.org  
Facebook.com/Pittsburgh-  
Frontrunners

### Pittsburgh LGBTQ Hockey

Instagram.com/pittsburgh\_  
lgbtq\_hockey  
Pittsburghlgbtq.hockey

### Qrew Pittsburgh

Facebook.com/LGBTQrew/

### Steel City Bowling League

Facebook.com/groups/  
steelcitybowling

### Steel City Softball League

P.O. BOX 90097  
Pittsburgh, PA 15224  
412-444-5064  
Steelcitysoftball.org

### Steel City Volleyball League

Facebook.com/groups/  
steelcityvolleyball  
Steelcityvolleyball.org

### Stonewall Alliance

901 Western Avenue  
Pittsburgh, PA 15233  
info@stonewallalliance.org  
*Parent organization of the  
Stonewall Sports Pittsburgh  
leagues*

### Stonewall Sports Pittsburgh

901 Western Avenue, Courtyard  
Pittsburgh, PA 15233  
Stonewallsportspgh.org

## Youth

### Proud Haven

525 East Ohio St Pittsburgh, PA  
15212  
(412) 346-1324  
proudhaven.org

### Hugh Lane Wellness Foundation

925 Brighton Road  
Pittsburgh, PA 15233  
412-626-3812  
Hughlane.org

**DON'T SEE IT LISTED?  
EVEN MORE AT PITTSBURGHPINKPAGES.COM**

**5801 Video Lounge**  
5801 Ellsworth Avenue  
Pittsburgh, PA 15232  
(412) 661-5600  
5801pgh.com

**Babylon Night Club**  
335 High Street, rear  
Morgantown, WV 26505

**Blue Moon**  
5115 Butler St  
Pittsburgh, PA 15201  
(412) 781-1119  
bluemoononbutler.com

**Brewer's**  
3315 Liberty Ave  
Pittsburgh, PA 15201  
(412) 904-2821  
brewersbarpittsburgh.com

**Club Pittsburgh**  
1139 Penn Ave  
Pittsburgh, PA 15222  
(412) 471-6790  
clubpittsburgh.com

**Harold's Haunt**  
142 Grant Ave  
Millvale, PA 15209  
(412) 283-6023  
queerwitches.com

**Mary's Pittsburgh**  
5128 Penn Ave  
Pittsburgh, PA 15225  
maryspgh.com

**P Town**  
4740 Baum Blvd  
Pittsburgh, PA 15213  
(412) 621-0111  
ptownbarpgh.com

**Real Luck Cafe (Lucky's)**  
1519 Penn Ave  
Pittsburgh, PA 15222  
(412) 471-7832

**Rainbow Unicorn**  
3133 Pennsylvania Ave  
Weirton, WV 26062  
(304) 914-3584  
rainbowunicornbar.com

**LGBTQ+ Friendly Bars  
& Breweries**

**Two Fray's Brewery**  
5113 Penn Ave, Pittsburgh,  
PA 15224  
(724) 902-3085  
twofraysbrewery.com

**SUPPORT  
YOUR  
LOCAL  
GAY  
BARS**

**Trace Brewing**  
4312 Main St  
Pittsburgh, PA 15224  
(412) 904-3555  
tracebloomfield.com

Add your bar or brewery at  
[QBURGH.COM/submit-directory](http://QBURGH.COM/submit-directory)

**DON'T  
SEE  
YOUR  
FAVES?  
GET IT LISTED, FREE**

[QBURGH.COM/SUBMIT-DIRECTORY](http://QBURGH.COM/SUBMIT-DIRECTORY)

**More at  
[PittsburghPinkPages.com](http://PittsburghPinkPages.com)**



[QBURGH.COM/SLAY](http://QBURGH.COM/SLAY)

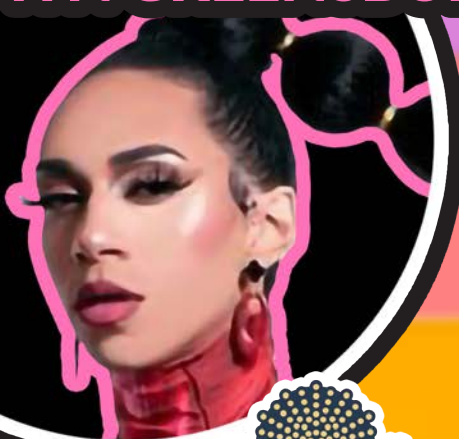


# Largest Pride Celebration in the Laurel Highlands!

THREE UNFORGETTABLE DAYS OF CINEMA, DRAG, AND COMMUNITY IN DOWNTOWN GREENSBURG.



Celebrate Pride Weekend with Westmoreland Cultural Trust—featuring a special queer film event, a free Pride Prom at The Westmoreland Museum of American Art, and a show-stopping Drag Brunch live on the historic Palace Theatre stage.



THE WESTMORELAND MUSEUM of AMERICAN ART



**FRI, JUNE 26**

## Pride Movie Night

The Palace Theatre  
Doors 7PM | Film 8PM

A beloved queer film hits the big screen.

Pre-show drag & costume contest • Bar • Local vendors

Bring the looks. Bring the drama.  
Event is 16+

**SAT, JUNE 27**

## Pride Prom (FREE EVENT)

The Westmoreland Museum of American Art  
6PM–9PM

Dance the night away—featuring live performances, community activities, and nonstop Pride energy.

Prom attire encouraged.

**SUN, JUNE 28**

## Drag Brunch

The Palace Theatre  
Doors 11AM | Show 12PM

Featuring: Alora Chateaux • Dixie Surewood • Kaydence McQueen • Phoenix Fatale

Brunch, custom cocktails, and a high-energy, on-stage drag experience!

(VIP experiences available)  
Limited seating – reserve now!  
Event is 18+



# TICKETS & DETAILS

WestmorelandCulturalTrust.org | 724-836-8000

PRIDE IS

YEAR ROUND

AND SO IS OUR COMMITMENT  
TO YOUR CARE.



[AIDSFreePittsburgh.org](https://AIDSFreePittsburgh.org)