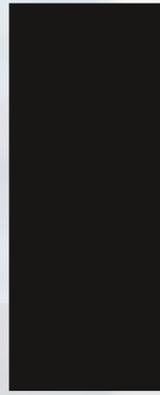
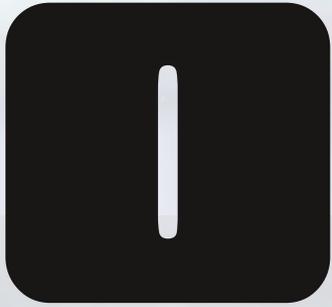
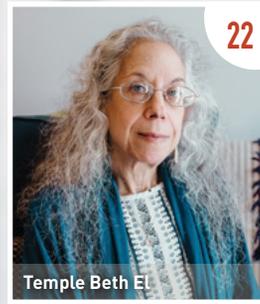


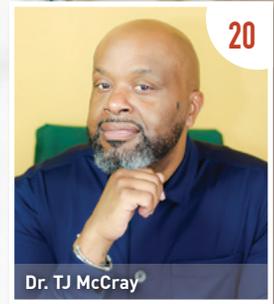
our lives



Frederick Harris



Temple Beth El



Dr. TJ McCray

HEALTH & FAMILY

Madison's LGBT&XYZ Magazine

Advancing LGBTQ

health equity across the state

November/December 2022

HOLISTIC VISION

Brandon Hill

Vivent Health's new executive vice president and chief operating officer on his direction for HIV/AIDS care.

UW HEALTH GENDER SERVICES

UW Health launches integrated transgender health services clinic.

QUEER DOULAS

Full-spectrum care for people through their pregnancy and birth or abortion experience.

**THE DREAM OF A BETTER,
MORE INCLUSIVE TOMORROW
STARTS FROM WITHIN.**



AT AMERICAN FAMILY INSURANCE, OUR COMMITMENT TO FOSTERING A MORE DIVERSE AND INCLUSIVE CULTURE EMPOWERS OUR MOST VALUABLE ASSET — OUR PEOPLE.

We've seen firsthand how diverse teams are more productive and innovative in an inclusive environment. That plays a critical role in helping to solve customer challenges through unique perspectives, real dialogue and empathy.

Learn what we're doing to support inclusion for all identities.



Our mission is to inspire, protect and restore the fearless dreams your family is pursuing. That's why for LGBT History Month, and every month, we're proud to support and celebrate all families — at home, in the workplace and in our communities.

*US Census Bureau, Household Pulse Survey, July 21, 2021 - September 13, 2021
American Family Mutual Insurance Company, S.I. and its Operating Companies,
6000 American Parkway, Madison, WI 53783 ©2022 20397 — Rev. 10/22

Being named the best place to work for LGBTQ+ Equality by the Human Rights Campaign Foundation for seven years running reflects our ongoing commitment to an inclusive culture.



While we are proud of this achievement, we also recognize that there is so much more to be done to address the systemic inequities that affect the LGBTQ+ community every day:

- **13.5%** of LGBTQ+ respondents lived in a household that experienced food insecurity compared to 7.4% of non-LGBTQ+ respondents.*
- **Nearly a quarter (21.6%)** of LGBTQ+ respondents reported the loss of employment income in their household compared to 16% of non-LGBTQ+ respondents.*
- **36.6%** of LGBTQ+ adults lived in a household that had difficulty paying for usual household expenses in the previous seven days, compared to 26.1% of non-LGBTQ+ adults.*

In 2022, the American Family Insurance Dreams Foundation, along with American Family's LGBTQA Business Resource Group, proudly supported Gay For Good, The Trevor Project and OutReach LGBTQ+ Community Center.



For resources on allyship or to learn more about the Human Rights Campaign Equality Index, please visit www.hrc.org.



WHEN YOU BANK HERE, YOU BELONG HERE.



Every day, thousands of people from all walks of life come through our doors. And every single one of them is just as welcome as the last. We're proud to champion diversity, equity and inclusion in communities across the Midwest. Because as a bank that's rooted here, we believe our workforce should reflect the communities we serve.

AssociatedBank.com/YourMoneyWorksHere



Deposit and loan products are offered by Associated Bank, N.A. Loan products are subject to credit approval and involve interest and other costs. Please ask about details on fees and terms and conditions of these products. Relevant insurance coverage, if applicable, will be required on collateral. M/F/D/V. Drug-Free Workplace. Member FDIC. Equal Opportunity Lender. (9/22) P07110



46

DEPARTMENTS

- 5 ADVERTISER DIRECTORY
- 6 PUBLISHER'S LETTER & CONTRIBUTORS

FEATURES

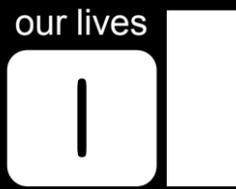
- 30 **THE PROFESSIONAL IS PERSONAL**
New Vivent Health executive vice president and chief operating officer Brandon Hill.
- 36 **MOST LIKELY TO SUCCEED**
Frederick Harris on being the first to enter spaces that are not prepared to receive them.
- 42 **QUEERING DOULA CARE**
Inclusive, affirming support and full-spectrum care for people through their pregnancy and birth or abortion experience—and beyond.
- 46 **COLLABORATION IN CARE**
UW Health's integrated transgender health services clinic.

CONNECT

- 9 **MADISON'S ANTI-TRANS CHALK WARS**
An ephemeral medium becomes a weapon of choice for local TERFs.
- 14 **PUBLIC ART & ADVOCACY**
Madison installs its first rainbow crosswalk.
- 16 **NEWS BRIEFS**
- 20 **OUR EDUCATORS**
Dr. TJ McCray, GSAFE's 2022 Educator of the Year.
- 22 **OUR FAITH**
Three people from Temple Beth El.
- 26 **OUR ADVOCATES**
Meriter's Child & Adolescent Psychiatry care center.
- 28 **OUR EVENTS**
GSAFE's Trick or Trot.

IMPROVE

- 48 **OUR HISTORY**
"Ralph Kerwineo and the Refining Influence of Skirts" tells the historic figure's notorious story to new audiences.
- 50 **OUR YOUTH**
Vel Phillips Memorial High School Sophomore Devon Wells.



Madison's LGBT&XYZ Magazine

Patrick Farabaugh
Publisher / Editor-in-Chief

Virginia Harrison
Copy Editor

Doug Rowe
Editorial Curator
Online Jobs & Events Curator

Contributing Writers

Rodlyn-mae Banting
Stacy Harbaugh
Frederick Harris
Melanie Jones
Emily McCluhan
TJ McCray
Erin McGroarty
Vica-Etta Steel
Michail Takach

Contributing Artists

Ian DeGraff
Melanie Jones
M.Rose Sweetnam
Samantha Rae Waldron

Social Media Curators

jilip nagler
Doug Rowe

Webmasters
design.garden

National Advertising Sales
Rivendell Media Inc.

**Subscribers in
450+ Wisconsin
cities & towns**

©2022 All Rights Reserved.
Nov. / Dec. 2022, Volume 16, Issue 3
Life in the Middle Publishing, LLC
Patrick Farabaugh, Publisher.
PO Box 1202, Madison, WI 53701

Any reproduction of OL: Our Lives Magazine in part or in full without the written permission of the publisher is strictly prohibited. OL: Our Lives Magazine shall not be held responsible for any claims made by our advertisers. Submission of photographs or other images to OL: Our Lives Magazine may be published without providing image credit. Appearance of any person, business or organization within photographs, advertisements, or editorial content neither implies nor infers any indication of their sexual orientation.

ADVERTISER DIRECTORY



Our Lives is a 100% ad-supported publication. We are able to exist because you support our dedicated advertising partners. To help us thank them for their support of LGBTQ people and our stories, check out their businesses whenever you need them—and specifically thank them for advertising with us. **A little bit of love goes a long way!**

A SPECIAL THANK YOU

Amidst the extraordinary strain on small businesses, these advertisers are helping to keep us publishing. If the opportunity arises, please join us in thanking them.

ARTS

- p. 27 Forward Theater
- p. 6 Madison Symphony Orchestra
- p. 10 Wisconsin Chamber Orchestra

ART / ARTISTS / ART SUPPLIES

- p. 34 Monroe Street Framing
- p. 17 Bruce Seeds

ATTORNEYS

- p. 45 Balisle Family Law
- p. 47 DeWitt

AUTOMOBILES

- p. 38 MINI of Madison

BANKING / FINANCIAL ADVISING

- p. 3 Associated Bank-Corporate
- p. 44 Shannon M. Anderson
Ameriprise Financial
- p. 17 Mike Fumelle, Associated Bank
- p. 40 Summit Credit Union
- p. 29 UW Credit Union

COMMUNITY ORGANIZATIONS

- p. 21 Freedom, Inc.
- p. 41 Madison Public Library
- p. 48 New Harvest Foundation
- p. 12 OPEN
- p. 33 Perfect Harmony Men's Chorus

COUNSELING / SUPPORT

- p. 19 Alexander Einsman, MS MFT
Atlas Counseling

FASHION

- p. 16 Ulla Eyewear

FOOD & BEVERAGE

- p. 15 Capitol Centre Market
- p. 21 Delta Beer Lab
- p. 37 D'Vino
- p. 33 The Sow's Ear
- p. 24 Willy Street Co-op

HEALTH/ WELLNESS

- p. 49 Dental Health Associates
- p. 14 Forward Fertility, LLC
- p. 6 Inner Fire Yoga
- p. 15 New Health Chiropractic
- p. 35 Smart Dental
- p. 7 UnityPoint Health - Meriter
- p. 31 Vivent Health
- p. 43 Wisconsin Fertility Institute

HIGHER EDUCATION

- p. 39 Madison College

INSURANCE

- p. 2 American Family Insurance
- p. 5 Colleen Frentzel Agency
American Family Insurance
- p. 5 David Ryan-Sukup
American Family Insurance
- p. 11 Jim Hartman, State Farm

INTERIOR DESIGN / HOME

- p. 24 Bethke Heating &
Air Conditioning Inc.
- p. 13 Chad's Design Build
- p. 28 Kool View
- p. 31 MaraLee Olson Design Studio
- p. 37 Quigley Decks & Cable Rails
- p. 14 Time 2 Remodel

JEWELERS

- p. 19 Goodman's Jewelers
- p. 41 Jewelers Workshop

MEDIA

- p. 19 Towns & Associates

OUTDOOR RECREATION

- p. 23 Rutabaga

PAPER SUPPLIES & CARDS

- p. 28 Anthology

PETS

- p. 25 Angel's Wish
- p. 28 Bad Dog Frida
- p. 50 Dane County Humane Society
- p. 4 EarthWise Pet Supply

PHOTOGRAPHY

- p. 16 Dulcy Dog Photography
- p. 18 Dutcher Photography

REALTY

- p. 22 Vivienne Anderson
- p. 33 Lauer Realty Group

SENIORS

- p. 51 Agrace

SPIRITUAL

- p. 20 First United Methodist Church
- p. 23 Holy Wisdom Monastery

UTILITIES

- p. 8 Madison Gas & Electric



AS YOUR DREAMS EVOLVE,
WE'RE HERE TO SUPPORT YOU.

Whether you're buying your first car or your retirement home, American Family Insurance is with you every step of the way, ensuring that your dreams are always protected.



Colleen Frentzel, Agent
4407 Milton Ave Ste 110
Janesville, WI 53546
cfrentzel@amfam.com
(608) 302-4101



David Ryan-Sukup, Agent
514 Grand Canyon Dr
Madison, WI 53719
dryansu1@amfam.com
(608) 833-1717



American Family Mutual Insurance Company, S.I. & its Operating Companies,
American Family Insurance Company,
6000 American Parkway, Madison, WI 53783
008747 - Rev. 12/15 ©2015 - 15616751



Pets Are Family



EARTHWISE Pet
SUPPLY • GROOMING • WASH
LOCALLY OWNED & OPERATED

SHOP OUR TWO MADISON LOCATIONS

MADISON EAST
6071 GEMINI DRIVE
MADISON, WI 53718
(608) 230-6210

MADISON WEST
3260 UNIVERSITY AVE
MADISON, WI 53705
(608) 284-9007

EarthWisePetMadison.com

PUBLISHING IN A PANDEMIC is certainly not boring. At a time when I had been hopeful about expanding the magazine statewide, the world had other plans. As the world contracted in 2020, so did *Our Lives*. I'm grateful that our limited staff and volunteers created the flexibility to expand and contract on demand. It helped us survive the worst Covid could throw at us. But it isn't over just yet. While *Our Lives* has proven resilient, we're still vulnerable to the rest of print media's recovery. Paper prices have skyrocketed, and staffing challenges and maintenance at our printer have made our release dates volatile. I just want to use this small space in this issue to thank you for sticking with us as we still weather what's hopefully the last of the Covid storm. Here's to a new beginning in 2023!



ERIN MCGROARTY is a second-year master's student with the UW-Madison School of Journalism. She previously worked as a political reporter in Interior Alaska for more than three years. Her work can be found in *Wisconsin Watch*, *The Capital Times*, the *Chicago Reader*, and the *Poynter Institute*.

EMILY MCCLUHAN is a Madison-based writer, runner, volunteer, and dog-mom. Her contributions to regional publications in Michigan, Montana, and Wisconsin over the last 20 years provide an outlet for her insatiable curiosity and passion for telling the stories that open our eyes and connect to our everyday lives.

MICHAEL TAKACH is a historian, author, reporter, and communications professional. He earned his master's in communications and history at UW-Madison. Michail is currently the curator of the Wisconsin LGBTQ History Project, a not-for-profit devoted to connecting local LGBTQ people with their hidden history and heritage.

MELANIE JONES is a photographer and writer living on the northside of Madison with her spouse, two dogs, and three cats and working out of her Atwood Ave studio. While she enjoys photographing people, her passion project for the past two years has been her photography work with dogs under her Dulcy Dog Photography brand.

INNER FIRE YOGA
 Madison's Original
 Hot Yoga Studio Since 2002



East Madison
1813 East Washington Ave
608-405-5896

West Madison
5003 University Ave
608-661-0167

www.innerfireyoga.com

MADISON SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA
 JOHN DEMAIN | MUSIC DIRECTOR

22 | 23
 SEASON

Celebrate A Madison Symphony Christmas with friends!

Join us for either of two special social gatherings at our December Madison Symphony Christmas concerts! Connect with young adult classical music lovers at **Club 201 on Friday, December 2**, and with members of the LGBTQ+ community and friends at **Out at the Symphony on Saturday, December 3**. Both events include exclusive receptions and opportunities to meet MSO Musicians, Music Director John DeMain, and other special guests. Experience a Madison tradition to start your holiday season. Your ticket includes a fantastic seat at the concert, plus the after-party. All tickets are \$50 and include a Circle-level concert ticket, plus the post-concert reception with hors d'oeuvres and complimentary beverages. **RSVP by Monday, November 21, 2022.**

Discover more and reserve your place:
madisonsymphony.org/club201
madisonsymphony.org/out

Carol Sing with Greg Zelek



FREE EVENT SAT. 12/3

Saturday, December 3 at 11:00 a.m. in Overture Hall. Bring your pipes, and your friends and family, to raise a joyful noise with the Overture Concert Organ. Join MSO's Principal Organist Greg Zelek for this celebration during our Madison Symphony Christmas concert weekend. All ages are welcome, and no tickets or reservations are needed. The program lasts 45 minutes to one hour.

Learn more: madisonsymphony.org/carolsing

Programs, dates, and artists subject to change. Photo: (Zelek): Peter Rodgers

Love great music. Find it here.  madisonsymphony.org

THANK YOU TO OUR LEAD SPONSORS

JERRY FRAUTSCHI



SARAH & NATHAN HERBST



LOVE IS Love

Friday, February 3, 2023
 7 p.m. to Midnight

Overture Center for the Arts
 201 State St, Madison

A vibrant evening of self-expression, hope and love

LIVE MUSIC WITH CROONER MARC LOPEZ

PRESENTED IN ENGLISH, SPANISH & ASL

DANCING ALL NIGHT WITH DJ CHRISTOPHER VAZQUEZ

to support mental wellness and healing for our community's LGBTQ+ youth.

Get your tickets now!

unitypoint.org/loveislove



 **UnityPoint Health**
Meriter Foundation

UWHealth

FIND
YOUR
DRIVE



GENRE 20|30

EV LAND

MADISON GAS AND ELECTRIC IN ASSOCIATION WITH BACKFLIP PRESENTS A GENRE 2030 FILM EV LAND
MGE BACKFLIP ev MGE.COM/LOVEV GENRE2030.COM

EV FOR SCENES OF SINGING AND DANCING, ALL INVOLVING ELECTRIC VEHICLES
All Ages Admitted

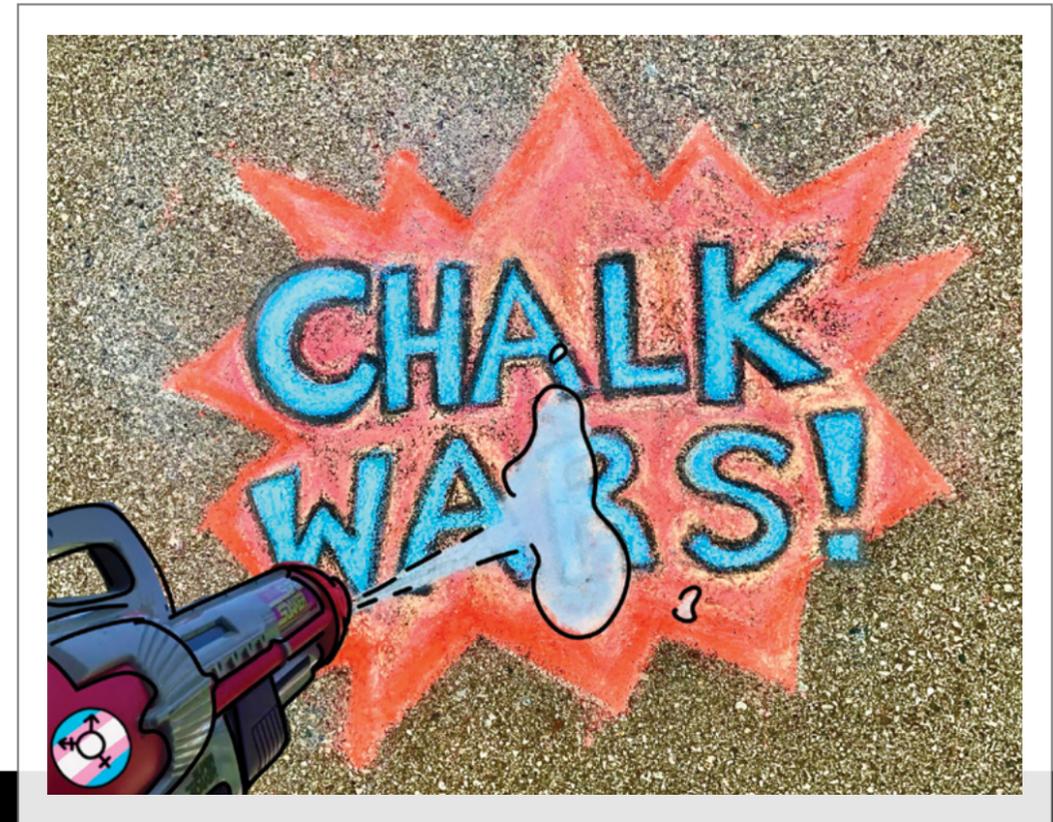


OURLIVESWISCONSIN.COM



OUR NEWS

Leading News & Local Stories



Madison's anti-trans chalk wars

An ephemeral medium becomes a weapon of choice for local TERFs.

ANTI-TRANSGENDER VANDALISM | LGBTQ ACTIVISM

THIS PAST SPRING, on an evening stroll that I had made ritual during those first few weeks of warm Madison weather, I stumbled upon some street art behind the Willy Street Co-op. “Protect Trans Kids,” it read, scrawled in pink chalk, accompanied by a blue and pink heart meant to resemble the transgender pride flag. It was an unsurprising albeit symbolic message for the Marquette neighborhood, whose lawn signs share sentiments of inclusivity, and I was glad that more community members were expressing their support during Pride month. I went on with my walk, grateful for the fresh air and sun. But on my way back home, I noticed the message had been altered, taking on a completely opposite stance.

The word “trans” had been smeared, as if by foot, and a

new message appeared beneath it. The sidewalk square now read: “Protect kids... Don’t give them puberty blockers.” The second half, written in white, was an assault on the gender-affirming care that slows and eventually halts development of secondary sex characteristics for those who do not identify with the gender they were assigned at birth. Also known as hormone blockers, these medical treatments are safe and life-affirming to those who seek them out, making opposition to them glaringly anti-trans in nature.

Stunned that someone would take the time to run home and grab their own chalk to respond to the original message, I did what any sensible person would do: I ran to my kitchen sink, filled up a glass of water, and poured it over the pavement. The next morning I drove to work in the rain, thankful

This story is published in partnership with Tone Madison. Sensitivity reading provided by jilip nagler.



Two American Masters

Masterworks I

November 18 at 7:30 PM

Capitol Theater, Overture Center

Andrew Sewell, conductor

Elissa Lee Koljonen
violin

Featuring two extraordinary women musicians: composer Florence Price wrote her Symphony No.1 in E minor, in 1932 and violinist Elissa Lee Koljonen makes her WCO debut.



Subscribe & Save
See all five for as little as \$28/concert!

wcoconcerts.org/subscribe



CONNECT → OUR NEWS

OURLIVESWISCONSIN.COM



that the weather took care of anything I missed, the hateful language gone without a trace.

TERFS CHALK THE CAPITOL WITH ANTI-TRANS RHETORIC

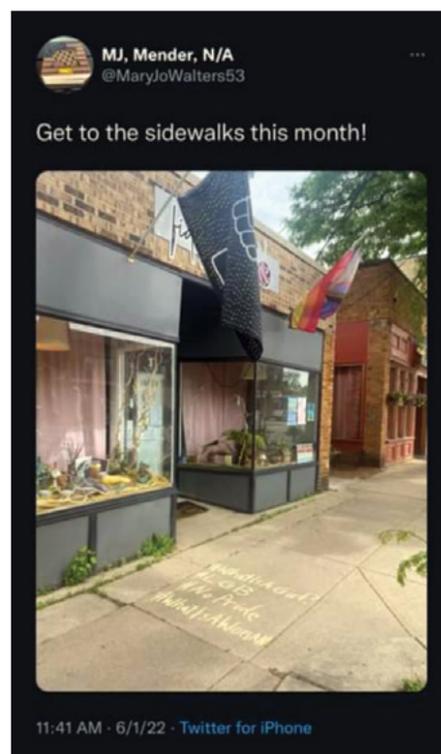
While some might find this incident unremarkable or even trivial, people have increasingly used chalk to spread hateful messages—particularly anti-trans messages—in Madison. This past April, dozens of so-called “radical feminists” organized an event in our capital city called Sisters4Sisters. It was an effort to rally around local TERFs (trans-exclusionary radical feminists) who claim that they are targets of oppression because they have faced consequences for their vocal bigotry against transgender and non-binary people. The TERF event was also an attempt to push their own brand of “feminist” ideology rooted in biological essentialism; organizers branded the event “female only,” using transphobic language that narrowly defines “women” by their chromosomes and secondary sex characteristics, excluding trans women and intersex people. It’s part of the hateful rhetoric that encourages violence against trans women by casting them as predatory men.

On the weekend of the convention, the sidewalks of the Capitol Square were littered with anti-trans messaging—such as “Protect Women Spaces”—all written in chalk.

Sidewalk chalk as the modus operandi for hate speech poses a peculiar question: if these individuals are so intent on spreading hateful rhetoric and invalidating transgender identities, then why choose such a transient medium? In just the past few months, Madison has seen its fair share of more permanent forms of expression. In July, a spray-painted message on St. Bernard Catholic Church on Atwood Avenue called out the Catholic Church’s hypocrisy on abortion and the history of deadly Church-run boarding schools that stripped Indigenous children of their cultural identity. After a draft of the Supreme Court’s decision reversing *Roe v. Wade* leaked in May, someone damaged a Wisconsin anti-abortion group’s offices with molotov cocktails and spray-painted threats. If these TERFs remain so staunch in their beliefs, then why choose to publicize them in such fleeting and impermanent ways?

FIDDLESTICKS KNITS CHALKED WITH #LGB AND #WHATISAWOMAN

This was the same question that stumped Erica Hainz, the owner of the fiber arts yarn store Fiddlesticks Knits at 1976 Atwood Ave. The business, which is proudly queer and wom-



Chalk is the newest weapon of choice for TERFS spreading transphobic ideology, joining a hefty, persistent, and evolving arsenal of anti-trans measures that includes anti-trans stickers that have been particularly prominent in summers past

an-owned, was the target of an incident of hate speech on June 1, the first day of Pride month. When Hainz arrived at the store that morning, she found the remnants of transphobic messaging in chalk outside of the establishment.

By the time Hainz made it to the storefront, an employee at Thorps Haircut & Color next door had already washed it off, after a concerned customer pointed it out. Mary Jo Walters, who took credit for the chalking shortly after the incident, has openly referred to herself online as “trans-a-phobic.” The messages Walters wrote outside Fiddlesticks confirm as much, incorporating the hashtags #LGB #NoPride #WhatIsAWoman? and #WhatIsAGirl? In an interview with WORT during which she proudly referred to her actions as “artwork,” Walters explained that the hashtags she used were lifted from the movie *What Is A Woman?*, a feature-length act of transphobic violence from commentator Matt Walsh of the far-right website *The Daily Wire*.

Walters expressed no remorse for her

actions and encouraged others to do additional transphobic chalking of their own. “Get to the sidewalks this month!” reads a tweet she posted soon after the incident, from an account that has since disappeared (screenshot to the left), even including a picture of the original hate speech outside Fiddlesticks. Chalk is the newest weapon of choice for TERFS spreading transphobic ideology, joining a hefty, persistent, and evolving arsenal of anti-trans measures that includes anti-trans stickers that have been particularly prominent in summers past.

Ashes, Fiddlesticks’ only trans employee, couldn’t help but feel targeted by the chalking. “I wasn’t sure that it was about me, but even the fact that it was so close to my home, like—Fiddlesticks is my home and my family,” Turner says. “It was hard not to think it was about me and not to be scared that [it was] because I’m very open about being trans. It’s sort of like the first time that I worried that that might burn me.... To have that in Madison was like a shock to my system.”

This fall, Walsh scheduled a visit to the UW-Madison campus, sponsored by the university chapter of right-wing group Young Americans for Freedom. *The Badger Herald* reported in October that transgender and nonbinary people at UW-Madison have expressed “hurt, anger and exhaustion” ahead of the event. A graduate student and teaching assistant in the Gender and Women’s Studies department has reported an incident of targeted hate speech after posters for the event with Walsh were plastered throughout the department in Sterling Hall; their own department notices were torn down days later.

POLICE REACTION TO CHALKING VARIES WITH LOCATION, MESSAGE

The motive behind using chalk seems to lie at the intersection of convenient immateriality and an absence of accountability. “Because it is chalk, that kind of makes it a little bit more slippery,” Hainz explains. When filing a police report about the incident at Fiddlesticks, she recalls, “I had to file it under vandalism even though [there wasn’t any] property damage because it is something that’s removable. If it was spray paint, it would be clear vandalism, that would be a criminal offense, but because it’s chalk, it gets into that weird gray area.”

Hainz says that the self-submitted police report form didn’t have an easy option to flag hate speech, “which is frustrating in its own right. Because it’s like, if somebody drew a chalk flower in front of my store, I would not be filing a police report, right? It’s because of the content, not the mode.” Hainz has not heard back from the Madison Police Department since filing her report.

Historically, police and local governments have selectively criminalized sidewalk chalk, including in Wisconsin. In 2017, a mother and daughter who were members of the Racial Justice Group in Onalaska received a citation and a \$1,000 fine for chalkwork that expressed support for the Black Lives Matter movement. Despite Onalaska officials’ claims that the citation wasn’t about the message itself and instead had to do with the amount of the time and labor involved in removing the chalkwork, it doesn’t take much to understand why messages of racial solidarity and a challenge to white supremacy wouldn’t fly in this part of the state. The “harm” that these chalkings created was not one concerning aesthetic, but a disruption of the white utopias that police work to maintain.

UNEVEN ASSESSMENT OF HATE CRIMES

Madison’s tendency to cling to its liberal reputation without any push for real, material change is nothing new. It is more comfortable to talk about equity—or to insistently signal that we are a resoundingly LGBTQ+ supportive city—than to do the transformative work of addressing and repairing harm. Just as authorities cherry-pick which protestors to criminalize, on the flipside, they cherry-pick which incidents of hate necessitate—or “deserve”—accountability. Although those targeted by hate

may be clear about its harmful impact, there is limited recourse; those in power set the boundaries of who, exactly, “deserves” defending, upholding systems of oppression that keep people with marginalized identities in danger.

Hainz says that the self-submitted police report form didn’t have an easy option to flag hate speech, “which is frustrating in its own right. Because it’s like, if somebody drew a chalk flower in front of my store, I would not be filing a police report, right?”

In June, five strangers assaulted a Chinese Ph.D. student in downtown Madison; Both UW-Madison authorities and law enforcement refused to acknowledge the clear racism behind the altercation. “While we don’t have evidence these incidents were motivated by race...” a(n astonishingly late) statement from UW-Madison administrators began, joining a chorus of official statements that shirk blame and dismiss the necessity of clear, deliberate, and indicting language. It matters little what the statement goes on to say, only that the institution has failed once again to call out an act of violent racism, bending over backwards to make vague what is so incredibly obvious, creating an environment of negligence and risk



Proudly serving the LGBTQ community.

Jim Hartman Ins Agcy Inc
Jim Hartman, Agent
5706 US Highway 51
jim@jimhartman.com
Bus: 608-838-4171

As a proud member of the LGBTQ community in Dane County, I’m here to help all my neighbors protect what matters most. Call me today.

Like a good neighbor, State Farm is there.®

State Farm
Bloomington, IL
2006037



NETWORK WITH US

MISSION

OPEN welcomes diverse LGBTQ+ and allied professionals to share perspectives and experiences in connecting, developing, and building a vibrant community.

VISION

OPEN believes in demonstrating personal and professional leadership as stewards of an inclusive community where all are equal and valued.

Career Resources

Exclusive Events

Discussion Boards

Job Board

Featured Members

Networking

OPEN provides education and information resources regarding issues of gender and sexual diversity and other issues of professional concern to lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender (LGBTQ) individuals who live in the Madison and Dane County, Wisconsin area.

LEARN MORE AT

OPENMADISON.ORG



CONNECT → OUR NEWS

OURLIVESWISCONSIN.COM



for its most vulnerable members.

In situations like these, the malicious malfeasance and outright denial of intent is what makes concrete evidence so crucial to processes of accountability. Whether it's physical injury or (irreversibly) damaged property, proof becomes the determining factor for whether or not something is worth further investigation.

What then, becomes of incidents like the ones Hainz of Fiddlesticks experienced, where the intent is explicit, but the harm caused can't be measured, taken in for investigation, or returned to over and over? How could one ever fully report, capture, or testify to the emotional and mental toll of having a safe space so boastfully vandalized?

OUR LIVES TARGETED BY TERF STICKER CAMPAIGN

Even with physical evidence, pursuing hate crime charges can be limited by other systemic discriminations. Just last year, a vocal local TERF was cited for vandalism with a hate crime enhancer for allegedly sticking transphobic slogans onto media boxes owned by *Our Lives* magazine, a Wisconsin LGBTQ+ publication. Despite brazenly claiming most of her public, transphobic actions, she notably denied that she was involved in this particular incident. And despite the evidence (the stickers), she ultimately wasn't sentenced. The reasons are technical and two-pronged: firstly, the District Attorney's office didn't limit the vandalism charges to only *Our Lives*' media boxes (she had stickered other surfaces, too), which made the case too broad to prove targeted vandalism. Secondly, as publisher Patrick Farabaugh explained, her "attorneys argued that because the state doesn't [protect] gender identity," the hate crime enhancer was a moot point.

In this instance, though the criminal legal system initially labeled the sticking a "hate crime," policy decisions related to gender identity blocked legal consequences.

Our Lives has been targeted by homophobic and anti-LGBTQ actions since it started in 2007, shortly after the state constitutional amendment to ban same-sex marriage was passed by Wisconsin voters. Since its early days, Farabaugh has had to contend with those determined to destroy the magazine, subjecting copies in media boxes in downtown Madison to ripping, water damage, and theft. For

Our Lives, the sticking is only the newest iteration of the same hatred it's been receiving for 15 years.

"That became somewhat of a turf war, where they were putting the stickers on as fast as we could take them off," Farabaugh said.

SEEKING HEALING WITH COUNTER-PROTEST CHALKING

Even though Fiddlesticks has only been open for a year, the chalk incident was not Hainz's first run-in with anti-LGBTQ+ actions directed specifically toward her store. This past February, an unknown person bent the flagpole



A local TERF bragging about vandalizing our sidewalk boxes on their facebook account.

Since its early days, Farabaugh has had to contend with those determined to destroy the magazine, subjecting copies in media boxes in downtown Madison to ripping, water damage, and theft. For *Our Lives*, the sticking is only the newest iteration of the same hatred it's been receiving for 15 years.

by her storefront on which a Pride flag hung, and took the flag. Both incidents have rattled Hainz's sense of safety and security in Madison, both as a business owner and a member of the LGBTQ+ community.

"I kind of chose [Atwood] specifically because I knew that we, I myself, could be openly queer, and that the store could be an openly gay-friendly space," she says. "And that [it] wouldn't make a ton of waves per se, like it would be accepted fairly well. So it was really surprising. I think, somewhere in my psyche, I knew [that] over the course of my career, let's say, I might have a hate incident. I never, never

would have believed that I would have two hate incidents in my first year being open. That is beyond me, especially for this neighborhood."

Hainz knows that "official" sanctions through our criminal justice system aren't the only way for her to begin healing, and might not even be a preferable avenue.

"I don't want compensation. I want our community to be a safe place for queer folks and trans folks to exist," she says. "And I don't want this hateful behavior and action to just go without consequence, especially [given] the fact that these people feel like they could just so proudly claim responsibility for what is essentially like community terrorism, with no ramifications."

Taking matters into her own hands, Hainz instead turned to community care and solidarity. On the day after the chalking incident took place, Hainz pivoted Fiddlesticks' weekly crafting social to a "counter-protest," putting out an open call for people to decorate the entire block with affirming and supportive messages of trans love and allyship. From regular customers to community members wanting to show their support, dozens of people of all ages answered, covering the entire block with rainbows, hearts, and messages like "I [heart] trans folx, enbies, and Fiddlesticks," "You Belong: We Love You!," and "Trans Rights are Human Rights."

Gideon Ariel, a bookseller at Madison's beloved queer-owned bookstore A Room of One's Own and a Fiddlesticks regular, considers the use of chalk by Walters and others like her to be a sign of fear and weakness. "I'd like to think that maybe they're more afraid of us," he says. "Because I feel like we do have numbers, we do have support. Madison has always been a very staunchly queer, supportive community more than any other that I've lived in. And I just think that [TERFs] are the minority." With the power of community, Fiddlesticks and its supporters transformed sidewalk chalk to take on a more empowering meaning, one that everyone—even our youngest Madisonians—could use to imagine and continue to build a more inclusive world.

TRANSPHOBIA INTOLERANCE REMAINS STRONG IN MADISON

Though the use of something as impermanent as sidewalk chalk might insulate people from consequences, Madison's larger community and its intolerance for transphobia remain steadfast. On the weekend of the Sisters4Sisters event, the Madison Area Transgender Association, a program of OutReach LGBTQ+ Community Center, held a free event celebrating Trans Joy in Community at Olbrich Park, filled with face painting, vendors, a clothing swap, food and drinks, and more. Attendance

exceeded organizers' expectations, reaching into the hundreds over the course of the day. "There are a few people that obviously have a problem [with trans folx], but the majority always comes out much louder, and much more supportive," Ariel says.

TRANS-AFFIRMING ARTWORK, FUNDRAISER AND EXPLICITLY QUEER SPACES

To continue supporting the Wisconsin LGBTQ+ community at large, Fiddlesticks will be selling brand new trans-affirming artwork by local artist Mighty Finn. The artwork, which features messages like "Trans women are women" and "Let Trans Kids Bloom," will be printed on repurposed Harry Potter pages in creative protest against the series' author, J.K. Rowling, who has doubled down on her transphobic sentiments over the years. All proceeds will go to Black Educators Caucus MKE, a group that has been spearheading efforts to revoke the license of Marissa Darling, a Milwaukee Public School guidance counselor who attended the Sisters4Sisters rally and has publicly expressed her clear and explicit disdain for transgender youth.

The fight to protect and uplift transgender and gender non-conforming members of our community is far from over, and will take persistent, intentional, and long-term allyship.

"I'm not going to tell every person in this

world that they need to show up and protest," Hainz says, but adds that "small daily actions" go a long way: "Noticing and removing any TERF stickers that you see, calling out TERFs when they say TERF-y garbage, shutting that kind of rhetoric down."

Farabaugh also notes that it's important for this support to come from within the LGBTQ community itself. "One of the things that I often find is that support should ripple from the source. It just needs to start with the whole queer community feeling empowered around gender justice," he explains. Better allyship also involves cis people finding opportunities to do some of the advocacy "rather than putting that work on trans and nonbinary people to shoulder exclusively."

Ashes at Fiddlesticks also touched on the importance of cultivating intentional and explicit safe spaces for trans folx. "I'm very much a believer in being the change that you want to see in your community. If you want there to be more queer spaces, you have to create them," Turner says. "Unflinchingly tell people that this is how it is, and that these are real people that you're scaring with your politics.... So I think if this city's not going to do anything, and the cops aren't going to do anything, then it's the responsibility of the businesses and the community to celebrate and make these spaces explicitly queer." ■



CHADS DESIGN BUILD

Transform Your Home Your Way with Unique Renewable Energy Ideas

Award-winning Projects

- Additions
- Bathrooms
- Kitchens
- Screen Porches
- Whole Home Remodels

Call Today!
608-221-1799

Building a Better World One Remodeled Home at a Time

Innovative Sustainable Solutions • ChadsDesignBuild.com



HAPPY HOMEOWNERS

"The design you came up with is a wonderful marriage of beauty and function." **CHAD & DALE**

Looks like it's...

TIME 2 REMODEL

time2remodel.com

do you dream of a

but you only have

FORWARD FERTILITY

Christie Olsen, MSN, NP

forwardfertility.com • christie@forwardfertility.com
608-217-7511 • Madison, Wis.

EGG DONATION AND SURROGACY
PROVEN RESULTS IN THIRD-PARTY FERTILITY



Madison Mayor Satya Rhodes-Conway along with common council members and Friends of Madison Arts Commission at the ribbon cutting for Madison's first rainbow crosswalk.

VISIBILITY ADVOCACY PUBLIC ART

Public Art & Advocacy

After a community-led effort, Madison installs its first **rainbow crosswalk** at the head of State Street and the Capitol Square.

WHEN KIA KARLAN and her family were vacationing in Jasper, Canada a few years ago, they noticed a rainbow crosswalk in town, and her nephew commented about how cool it was that they had a Pride crosswalk so visible. Other crosswalks were popping up in other cities, too, like Austin, Texas.

Back in 2019, Patrick Heck, an alder for District 2 in Madison, started talking with community members about the Pride symbols they'd seen in their travels, and decided to try to bring that back to Madison. In early 2020, Karin Wolf, the head of the Madison Arts Commission, along with then alderperson Lindsey Lemmer, started reaching out to people like Rebecca Kanner, a planner for the city, and others about how to actually make it happen.

After passing an initial resolution to start fundraising and putting the project together in spring of 2020, the rainbow crosswalk project all but died with the COVID shutdown and the protest action surrounding George Floyd's death. No one wanted to steer money away from more pressing projects and community needs. When the "Black Lives Matter" sign was painted on the road outside of the jail, however, the impact that a large, visual sign made on all who saw it motivated those involved with the rainbow project to get back to it as soon as they were able. That time came this past summer.

The State Street location was picked based on both the fact that it had the least amount of vehicular traffic of any intersection downtown, and its visibility to locals, visitors, and legislators.

The 2020 resolution stipulated that none of the original price tag of \$40,000 to \$50,000 to put two crosswalks up, one on the top of State Street, and one along the bike path at Monona Terrace, would come from city money. This year, the project was pared down to just the State Street crosswalk, to focus the money and energy of the project to one place. The State Street location was picked based on both the fact that it had the least amount of vehicular

traffic of any intersection downtown, and its visibility to locals, visitors, and legislators. Lindsey Lemmer, who was an alderperson when the 2020 resolution passed, and who did a lot of the planning and fundraising for the project, said that she wanted to put it there to "make sure that struggling LGBTQ+ youth are celebrated here." She continued, "We want legislators to look at it every day and remember that they represent everybody." But there was still the question of how to pay for it.

The Madison Arts Commission, according to Kia Karlen, handles annual grants, calls for city art, and allocates city money for these projects. "There are always things the city won't pay for, though," she said. This is where Friends of the Madison Arts comes in. They are a small board of volunteers who solicit donations from



- OPEN 24 HOURS
- Locally owned since 1983
- Shop Online 24/7
- Free delivery available!

PROUD TO SUPPORT VIVENT HEALTH COMMUNITY SHARES

111 N. BROOM ST. • CAPCENTREMARKET.COM • 608-255-2616

Chiropractic Care for our LGBTQ+ Community



Fix the CAUSE of your symptoms!!



Specializing in:
Chiropractic
Physical Rehabilitation
Sports Injuries
Extremity Adjusting
Nutrition & Supplementation

608-273-2222
newhealthmadison.com
2690 Research Park Dr., Ste A
Fitchburg, WI 53711

"I love working at Ulla because I get to be part of an amazing team that is passionate about what they do. I have so much fun meeting members of our community and styling them with unique eyewear."

Alia Younes
Optician



ULLA
EYEWEAR

HILLDALE SHOPPING CENTER
562 N Midvale Blvd
MON-SAT 10a-7p : SUN 11a-5p
www.ullaeyewear.com



corporate and private donors to fund projects and line items that the city won't. To date, the rainbow crosswalk, with a \$27,000 price tag, is the largest project they've raised money for, and they did so in a variety of ways. They put on The Silver Lining Awards, a fundraising awards show to also "honor what happened in the community during COVID, beside just arts," according to Kia. She also described raising money through a Facebook page, netting about \$4,000 there.

When asked about the individuals who donated to this project, Lindsey Lemmer described them as "Good Madisonians, good progressives, some activists, and many members of the LGBTQ community." Many of them are horrified by the anti-trans bills, and they wanted to contribute to "a symbol and reminder of who we want to be," Lemmer continued. Local and national corporations pitched in a great deal of the money needed as well. Financials provided by Kia Karlen outlined the funds donated through corporate gifts and additional funding. American Family Insurance provided \$5,000, MG&E \$2,500, UW Health \$1,000, and CBRE donated \$250—all as gifts. Additional funds came from the aforementioned Silver Lining Awards (\$2,600), the Facebook campaign (\$4,000), and Wisconsin NOW—National Organization for Women (\$1,000).

While there has been some pushback from some who don't want to put LGBTQ Pride on display, there's also been some from within the community that this money could be better spent directly on aid to trans people, who are disproportionately housing insecure and face discrimination in the workplace and in healthcare settings. They need health care and

NEWS BRIEFS

TRANSGENDER DAY OF REMEMBRANCE IS NOV. 2

A DIVERSE GROUP of affirming religious communities spanning the faith spectrum are joining together again in recognition of the Transgender Day of Remembrance. The planners of this event feel the need to recognize the ongoing harm faced by the transgender community, especially by Black transgender women.

Rabbi Jonathan Biatch of Temple Beth El says, "Our goal is to elevate, to raise up toward the intention and the action of the Creator." He adds, "Acts of memory evoke love, acts of memory evoke action."

Cantor Jacob adds, "It's important to hold

CONNECT → OUR NEWS

OURLIVESWISCONSIN.COM



Lemmer

legal help, and the \$27,000 price tag for this project, a number made higher by the long-lasting materials used in an effort to keep maintenance costs down and make sure the crosswalk is visible for many years, should have gone to those needs.



Heck

While everyone I spoke to about this project agreed that those needs are dire, and Patrick Heck specifically stated he was not interested

in making more of these crosswalks and raising and spending hundreds of thousands of dollars, they all agreed that symbols are needed. Public art is important to visibly show that Madison welcomes all, and kids who visit from smaller towns who might be in the closet or struggling with a community that doesn't support them, might feel some hope seeing this large Pride flag. Lindsey Lemmer wants a balance between symbols and effective legislation. "We need to do both," she said. "Symbols cannot replace transformational legislation, we need to do the right thing, not just showcase that we're doing the right thing. Having the symbol is not enough, but it is important."

There was some disagreement about the future and scope of this project going forward, with some, like Heck, thinking that the State Street crossing was enough. Others wanted to move forward with other crossings, like in front of Monona Terrace on the bike path. Regardless, the message is clear: Madison supports its LGBTQ community, and wants state legislators, and all who visit, to know it. ■

WRITTEN BY VICA STEEL & MELANIE JONES



Biatch

space not only for those who are still with us, but for those whose voices are no longer present, for them to be seen in their fullness."

The event will be held Sunday, November 20 at **Temple Beth El** in Madison and will center transgender people and transgender faith leaders and musicians, as well as allies.

Vica-Etta Steel, vicar at St John's in Madison, says, "I am a queer woman, transgender. I have felt the way words of faith have been twisted into weapons and held at the hearts of we who

are trans, but I also see how so many faiths are doing the work to return to their queer families. In this service, we acknowledge the pain and strive toward healing."

This event is open to the public. We invite you to join us November 20 beginning with fellowship and queer community organizations at 6:00 p.m. with the service starting at 7:00. You can also join via livestream on the Temple Beth El YouTube page.

RICE LAKE SCHOOL BOARD AMENDS PRONOUN POLICY

ON MONDAY, OCTOBER 10, the Rice Lake School Board voted 7-1 to amend a policy that previously had allowed for minors to change their names and pronouns at school without parental consent, now requiring a parent sign off before allowing such a change. "The debate mirrors rhetoric overtaking districts across the state and around the country," according to wpr.org.



Fischer

Many parents have come forward, in this case and in others around the state, to argue that parents have a right to know and that the policy as it stood was a violation of their constitutional and sometimes religious liberty.

WPR continues, "If I have a student coming to school that has issues like this, I would want to know that as a parent," said Kelly Sellers, a community member. "As a parent, I put a lot of time and a lot of money into my kid...and for parents not to have a right to know what's going on with their child is totally wrong."

But not all trans and queer kids have safe and supportive parents, and this policy will potentially out kids who do not want their families to know, putting those kids in danger, both of violence in the home from hateful family members, and also from self harm and suicide.

At a press conference outside the school board meeting, **James Kiffmeyer**, whose son identifies as transgender, stated, "I am a medical professional, and I want to start with a cold, hard, sobering fact. Data indicate that 82% of transgender individuals have considered killing themselves and 40% have attempted suicide, and those risks are at their highest during their school years. That isn't controversial information, it is very real and very deadly facts, which the school board must certainly be aware of. The Rice Lake School Board is wanting to limit the choices of these highly at-risk children." He continued, "On the one hand, the child can choose to go by a gender they don't believe applies to them, and use a name that doesn't align with the gender they align with. And that misalignment can build in their mind, with the very possible result of dangerous outcomes

involving self harm and even suicide."

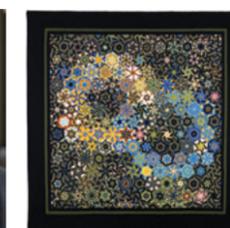
Abbey Fischer, who identifies as a lesbian and was formerly on the Rice Lake School Board, had to step down recently because of the debate around trans issues. According to WPR, she said that the school board used to be more supportive of transgender students, but national policies have "reshaped the board in the past few years...and sentiment over LGBTQ+ policies has changed." She asserted that the debate is much more than just informing parents of name changes, but, after a parent complaint resulted in a principal removing a welcoming sticker from a teacher's door, "We as a district are telling our staff that they can't respect the dignity of the human in front of them." Fischer said, "And that's going to feel awful for our students, it's going to feel awful for our staff, and creates a climate that is unsafe and un-supportive."

MILWAUKEE PRIDE TRANSITIONS TO A PAID STAFF STRUCTURE

MILWAUKEE PRIDE INC., who puts on Milwaukee's PrideFest, made some big changes this year that went into effect on October 1, 2022. The event, the largest LGBTQ+ event in Wisconsin, has been entirely volunteer based, even with attendance of 46,000 over four days in 2019, and 38,731 in 2022, according to the *Milwaukee Business Journal*, a model that



BRUCE SEEDS
QUILTS
BRUCESEEDS.COM



Achieve the dream of home ownership

To find out how you can get into the home of your dreams, call Mike today.

- Buyer's Edge® – first-time homebuyers program
- Fixed- and adjustable-rate mortgages
- New construction loans
- Refinancing
- Providing statewide support to the community



Michael Fumelle
4402 East Towne Blvd.
608-259-4263
Michael.Fumelle@
AssociatedBank.com
NMLS ID: 523546

Associated
Bank

Subject to credit approval. Equal Housing Lender. Associated Bank, N.A. is a Member FDIC and Associated Banc-Corp. (4/12) 1336

f t YouTube AssociatedBank.com



HAPPY HOMEOWNERS



"We loved working with Curt and Janean. The results are enjoyed aesthetically and functionally every day!" PAULA & ANN

Looks like it's...

TIME 2 REMODEL

time2remodel.com

Dutcher

PHOTOGRAPHY

SINCE 2002

robandsamphoto.com



CONNECT → OUR NEWS

OURLIVESWISCONSIN.COM



was not sustainable going forward. The new organization structure will include three new leadership positions, a new pay strategy, and a five-year plan. **Wes Shaver**, who previously held the role of Milwaukee Pride president, becomes the new president and CEO. **Luke Olson** will be vice president of festival productions and **Ryan Manning** will be vice president of operations," Margaret Naczek of the *Milwaukee Business Journal* explained. "Milwaukee Pride will now offer part-time roles to progress its strategic plan and benchmarks. Milwaukee Pride's board of directors also approved a stipend model for festival management, which will include director, manager, and coordinator positions," she continues,



Wes Shaver stated in an interview that "It was evident to me that in order for this event and the team to have any longevity, creating roles and responsibilities that were truly defined with set expectations is crucial to the future sustainability. In order for the event to move on, we need to have succession planning, and we need to start thinking about how this organization looks if any one of us on the team decides to move onto do something different."

Luke Olson said in a press release, "Most people don't understand how many folks it takes to put on this world-class event, and just how much of their personal time they dedicate to presenting Milwaukee with one of its legendary lakefront festivals. Our new stipend model—tied to the annual success of PrideFest—will finally let those folks be recognized and rewarded for their efforts."

Practically speaking, this change means that while in the past, some of Milwaukee Pride's income went back to the community in the form of supporting organizations, the organization will now "dedicate some of its funding to instead go back into reinvestment in Milwaukee Pride, specifically in the form of providing stipends to key roles."

MILWAUKEE COUNTY NAMES ITS FIRST LGBTQ HISTORICAL LANDMARK

WHILE MANY AROUND THE NATION are familiar with the Stonewall Bar and the uprising there that is said to have been the catalyst for LGBTQ rights fight in this county, very few

know about the incident at the Black Nite, a bar in Milwaukee that openly catered to a "queer clientele" according to NBC News. On August 5th, 1961, in what many are now saying is the first LGBTQ resistance event in the country, four naval servicemen, in what is largely believed to have been a bet, tried to enter the Black Nite without paying or signing their log. They didn't make it past the bouncer, who grabbed one of them by the arm, leading to a fight between the four men and the bouncer. "One of the servicemen was injured, so the other three took him to the hospital, according to coverage of the event at the time by the two local newspapers, the *Milwaukee Sentinel* and the *Milwaukee Journal*," NBC continues. "Witnesses later told police that as the servicemen left, one of them said, 'We'll be back. We'll return with some friends and clean up the place.'"

When the servicemen threatened to come back with "some friends and clean up the place," Josie Carter, a trans woman of color who was at the Black Nite that evening and was dating the bouncer, started preparing for a fight and tried galvanizing the rest of the patrons, many of whom, though tired of the harassment, were afraid to fight because they weren't out, some even being in heterosexual-presenting relationships with wives and kids. Nevertheless, Carter "urged patrons to fight



The Black Nite at 400 N. Plankinton Ave, a tavern storefront in a pre-Civil War warehouse.

back and defend the safe space they had created." At the time of this incident, according to NBC News, police had beaten a man to death in a park known to be a meeting place for gay people about a year prior, and there were anti-crossdressing laws, "which meant police would stop trans and gender-nonconforming people to ensure they were wearing three items of clothing that matched their sex assigned at birth."

When the servicemen returned, a large fight broke out, with Carter herself punching a man to the ground who called her a slur. NBC continues: "After the fight, witnesses told police that the group of servicemen piled into two cars and drove off, according to local newspaper coverage. Three people were hospitalized (one serviceman and two bar patrons), and the

next day, police charged three of the servicemen with disorderly conduct and searched for about a dozen others who they said "joined in an invasion" of the bar. The Black Nite's owner, Wallace Whetham, estimated that the incident caused \$2,000 in damages, the *Milwaukee Journal* reported."

Even though the city closed the bar down a year after this incident, and the bar that took its place closed a few years later because of a road expansion, Milwaukee is now set to designate it as a historical landmark, a move that would acknowledge the significance of the event in a state that has been at the forefront of LGBTQ rights until recent attacks have set Wisconsin back.

UW-MADISON HOSTS ANTI-TRANS "THEOCRATIC FASCIST" MATT WALSH, SPARKING LGBTQ PROTEST

ON OCTOBER 24, UW-Madison hosted conservative commentator and self-described theocratic "fascist" **Matt Walsh** on his tour to promote his anti-trans documentary, "What is a Woman." Although I have not watched the "documentary," recent remarks on his Twitter feed indicate exactly what Walsh thinks about gender expression outside of a rigid binary. *Blade*, a Los Angeles-based LGBTQ news organization compiled several quotes from Walsh's feed, including, "I believe that gender ideology is one of the greatest evils in human history. There is nothing they can threaten that would make me back down from this fight. I'd rather be dead than surrender to this madness. It's as simple as that for me," posted on Twitter on October 3, 2022. He continues in another tweet, according to *Blade*, with "The medical establishment, Big Tech, and the federal government conspire to punish those of us who criticize the accepted narrative. This is full-on tyranny, and it will of course be defended by every single leftist who spends every day whining about "fascism."

Blade counters by quoting Alejandra Caraballo, a Clinical Instructor at Harvard Law School's Cyberlaw Clinic, and a former staff attorney at the Transgender Legal Defense and Education Fund, and a Staff Attorney at the LGBTQ Law Project at New York Legal Assistance Group, with "This is a direct threat and incitement of violence against trans people. When he says, "gender ideology," he really means trans people. Matt says he's willing to die to fight it. Some of his followers may take him up on that and engage in real violence." With trans people being at least four times more likely to face real violence because of their identity, this fear expressed by Caraballo is not just theoretical.

Understandably upset that UW-Madison would host such a person, someone, or a group of people, defaced both the Memorial Union,



and Alumni Park with graffiti including "Matt Walsh + Nazi," "Stop letting Nazi transphobes talk," and "Trans POC rights now," according to *The Daily Cardinal*. UW-Madison spokesperson **John Lucas** is quoted as saying that "The university is deeply committed to the right to free speech. However, criminal damage to the university's buildings and spaces—for any reason or purpose—is unacceptable and will not be tolerated."

In addition to the graffiti, about 250 people showed up outside the Memorial Union ahead of the talk by Walsh to protest the event directly. The event, according to *The Daily Cardinal*, was organized by Madison Socialist Alternative and Madison Abortion and Reproductive Rights Coalition for Healthcare (MARRCH). "We think that we need a mass movement, really, it should be a mass movement of millions, of people pushing [fascist transphobes] back into their holes," said **Luke Eckenrod**, Madison Socialist Alternative organizer. "A protest is a good first step to organizing people who do not support transphobia." ■

At Goodman's, *love* is the most important thing!

GOODMAN'S Jewelers

The Diamond Store of Madison Since 1933

ALEXANDER EINSMAN
MS LMFT

Mind + Body Focus

LGBTQ-Affirming

Relationship Therapy

EMDR

Hypnosis

ATLAS COUNSELING

ATLASMADISON.COM
608.535.9285

TOGETHER!

we make a difference

madisonessentials.com | homeelementsandconcepts.com | journeyofaging.com



QTBIPOC EDUCATOR GSAFE LIFE LESSONS

Learning to Speak AND Heal the Younger You

To **Timothy**, from **TJ**, with love.

13-year-old who experienced homelessness in a new state with his family, and the 17- to 31-year-old that allowed the lack of acceptance of self to dictate how he moved in the world; including being told that you did not deserve to exist in certain spaces. While it has taken us some time to get here, the most valuable lesson, I hope you know, is that “Other people’s perceptions of you ain’t none of your business.” (Lisa Nichols)

A MOTHER’S LOVE

Growing up, I know it sounds like you didn’t have much. However, the one thing you did have was the most valuable gift. A gift that I wish we had the opportunity to love in this new phase of acceptance in our life. That was the gift of a loving mother. As you move throughout life, you will have the experience of meeting many people; however, your mother was your first true love. Through it all, she gave you two things that no man or woman can take away from you: love of reading and education. After all, she taught you at a very young age how to use public transit so that you could get to class and always have the best education.

To this day, I question why she pushed us so hard; however, while we never had a conversation about who I was becoming, a mother’s love really doesn’t need words. I recognize now, as a father, that she was preparing me for a world that I didn’t even know existed. She taught us many lessons in life, and even in death, she continues to teach us. The memories she has left have allowed us to learn to forgive always and, most importantly, to learn unconditionally. As an adult, these are lessons I have learned to tap into as I continue to grow, heal, and lead.

SUPERHEROES NEEDED

Growing up as an avid reader, we learned to take on many characteristics of those that we believe were our superheroes. While our superheroes were not the same as some of our friends growing up, we focused more on the lessons we learned from our reading. So growing up at an early age, we learned from a poem that Harriet Tubman didn’t take no stuff (Poem by Eloise Greenfield “Harriet Tubman”) or the lesson we learned from Thurgood Marshall, “A



McCray receiving GSAFE’s 2022 Educator of the Year from Congressman Mark Pocan.

man can make what he wants of himself if he truly believes that he must be ready for hard work and many heartbreaks.”

We need more superheroes. Superheroes are individuals that use their superpowers to serve a greater purpose, and most of them place the well-being of others above themselves. To be a superhero, certain characteristics are needed. However, the one characteristic I wish I had learned earlier is confidence. This life has taught me that “confidence is not arrogance; instead, it is the ability to see yourself as a flawed individual and still hold yourself in high regard.” (Esther Perel)

When I learned this, life opened up for me, and now allows me to live this life as authentically as possible. It has truly made me a better human, a better leader, a stronger father to the most courageous 11-year-old on this earth, a stronger husband, and a better friend.

Growing up, I never thought I would be in this space where I exist. As a young child, I recall saying I would never get married and never have children. I was positioning myself as the next Thurgood Marshall. All the things I said I would never do became my reality.

A GOOD PLACE

Being in Madison over the last five years has brought us much healing. If I am honest, I moved to Madison running from this space in my life where I thought it was my responsibility to be everything to everyone. However, the one person I forgot to show up for the most was myself. I think that is one of the most important lessons that I have learned from living in this space; you actually don’t have to be everything for everyone; instead, you have to be good to everyone, and there is a huge difference.

Madison has allowed me to tap into things about myself that I never knew I could do, such as being outside and enjoying the outdoors—we are learning to love the act of play. I have been fortunate enough to find a community of people that accepts me for who I am, both personally and professionally.

Five years ago, I was able to make this transition from Houston based on my involvement with Teach For America. Teach For America

allowed me to discover just how much I needed to be an educator. As the current Associate Superintendent of Technology for Madison Metropolitan School District, this career opportunity feels different. Honestly, I think it is because I am different. For the first time in my career, I show up as the most authentic person I know how to be, including being a Black, gay man.

In my current role, yes, I strive to ensure that all our students have equitable access to technology and libraries that reflect who they are and allow them to see themselves outside their community. However, it is my personal belief that when I show up, I am an example to a little Black boy struggling as I did with who he is. I am so grateful that I have the opportunity to do that and that I have a superintendent that encourages me to be me.

Life has taught me to dream big, so I continue to do that. I hope that one day, my desire to have a boarding school for African-American and Hispanic males becomes a reality, and maybe just maybe, I will one day become the superintendent of an urban school district and, eventually, the Secretary of Education for the United States. ■

Dr. TJ McCray is the Associate Superintendent of Technology for the Madison Metropolitan School District and GSAFE’s 2022 Educator of the Year.



BRENE BROWN STATES IT BEST, “True belonging does not require you to change who you are; it requires you to be who you are.” I wish you, Timothy, my younger self, would have known this. While it took having a son, moving 1,137 miles (from Houston to Madison), finding love in a new city, and learning to live my most authentic life, we have arrived at true belonging.

True belonging must come from healing. We must be willing to do the work as we move through life. So now, at the age of 44, I am glad that I have been able to heal the seven-year-old who overcame sexual abuse, the

In This House...
ALL STILL MEANS ALL
First United Methodist Church
Worship 9:30
Fellowship 10:30
Education:
Youth 9:30 Children 9:45
Adult 11:00
fumc.org

DELTA BEER LAB

BLACK LIVES MATTER



Rabbi Bonnie Margulis



Alexander Lemkin



Jacob Niemi

FAITH JUDAISM RELIGION

Queerly Called to Justice

Vica-Etta Steel spoke to three people from Temple Beth El about working toward radical justice.

WHEN YOU THINK OF PLACES OF FAITH, do you also think of work toward justice, toward uplifting and advocating the oppressed? In my interviews this month, I heard that radical justice is at the heart of the faith of Cantor Jacob Niemi (he/him), congregant Alexander Lemkin (he/she/they), and Rabbi Bonnie Margulis (she/her), as well as entire movements of Jewish faith. I hear of a faith that speaks to mystical understandings and also brings forward faith in action across all the racial identities of Judaism, and all the genders, in all their struggles, their enslavements—and in spite of the continuing reality of virulent, violent, anti-semitism.

QUEERLY BEGINNING

Jacob Niemi, Cantor at Temple Beth El, had a difficult time understanding himself to be gay. Queerly, it wasn't overt homophobia that kept him closeted. Cantor Jacob is a 90s kid. He describes himself as "very painfully shy, like really, very socially awkward," but states that he grew up in a time of the flamboyantly gay archetype. Cantor Jacob says, "Think about what kind of gay person they would even show

in media at that time," adding that it "was going to be very much a flamboyant caricature in any kind of media whether it was a TV show, a movie, a commercial, a book, or whatever." But for Cantor Jacob, "It just was so not how I saw myself." Besides his social discomforts, the idea of being "a big presence, whatever that meant, was just not something that I felt comfortable with."

Alexander Lemkin also found no space for who they were growing up. And even today, her particular gender-fluidity is hard for people to understand. I confess I am guilty of needing to take time to reset my own understanding of him and others who flow across the sliding metrics of identity, as Alexander terms their truth. I will pause here to ask: Were you confused by my mixed use of pronouns here? In our conversation, I began to learn of a delightfully gender-full identity from Alexander that includes all possible genders.

As Alexander grew up in Miami in the 90s and 00s, they felt the oppressions of overt homophobia. She is joyful that there are so many places today both in "TV and just a general youth [culture], where everybody is pretty open." But he adds, that as he grew up, "It was a pretty closed society and still very taboo." That taboo, that closing of possibilities, kept them quiet even with a loving mom. "I have distinct memories of her sitting me down several times, maybe just because of things that she saw or noticed and say, 'Alexander it's okay if you're gay. I love you.'" Alexander would "always assure her, 'Yeah, no mom. Not gay.'"

It didn't help that Alexander's particular queerness was one that wasn't much spoken of when she grew up, if at all. It wasn't until Jonathan Van Ness came out as non-binary and expressed himself in a lovely mix along the spectrum of feminine to masculine that Alexander began to see themselves represented and caught a hint of who he saw himself as.

For both Cantor Jacob and Alexander, it took time, and college, for them to more fully find themselves. Cantor Jacob laughs that when he finally did come out, he "had friends that outright told me that they were not surprised which was both nice and also—I wish that they could have helped me figure it out sooner!"

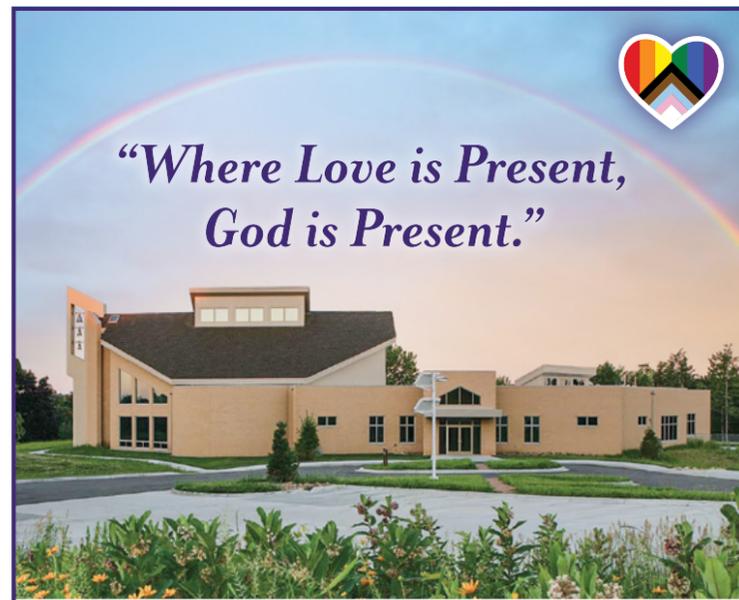
For Alexander, in college, the greater "access to opportunities, experience, and people" gave them the freedom that meant coming out was more of a natural flow with "no real need to tell anybody. I just kind of expressed myself." He further adds learning from the Talmud,

"and remember there were seven or eight [genders] that were recognized thousands of years ago."

Rabbi Bonnie tells of her own growth as a self-described "big-mouthed" ally. Rabbi Bonnie, who is cis/het, cannot name a particular moment when she became affirming, "because, I hope I always was," but she recalls moments when her awareness expanded.

In the 80s, when Reform Judaism had already made moves toward affirming queer people, but had not yet resolved to accept openly Gay, Lesbian and Bisexual people as rabbis or cantors (that moment would come in 1990 for LGB, and a bit later for Trans), there were already three specifically "gay" synagogues. Rabbi Bonnie recalls asking a gay friend, "Isn't it better to be part of the mainstream Jewish community and not to segregate yourselves?" She added that she feels the same way about women's seders. "If you want to raise up women's voices, women's stories, and women's issues, then don't segregate yourself." But her friend said, "Yes, in an ideal world. But if we want to be someplace where we're comfortable, and we don't feel like we're being gawked at or being ostracized or just having to answer stupid questions... We'd like to have a place where we can worship and not be on display."

Even as the movement toward full queer inclusion progressed, there was still resistance and hesitations, as will be true of any institution. Rabbi Bonnie notes a renowned professor who came into class one day declaring that he would "never sign a gay student's ordination certificate" among other moments of resistance to change. But ultimately, through the struggles and setbacks and turmoils, the process of welcoming inclusion worked so well that for Cantor Jacob, he said, "I think I'm the beneficiary of the reform movement of Judaism making huge steps over the last few decades in becoming very affirming," adding that for him, "the worst that happened at any job was the typical kind of Jewish parents asking 'so are you seeing anyone?' conversations that are a little bit awkward but well-intentioned."



"Where Love is Present, God is Present."



Holy Wisdom Monastery



Find us on Social Media

Middleton, WI

All are welcome...

- Walk 4 miles of trails
- Weddings
- Baptisms
- Prayer & worship
- Retreats
- Meetings & events

HolyWisdomMonastery.org

VIVIENNE ANDERSEN
REALTOR®

V@VIVIENNEANDERSEN.COM
608 425 0929



We wanted to do something new.

We wanted an energy-efficient carbon-neutral structure that would last a century, with active and passive solar power, and a water oxygenation system for our pond.

So we did.



Opening 12/3 at 2620 Rimrock Road

BETHKE

HEATING & AIR CONDITIONING, INC

Furnaces • Boilers • Air Conditioners
Humidifiers • Duct Cleaning
Preventative Maintenance Plans

Emergency Service 24/7 **251-2222**

Locally Owned.
Locally Operated.



FINANCING AVAILABLE

BethkeHeating.com



CONNECT → OUR FAITH



BRINGING GIFTS, QUEERLY

All agree that actively affirming spaces are so much more than just good or nice to have, that in fact by welcoming queer people, the faith spaces gain the gifts of new insights. Alexander can now bring his “full identity” to faith and just give “people more comfort just by being present visibly and obviously.” Alexander feels she is in a place to “have a big impact” and can give “ideas and contribute and be a part of these things that do impact pretty much everybody at the temple which has that kind of open ripple effect.”

Cantor Jacob says, “When we share our learning with each other, when we study text with one another, when we interpret, when we debate, when we discuss, then we’re all contributing to the ongoing process of revelation that began at Mt. Sinai.” To expand on this, he tells of when the Torah was handed to the Jewish people at the foot of Mt Sinai, there is a teaching “that everybody heard revelation according to their own strengths.” This, combined with a passage from Deuteronomy, “All who are standing here this day, but not only you but also even you who are not here this day,” provides a door into “a beautiful teaching that refers to us, to the later generations, to people who came thereafter and so there’s this idea that all of us, the whole people of Israel, we’re all standing throughout all space and time at the foot of Mount Sinai to receive revelation and that each hears that revelation ‘according to their own strength.’ What that means is that everybody has to contribute through their whole life to the ongoing process of revelation.” And with that understanding, first developed by the Jewish Feminist theologian Judith Plaskow, Cantor Jacob adds, “if you have voices not part of that conversation for whatever reason, or erased, or marginalized, or just left

out or even persecuted or even made into caricatures or whatever,” then “any queer Jew, is reading those voices back into the conversation and back into the process of revelation.”

QUEERLY CALLED TO JUSTICE

The call to justice is at the heart of faith. Rabbi Bonnie says, “And that justice is bolstered when the gifts of all people are brought to the table,” adding, “it is just baked into our DNA. This is what Jews are supposed to do. We are partners with God in the ongoing work of creation.”

Rabbi Bonnie heard the call to justice passed to her from her mother reading stories of justice at her bedside as she grew up and vitalized while in the first year of rabbinic school in Jerusalem. There, she heard a talk by visiting rabbi David Saperstein, then the Director of the Religious Action Center of Reform Judaism in Washington, DC, the advocacy arm of the Reform Movement. As she heard Rabbi Saperstein talk about his work, she was “just thunderstruck. I thought, ‘they pay you to do this! I didn’t know that was a thing! That’s what I wanna do!’” And she has. Her work with Wisconsin Faith Voices for Justice continues to uplift the voices and needs of the most marginalized, including but not limited to the energy and guidance she has given the development of the Interfaith Service for the Transgender Day of Remembrance (November 20) and the renewal of the Interfaith Service for Pride held in August.

She adds, in words that resonated through the stories shared by both Alexander and Cantor Jacob, that “it is our responsibility to engage in acts of tikkun olam, the repair of the world, or what we call today social justice.” She gives the example that, “every year on Yom Kippur when we’re all spending the entire day in synagogue fasting and praying, one of the readings is Isaiah 58, where Isaiah says God doesn’t want you to spend all day fasting and praying unless you’re also doing acts of social justice,” with an eye toward the “widow, the orphan, the hungry, the homeless, and the stranger in our midst.”

All three spoke to the fact of the Jewish people being the “stranger” in so many countries through so much of history as a key to why they must speak with, for, and to other oppressed communities. Alexander speaks of their own call to social justice from the generational trauma endured by his families, from the Black Jamaican roots “on my father’s side, we were slaves” and from the Jewish roots “on my mother’s side, we were slaves and persecuted all the way back and through the Israelites crossing the desert for 40 years,” not to mention millenia of oppression and anti-semitism, but Alexander names a generational defiance rooted in justice and in community. She shared a phrase, “mir veln zey iberlebn” (Yet we will outlive them) that comes from a “small dancing town that Cantor Niemi introduced me to. In this small town during World War Two, essentially the German soldiers were trying to force them to sing and dance because they were famous for singing and dancing, but none of them would until one person said that phrase, mir veln zey iberlebn, and they all sang it together before they were shot and killed.” And honestly, that might feel like a difficult way to end the story, but for the Jewish people, persecution is a long story and the point, as I understand it, is not the loss or the death, but the life, the continued life, the defiant life and the queerly persistent work toward outreach, toward justice, and toward hope. Perhaps all of the people are, in fact, standing at the foot of Mt. Sinai as Cantor Jacob shared, receiving the Torah, speaking to justice for the world, and singing together across time and space, “Yet we will outlive them.” ■



VICA-ETTA STEEL is a Vicar at St. John’s Lutheran where she preaches and does outreach. She also serves as a public chaplain at the Madison Farmers’ Market, at coffee shops, and on Tik-Tok. It is her joy to work with people across the spiritual spectrum who have returned to their queer family, Jewish, Pagan, Christian, to name a few, and the many atheist and agnostic people who taught her how to believe deeply in love, in community.

2016 National & Regional award winner NARI basement under 30k
2017 Regional award winner NARI kitchen under 50k
2016 Angie’s List Super service award



HAPPY HOMEOWNERS

“It has been great to know that I could refer to my husband without fearing that weird look people get on their faces when they aren’t expecting that.” **CHAD & DALE**

Looks like it’s...

TIME 2 REMODEL

time2remodel.com



purrrrrrsonal matchmaking for every family!



Angel's Wish

WWW.ANGELSWISH.ORG

Pet Adoption • Microchipping • Retail Store
Educational Resources • Volunteer Opportunities



willy street co-op



willy street co-op



Find local, fair trade, or natural
Nifty Gifties
at any of our three locations!

- 1 WILLY EAST:**
1221 Williamson St.
- 2 WILLY WEST:**
6825 University Ave.
- 3 WILLY NORTH:**
2817 N Sherman Ave.



www.willystreet.coop



Andes Gifts Fair Trade hand-knit, alpaca fiber winterwear.



willy street co-op



willy street co-op





HEALTH & WELLNESS MENTAL HEALTH YOUTH

Something to Lean On

Emily McCluhan talks to Dr. Kate Schmitt, Medical Director for Meriter's Child & Adolescent Psychiatry care center, talk about one of the center's patients, and about the intersection of LGBTQ+ identities with mental health care needs.

DAMIAN BOCK shoulders in next to his dad, Kurtis, to squeeze into the virtual meeting screen. His hands are constantly touching his thick, nearly shoulder-length blonde hair with a shock of black underneath, tucking it behind his ear and teasing it up along the part. He settles in to tell the story of his transition as a transgender male, and how Child & Adolescent Psychiatry (CAP) at UnityPoint Health—Meriter saved his life.

EVERYTHING PILES TOGETHER

As a 15-year-old living through the isolation of the pandemic in 2020, Damian said it was both scary and cool because it gave him a chance to put words to his feelings, choices, and identity. But the anxiety he dealt with his whole life crescendoed as he went through puberty, and he had to begin facing some of these changes. “We’ve always been supportive of the choices Damian makes and how he perceives himself,” Kurtis said. “But he always held feelings in, to where it would boil over.”

Damian describes it as layers that began to pile on top of each other. His anxiety over his gender dysphoria and normal high school stressors led to an eating disorder, and later to self-harm. By the spring of 2021, Damian had suicidal ideations and feelings, and the family made multiple trips to the Meriter ER for intervention.

He felt buried and hopeless.

ACCEPTANCE AND INCLUSIVITY FOSTER COMMUNICATION

Dr. Katie Schmitt, Medical Director for CAP at Meriter, a care center that offers inpatient hospitalization and intensive outpatient mental health services for ages 6–18, said Damian’s experience is normal. The 2021 Trevor Project National Survey on LGBTQ+ youth mental health showed that 42% of LGBTQ+ youth seriously considered attempting suicide in the past year, including more than half of transgender and non-binary youth. She adds that when she first started at CAP 12 years ago, it was not common to take care of kids who struggled with gender identity issues or gender dysphoria.

“It is much more common now. There are times in our unit where over 50% of the patients that we have here identify as a different gender or prefer different pronouns or are exploring their sexual preferences,” she said.

Schmitt points out that while there are many kids who identify as part of the LGBTQ+ community at CAP, they are not always there because of gender or sexuality issues. Many of them are comfortable with their gender and feel supported in their communities and by their families,



Dr. Kate Schmitt

and they are at CAP because they are teenagers with depression.

“That is the reason we treat all patients the same, by always asking about pronouns, and when talking about dating and relationships, always asking sexual preference,” said Schmitt. “We try to create a safe and inclusive environment so that kids feel comfortable expressing themselves, even if their family is not aware. It gives us the opportunity to open up lines of communication or offer education if the kiddo is ready for that.”

Damian feels grateful that his family is supportive of his choices and they were able to work together for him to start testosterone therapy in August of 2021. His mom, Jennifer, says that this helped relieve some of Damian’s

anxiety as he felt he was moving forward on his trans journey. At the time, his depression and anxiety were too much to overcome though, and Damian’s physicians recommended Intensive Outpatient Services at CAP (specialized treatment for adolescents who are struggling with a primary mental health diagnosis but do not require an inpatient hospitalization).

SUPPORT HELPS YOU DO THE SELF WORK

“I did not want to go. At all,” said Damian with a sideways glance at his dad. “Especially since I started the program on my 16th birthday.” But he says the dialectical behavior therapy (DBT) and coping skills were easy to understand, and he quickly realized this “work” wasn’t being forced on him to complete for a grade, like at school. He acknowledged that it was on him to use those skills to get better. Only he could do that work. “I also liked that we were able to talk about our feelings and stuff without feeling judged, rather than just talking to, sorry, but old people who wouldn’t understand,” he says as Kurtis chuckles. “And there were other queer youth there which made it nice to connect to people who could understand my situation.”

Schmitt agrees it is critical for programs like CAP to have staff and programming that help kids to feel accepted and supported. She cites the Trevor Project National Survey again, which found that 70% of LGBTQ+ youth stated their mental health was “poor” most of the time or always during COVID-19 and 48% of the youth reported they wanted counseling from a mental health professional but were unable to receive it in the past year. “I think this highlights not only poor access, but also

that these kids just want somebody who gets it, and until we have staff who are part of the LGBTQ+ community or are specially trained to support this community, we’re always going to be behind in serving these kids in a way they deserve to be served,” said Schmitt.

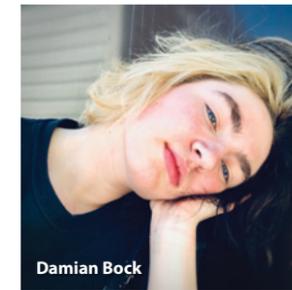
She also notes they are seeing an increase in family support for kids dealing with gender identity and sexuality questions. For parents like the Bocks who helped Damian find support groups like Briarpatch’s Teens Like Us and groups at his school, the CAP Intensive Outpatient program was more about understanding how to support Damian through his journey. “It’s impossible for us as parents to understand everything he’s going through because everyone’s journey is experienced through their own prism,” Kurtis said. “But the program really helped me understand the kind of support he needs. Not just meeting his basic needs, but truly understanding what he needs to hear when he’s in his darkest moments. We discovered that sometimes that is just saying that it’s going to be okay.”

A COMMUNITY IS BETTER

Schmitt said, “When this kind of support is not there, kids may feel isolated. It is so much better for kids to have access to medical or mental health professionals, support, and guidance while exploring relationships or beginning this journey. Without this support, kids may struggle more with mental illness, consider self-harm or even suicide.”

To continue addressing this gap, UnityPoint Health—Meriter Foundation and UW Health are hosting **Love is Love** on **February 3, 2023**. The vibrant event will be a celebration of self-expression, hope, and love—all with the purpose of raising funds to support mental wellness and healing for our community’s LGBTQ+ youth. Tickets start at \$100 with all proceeds benefiting CAP.

“It’s going to be another fun event! The first Love is Love in 2019 was incredible. Not only is it about raising awareness for LGBTQ+



Damian Bock

youth mental health, but also about raising funds to support programming that helps LGBTQ+ youth thrive,” said Schmitt.

Part of the funding will go toward training CAP staff about optimal ways to engage with and care for LGBTQ+ kids, as well as creating youth and family support groups. There are also plans to assist families with immediate emergency resources and scholarships for therapies proven to help young people heal, like art, music, or animal-assisted therapies.

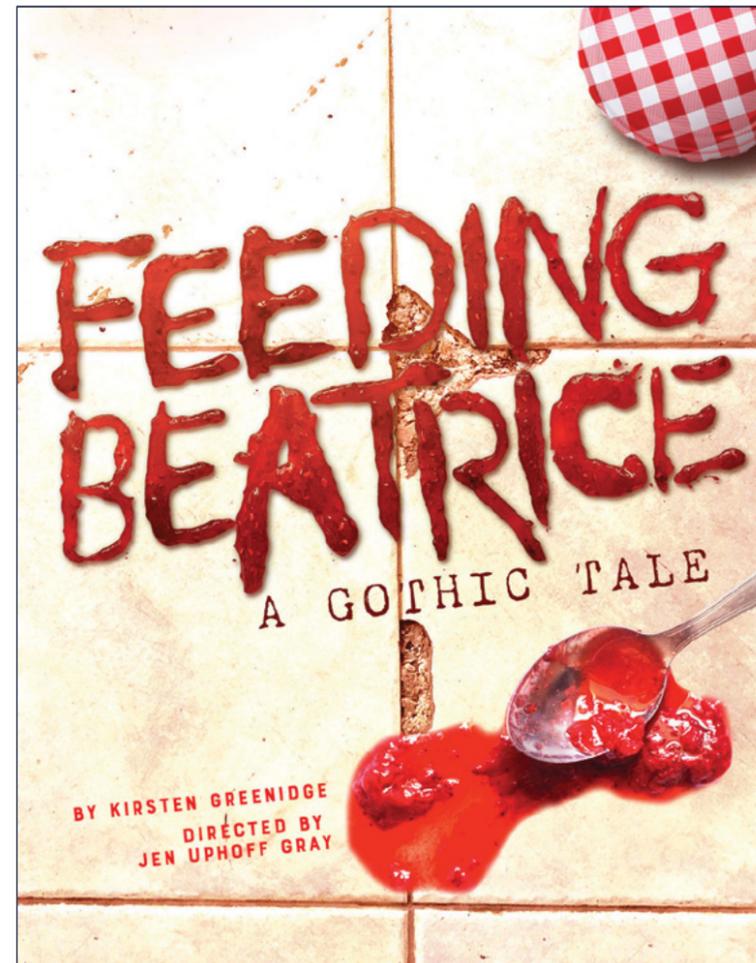
Almost a year since Damian finished the outpatient program at CAP, he is able to reflect on everything he learned and says that more teens should have regular access to this type of support.

“It made me realize that a community is better than just one person. When you’re dealing with queer issues or mental health issues, it can feel very self-centered,” he says. “It’s about me. These are my issues. No one else will understand. But when you hear others talking about the same problems, it gives you something to lean on, and you feel less isolated.”

Schmitt and the staff at Child & Adolescent Psychiatry at UnityPoint Health—Meriter are hoping they can continue to expand their programs to create the community that teens like Damian need: one that helps queer teens feel supported and hopeful about their place in the world. ■



EMILY MCCLUHAN is a Madison-based writer, runner, volunteer, and dog-mom. Her contributions to regional publications in Michigan, Montana, and Wisconsin over the last 20 years provide an outlet for her insatiable curiosity and passion for telling the stories that open our eyes and connect to our everyday lives.



OVERTURE CENTER

NOVEMBER 3–20, 2022

June and Lurie are the proud new owners of an old gothic home that takes “fixer-upper” to a whole new level. For starters, they have a haunting new houseguest—and she’s ravenously hungry. A creepy, dark comedy that evokes the terror of *Get Out* and the suspense of Hitchcock’s *Psycho*, while deftly exploring questions of race, class, and the American Dream.



FEATURING: Jamal James, Sherrick Robinson, Alexandra Salter, and Candace Thomas

“This play is a thought-provoking, sobering, but often times laugh-out-loud gothic tale, smartly crafted to work on many complex intellectual levels.”

—BROADWAY WORLD ST. LOUIS

PURCHASE TICKETS
FORWARDTHEATER.COM
or call 608.258.4141
FORWARD THEATER CO.



The Professional is Personal

New **Vivent Health** executive vice president and chief operating officer **Brandon Hill** shares his vision for HIV/AIDS care.

HEALTH & WELLNESS | HIV/AIDS | QTBIPOC

THERE'S A NEW LEADER IN TOWN. On July 18, 2022, Brandon Hill, PhD, began his position as executive vice president and chief operating officer at Vivent Health. Mike Gifford, former CEO, exited the organization after nearly 30 years of leadership.

These are exciting times at Vivent Health, formerly the AIDS Resource Center of Wisconsin. Under Gifford's leadership, Vivent had grown from a modest local resource to a multi-state operation serving more than 13,000 patients in four states. In July, the organization announced it would relocate from its historic Milwaukee home at 820 N. Plankinton to a new \$9M headquarters and clinic at 1311 N. 6th Street.

We sat down with Brandon for a digital meet and greet—and a Q&A on the future of Vivent Health.

WHAT DO YOU THINK OF MILWAUKEE?

I am from the Midwest and grew up in northwest Indiana. I attended Indiana University before moving to Chicago. I always kept a Chicago base, no matter where I worked, including my house outside Lake Geneva. Now I'm living in the Third Ward, just a quick walk from our office.

Milwaukee has a really vibrant, visible, and active LGBTQ social scene. To me, that's the most striking thing about the community—even coming from Chicago. There are so many LGBTQ-owned establishments here: bars, restaurants, shops, and it's really refreshing to see that. You read articles about half the gay bars going extinct, but in Milwaukee, there are more than I expected. There are so many places claimed as queer spaces. This is comforting to see. I still have to make my way

through all of them. I wasn't able to participate in Summerfest, but I was able to participate in the traffic.

I'm also impressed by the Riverwalk. Chicago is on a riverfront, but it doesn't feel like a river city due to the altitude. Here, the river feels integrated and essential, along with the businesses and activities that happen there.

Compared to Chicago, Milwaukee also feels much more tight-knit. People know me before I know them. Whether it's at a fundraiser, an LGBTQ space, or even on the sidewalk, strangers are always introducing themselves to me and sharing their respect for Vivent Health. Many saw

I am a member of the LGBTQ community. I am also Latino. This work is part of my identity. This work is part of my persona. This is the work I didn't know existed when I was young and queer, but the work I committed myself to doing as an adult.

me first in the *Business Journal* and wanted to welcome me to the city. They're so comfortable breaking the ice. I appreciate this more than they know. When you first move somewhere, you don't know anyone! So it's nice that people freely show hospitality, respect, and gratitude.... It creates a true feeling of togetherness, and in turn, that fosters connections, collaboration, and progress. Chicago is so big, and somewhat disparate, with everyone scattered across the neighborhoods.

WHAT HAVE BEEN YOUR INITIAL IMPRESSIONS OF VIVENT HEALTH?

Over the past three months, I've had a chance to visit our health centers across the Vivent map, inside and outside Wisconsin. The amount of work that our staff and volunteers do at Vivent is amazing. And I've seen our care model in practice: We really think about HIV care in the most holistic fashion you can imagine. We think about food, housing, social determinants of health.... These things become the medicine we use to treat people. I recognize this is the long-standing "secret sauce" that makes Vivent so unique. It's all about treating the individual who has a chronic condition while treating all of the aspects of their life. That's how we get the best health outcomes possible. That's what makes Vivent so unique.

HOW DOES IT FEEL TO BE A NEWCOMER LEADING A LEGACY ORGANIZATION?

Like most AIDS service organizations, Vivent's roots were planted in a moment of crisis. Those crises were not being acknowledged or responded to by local or national governments. The call to action came from within the community. All members of the LGBTQ community were working side-by-side, out of necessity, even though the epidemic was mainly affecting gay and bisexual men. There was no time and no luxury to think about what AIDS care would look like 40 years later.

When you look at the timeline of any AIDS support organization, and especially Vivent, there have been moments that allowed forward thinking and planning. First, coming together and responding to the crisis; second, advancing medicine from these huge, arduous treatment regimens to a single pill/single treatment model. Those advancements allowed us not to just comfort sick, suffering, and dying people, but consider all of the factors they need to manage in conjunction with their chronic condition.

That forced an opportunity for ARCW to think about what long-term looks like. That allowed us to develop the HIV medical home. If someone's going to live for another 40 years, we have to think about dental care, behavioral health, and so much more. One pill a day is just part of a multifaceted life—we really need to look at how those other things

**ALL CAUSES
HAVE ADVOCATES.
BUT IN THE FIGHT
AGAINST HIV
ONLY A CHAMPION
WILL DO.**

Vivent Health is steadfastly dedicated to serving anyone and everyone affected by HIV through our comprehensive prevention, care and treatment programs. **Learn more at ViventHealth.org**



Make Room for Love



Mara Lee Olson
DESIGN STUDIO

maraleeolsondesignstudio.com

intersect with care and treatment. That's what worked great for ARCW and other organizations have noticed. They didn't necessarily want to replicate, but they wanted to be part of this, and extend this. The biggest benefit is working in scale: Not being limited to state boundaries.

Most of Vivent's growth has been being invited to merge with other organizations where we have communities of need. There's a reason there's not a Vivent in San Francisco or New York. They have excellent services in place. Other places have extremely limited resources or no resources at all. If we join together, we can create the biggest impact.

HOW HAS THE HIV MEDICAL HOME CONCEPT TRANSFORMED CARE?

Here's the best way I can explain the concept: Think of an ecosystem around an individual living with a chronic condition. First, we provide medicine through care and prescription drugs. We want to provide that in the most inclusive, specialized, and knowledge way possible. Then, we address mental and behavioral health needs, if services are needed. We evaluate access to dental care. There's still a lot of discrimination in that area due to the risk of bleeding. Then, we surround this core set of deliverables with environment and social factors: Food, legal services, housing, employment training, etc.

When all of these factors are managed, the individual can truly thrive. It's not just about living with HIV, it's truly living a healthy, rich, and rewarding life.

Since the pandemic, needs have been evolving: COVID prevention, survivorship, cost of living changes, ongoing inflation.... These are all affecting the need for services, particularly behavioral health services. So our question now is, how do we broaden services that are suddenly in much higher demand?

WHAT OTHER VIVENT PROGRAMS HAVE REALLY IMPRESSED YOU?

Our advocacy programs are really incredible. Our overall mission is to help contribute to the end of AIDS. So, we lobby for legislation at both the state and national level, wherever we're doing business, to achieve that mission. But it's also at the street level. We have a very, very solid outreach and prevention team. We distributed over 400,000 condoms last year. We have a long-standing needle exchange program. We have an online store offering safer sex products and services. Prevention is a definite part of our universe—and we're trying to make it part of everyone's.

HOW DO VIVENT'S PARTNERS FIT INTO YOUR CARE MODEL?

We rely heavily on medical institutions, as they allow us to deliver the highest quality care. Many of our providers also work for local health care systems. If we were free-standing, without those relationships, we simply couldn't provide that level of access. We form these relationships in every city we have a health center. In addition, many of our prevention teams are set up as community partnerships. It is critical that these teams are staffed with people from the communities they serve. This creates authenticity and cultural competency we wouldn't have otherwise. In the end, our relationships with the Ballroom House groups are as important as our partnerships with the Medical College of Wisconsin because that's where we show up. That's where we make a difference.

HOW DOES VIVENT OVERCOME LONG-STANDING STIGMAS THAT CREATE BARRIERS TO HIV PREVENTION, DIAGNOSIS, AND CARE?

We normalize sexual health care. We treat it like any other health

care. That really helps to dilute any stigma people are carrying. That just moves HIV care into regular sexual health care. We believe it should be a priority for people who are engaged in any sexual behavior, regardless of how you manifest that in your identity, to have access to health care. Get tested. Evaluate your risks. Consider your options, including PrEP. Cope with a positive diagnosis—and learn to live with it. These are all part of a supportive, inclusive, holistic conversation with a competent provider. It all starts with access, and many times, people don't even have that.

There are different ways that people interpret, justify, and explain their sexual behavior to others, and to themselves. But, the main thing is, no matter what you're doing—if you're having sex, you should have sexual health care.

Forty years ago, HIV/AIDS was a death sentence. Now, treatment has advanced so far that some people are living with an "undetectable" status. How has undetectability changed the world?

Viral suppression was a long-time goal for Vivent. We know if we can

By the Numbers

Wisconsin Patient Demographics: 2021

- Patients Served: 4,753
 - Black or African American: 40%
 - Hispanic/Latino: 13%
 - Uninsured: 18%
 - Medicaid: 40%
 - Medicare: 18%
 - Live at or below 200% of the Federal Poverty Line: 88%
- Dental Patients: 1,137 of which 267 are new patients
- Behavioral Health Patients: 657, of which 188 are new patients
- Viral Suppression Rate: 95% vs national average of 88% (HRSA)
- Viral Suppression Rate Black Patients: 93% vs. national average of 61% (CDC)
- 1,407 individuals received 10,215 orders of healthy food from the food pantry
- Doses of Naloxone Distributed: 56,232
 - Individuals Trained and Receive Naloxone: 4,412
 - Peer Saves Reported: 1,870
- Housing Assistance Provided: 424 individuals

Agencywide Patient Demographics: 2021

- Patients Served: 13,376
 - Black or African American: 41%
 - Hispanic/Latino: 15%
 - Uninsured: 19%
 - Medicaid: 33%
 - Medicare: 15%
 - Other public 4%
 - Live at or below 200% of the Federal Poverty Line: 85%
- Dental Patients: 2,831 of which 1,475 are new patients
- Behavioral Health Patients: 1,080, of which 481 are new patients
- Viral Suppression Rate: 95% vs national average of 88% (HRSA)
- Viral Suppression Rate Black Patients: 92% vs. national average of 61% (CDC)
- 3,318 individuals received 20,709 orders of healthy food from the food pantry
- Doses of Naloxone Distributed: 60,217
 - Individuals Trained and Receive Naloxone: 5,088
 - Peer Saves Reported: 1,918
- Housing Assistance Provided: 995 individuals
- Condoms Distributed: 861,285.

The Sow's Ear



125 S. Main Street • Verona • knitandsip.com

608-848-2755

CAFE & BAKERY
Fresh, Daily Lunch
Menu Items

ARTISAN COFFEE
From Ancora and
Kickapoo

SMOOTHIES
Fresh Fruit,
Chocolate & Espresso

KNITTING
Yarns, Accessories
& Classes

We use local produce
and cheese

MADISON SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA

JOHN DEMAIN | MUSIC DIRECTOR

22 | 23
SEASON

A Madison Symphony Christmas

DECEMBER

- 2 FRI. 7:30 PM
- 3 SAT. 8:00 PM
- 4 SUN. 2:30 PM

Madison Symphony and Opera favorite, Adriana Zabala, joins UW-Madison Alumnus and Broadway star, Nate Stampley, for this season's Christmas concert. Our traditional partnerships with Madison Youth Choirs, Mt. Zion Gospel Choir and our own Madison Symphony Chorus will continue as we officially kick off the Madison holiday season. — John DeMain

John DeMain, Conducting
Adriana Zabala, Mezzo-soprano
Nathaniel Stampley, Baritone
Madison Symphony Chorus,
Beverly Taylor, *Director*
Madison Youth Choirs,
Michael Ross, *Artistic Director*
Mount Zion Gospel Choir,
Tamera and Leotha Stanley,
Directors

MAJOR SPONSORS
American Printing
BMO Harris Bank
Fiore Companies, Inc.
Richard and Pamela Reese,
*in memory of Maurice
and Arlene Reese*
Judith and Nick Topitzes
An Anonymous Friend

ADDITIONAL SPONSORS
Hlad Architects
Hooper Foundation
Reinhart, Boerner, van Deuren, s.c.
Wisconsin Arts Board

madisonsymphony.org/christmas

Discover more at madisonsymphony.org.

Buy single tickets (\$20-\$98) at the Overture Center Box Office, by phone (608) 258-4141, or at overture.org.

Programs, dates, and artists subject to change.

Photos: (DeMain/orchestra, MS Chorus): Amanda Dill; (Mt. Zion/Youth Choir): Peter Rodgers

Love great music. Find it here.



help patients and clients become virally suppressed, the opportunity for other infections decreases, overall health improves, and the virus is not having an impact on other systems. But we don't put that weight on an individual alone. It's the reason the medical home is created.

Only when your basic needs are met can your health become a higher priority. Viral suppression is not a reachable goal if those other services aren't delivered. Those services are very important in reaching viral suppression. That's why we are giving people more than just a pill. There are many places that just give out pills, but they never reach adherence, and they don't achieve viral suppression.

Undetectability is a new concept for many who lived through the AIDS crisis and still see AIDS as terminal. It's not widely understood. It's an empowerment to individuals with the right support to reach this goal. They regain a sense of control. In my own research, there are people who partner-sort, who may not start a relationship with someone who is HIV-positive. That level of internal community stigma is really unfortunate, unacceptable, and ignorant. It's dismissive of how we have been managing this disease for the past four decades. Today, it's like not starting a relationship with someone who has heart disease, diabetes, or cancer. That's why education and outreach campaigns are so important. People are still so scared, and it's because they just don't understand. They haven't been as close to HIV/AIDS care as we have been, so they just don't know how far we've come.



WHAT'S YOUR FUTURE VISION FOR VIVENT?

We're already at a great advantage point for an organization of our size. But, to be honest, we're still in our adolescence phase. So we have an opportunity now to look inward, and ensure we are providing all of the systems and structures in place, within the organization. We want to support our caretakers, providers, and prevention folks in doing the best work they possibly can. Ultimately, our goal is to give our clients, patients, and staff everything we can, and serve everyone we can.

Health equity is our forever goal. But it's more than just "health" as most people think of health. We know HIV and AIDS are impacting communities differently, with communities of color more impacted than ever. Addressing racial and ethnic disparities in all avenues of life—food security, housing, jobs, economics—is also an overarching goal.

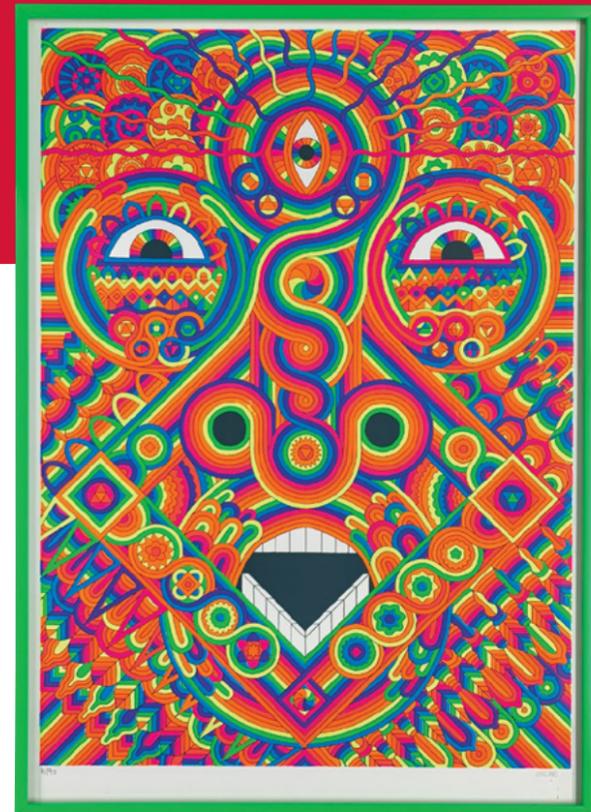
ANYTHING YOU'D LIKE TO ADD?

I am a member of the LGBTQ community. I am also Latino. This work is part of my identity. This work is part of my persona. This is the work I didn't know existed when I was young and queer, but the work I committed myself to doing as an adult. I've been involved in HIV care research and delivery since I went to college. I operate with a different lens than most, and that's how I'll be creating and leading my vision for Vivent: Through a personalized lens. This isn't just a job. This is personal. ■

TAKE A SMART STEP TO
A HEALTHY SMILE

SMART DENTAL

CALL TODAY (608) 241-8782

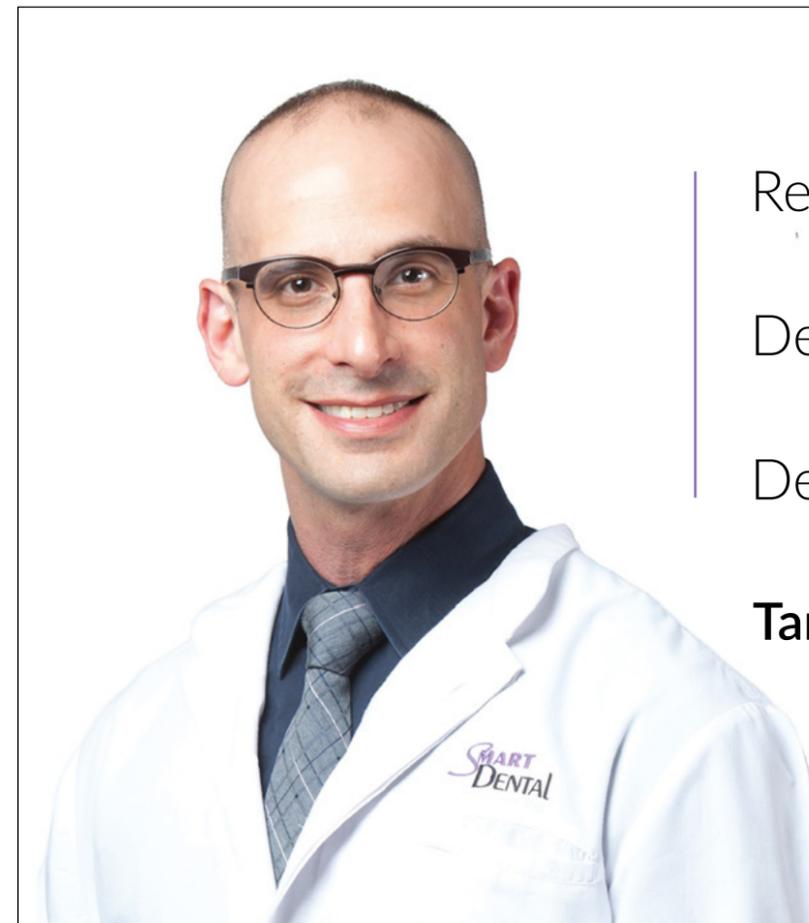


YOU MAKE THE MEMORIES.
WE'LL MAKE THEM LAST.

Whether it's a beloved print or family heirloom, give your piece an artful presentation that will stand the test of time.

OPEN
Tues – Sat, 10am – 5pm
Schedule an appointment or drop by

MONROE STREET
FRAMING



Recruiting Top Talent!

Dental Hygienist

Dental Assistant

Tamim Sifri, DDS

Learn more at
smartdentalmadison.com



Photographed by Max Wendt for Our Lives magazine.

Most Likely to Succeed

Frederick Harris, MA, MA, LPC, SAC, CCTP, discusses the exhausting reality experienced by those who are the first to enter spaces that are not prepared to receive them and how that brought him to create a space for healing.

HEALTH & WELLNESS | MENTAL HEALTH | QTBIPOC

GROWING UP IN NORTH PHILADELPHIA I was never the one who was invited to social events, who wore the newest Jordans or updated fashions or was invited to cut classes to hang out at the Gallery Mall with friends. Though I was not seen by my peers in the way I dreamed to be, I was named “Most Likely to Succeed,” “Teacher’s Pet,” and class Valedictorian of my senior class. To the core, I am still that overachieving, insecure smart kid with big glasses who wanted to be noticed by his peers.

A DIAMOND IN THE ROUGH

I rarely discuss my childhood and upbringing in Philadelphia. Sometimes it doesn’t even feel real to me as my life now is vastly different from then. I am the eldest of four children; my biological father was absent from my life. We were raised by my mother and stepfather. Back then, North Philadelphia was not the safest place to live. My neighborhood on 28th Street was infested with drugs, gangs, prostitution, and violence. My childhood home was filled with yelling, screaming, crying, drinking, domestic violence, and emotional and physical abuse. My

I am still that overachieving, insecure smart kid with big glasses who wanted to be noticed by his peers, but I have realized my strengths and abilities and have taken my power back.

maternal grandmother’s house was where I found refuge and the most happiness. My grandmother loved me no matter what, and in her eyes, I could do no wrong. She provided and showed me the true meaning of unconditional love through her encouragement of being whomever and whatever I wanted in life.

My imagination was my safe place where I could escape the realities of my life. I would round up my siblings and cousins to force them to play school with me as the teacher. I watched music videos and learned the dance moves of Michael and Janet Jackson; pretending I was on their world tours. Beginning earlier in my life, my family called me “The Professor.” Everyone believed I would be the first in the family to make it out of North Philadelphia and become someone important and make an impact on lives. School, more specifically the classroom, was where I believed I excelled and felt safe. Teachers and other faculty noticed my intelligence and began to invest in my future.

In high school, I was “forced” by my teachers to join as many extra-curricular activities as possible to prepare for college applications. My

D’Vino..



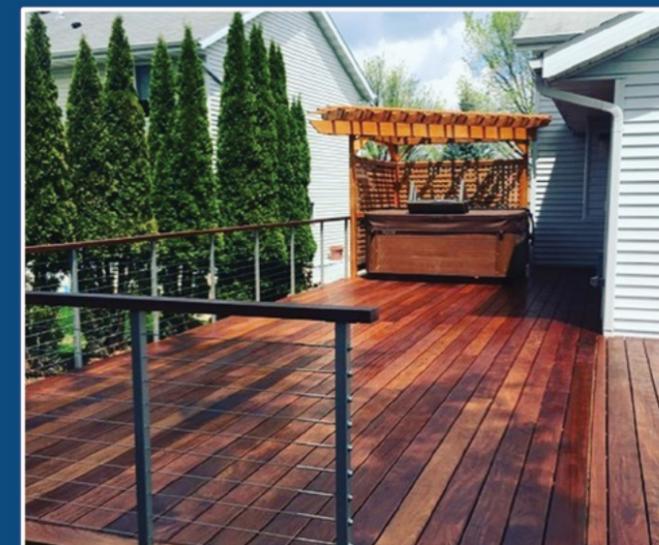
APERTIVO/CICHETTI

BRUNCH/DINNER/LATE NIGHT

Dvinomadison.com

116 KING STREET • RESERVATIONS@OPENTABLE

WHEN CLEANLINESS, POLITENESS AND TRUST MATTER.



QUIGLEY **FREE**
Decks Onsite Consultation to readers of OL Magazine!

All quotes guaranteed in writing, no unwelcome surprises at the end of your project.

QuigleyDecks.com // Tim@QuigleyDecks.com // 608.577.4277



mother rarely had the financial means for me to participate in all these activities; so, the faculty would pay for my attendance and associated fees. Attending college was something I always wanted, but the process was unfamiliar to me and my family. Through the support and guidance of three teachers at Benjamin Franklin High School, I was able to apply and be accepted to most colleges. I was a straight-A student for as long as I could remember, but I was still shocked when I received the news from my principal that I was the Valedictorian of the Graduating Senior class of 2000. I had always wanted to be seen by my peers; now I was selected to provide 200 graduates with a send-off speech. I was placed on a stage at Temple University where I was finally seen and heard by those whom I sought the most validation from.

REALITY BITES

At the age of 17, I attended the Indiana University of Pennsylvania on a full scholarship majoring in Hotel, Restaurants, and Tourism to eventually become a chef. Coming from an urban, lower-income, predominantly black community, Indiana, PA was a culture shock. I had never been in a position where there were so many white people that I was in the minority. Being sheltered from the world as a child made this increasingly difficult for me to adjust. Not only was I in a place where I felt and looked different, but I was also dealing with the internal struggles of my sexuality. My experiences as a student while living in Indiana, PA were things I remember my grandparents explaining to us as children when they lived in the South. I remember being called a “Nigger” for the first time; being called a “porch monkey” and being told I stayed in the tanning bed too long and was overcooked. I eventually graduated with a bachelor’s degree in Criminology. This was also the same year I lost my biggest supporter; my grandmother passed away from lung cancer the night of my last final.

I attended the graduate program at the University of Toledo, majoring in Criminal Justice. I received a Teaching Assistantship, where I had the opportunity to work alongside and be mentored by two of the department’s first black tenured professors: Dr. Jenkins and Dr. Baker. Growing up, I never had positive male role models, so having these two black, accomplished men taking me under their wings was impactful in my life. Though it was graduate school, the racism and prejudice continued, more so with my cohort. As I continued to make achievements in the department, I was met with gossip and rumors targeting my

sexuality and potential as a graduate student. At this time in my life, I had come out as gay, which was met with lots of resistance from family, friends, and colleagues. The most damaging rumor spread by my white colleagues in my cohort was that I was providing sexual favors to my professors and mentors (Dr. Jenkins and Dr. Baker) to receive preferential privileges in teaching certain classes, attending certain academic events, and participating in articles being worked on and published by the two professors.

Mentally exhausted, I became extremely overwhelmed and depressed. On paper, my life was soaring in the right direction, but internally I was struggling with identity, rejection, abandonment, and self-hate. In the African-American community, seeking mental health services was not discussed or accepted, so I buried these dark feelings and continued with the mission. Upon graduating from the University of Toledo, I secured a job at Treatment Alternative Systems (TASC); where I worked within Toledo Correctional Institution. I provided psychoeducation classes to male offenders and created a reintegration program. The reintegration program allowed identified offenders to begin the process of family reunification prior to their release. The program was designed to have the offender’s family (children, partners, etc.) visit the prison once a week for a family dinner and programming and provided outside case management support to the families.

BREAKING BARRIERS

In 2008, I moved to Chicago to attend Argosy University to receive my Masters in Community Counseling. While working at Toledo Correctional Institution, I realized how much mental health affected and played a role in most of the offenders’ incarceration. There were predominantly people of color incarcerated and most of them suffered from a mental health diagnosis and were not receiving the proper treatment from the corrections systems.

As the years passed by; my career continued to flourish. I continued to work in the corrections and court systems as I went through graduate school. My mission at the time was to advocate and provide adequate and fair treatment to marginalized communities in these systems.

During this time, I continued to struggle with my own mental health, and finally decided to seek treatment. With the support and help from my sister, I admitted myself into an inpatient mental health program. Though my focus was to get my mental health stable; I couldn’t help noticing the lack of representation amongst staff at the facility. This made it difficult to trust and open up to the providers without feeling judged and misunderstood. After a few days at the facility, a BIPOC psychiatrist came into my room and spoke to me. I remember feeling heard, validated, and safe in his presence, which in turn allowed me to begin my process of healing.

After graduating and obtaining my license, I was hired as a substance abuse counselor at Lutheran Social Services of Illinois (Kenmore Center); where I also completed my internship as the first male to work in the female halfway house. I had the opportunity to be mentored and supervised by Director Frank Harris, who was another black male role model placed in my life. Throughout my time at Kenmore, I was able to provide treatment services that were reflective of the populations being served in treatment. Many of the clients being served were BIPOC, LGBTQIA, low-income men and women struggling with substance addiction.

Frank Harris had seen something in me and invested whatever resources at his disposal to invest in my professional career. Within the four years at LSSI Kenmore I had been promoted as a Clinical Supervisor, Program Supervisor, and finally Assistant Director. I made the decision to leave LSSI and work for Healthcare Alternative Systems (H.A.S.) as the Program Administrator for the Outpatient Programs. H.A.S. is a predom-

DOES IT ALL?

LIKE A BOSS

APPLY YOUR SELF

Flexible courses and support beyond measure

ChooseMadisonCollege.com

MADISON AREA TECHNICAL COLLEGE

PrEP

PRE-EXPOSURE PROPHYLAXIS

ONE PILL, ONCE A DAY, HELPS PROTECT AGAINST HIV. REDUCE YOUR RISK STARTING TODAY!

viventhealth Learn more at viventhealth.org



ROLL OUT YOUR PERSONAL STYLE.

Whether you choose the iconic MINI Hardtop, the sporty MINI Convertible, the sophisticated MINI Clubman or the adventurous MINI Countryman Sports Activity Vehicle, you’ll discover exhilarating performance, premium features and unique accessories that express your personal style. #MINIPRIDE

MINI of Madison

310 West Beltline Highway Madison, WI 53713 608-729-MINI (6464) MINIOFMADISON.COM



Karl Barton
Mini Motoring
Advisor
608-729-6444

inantly Hispanic organization providing services for the Hispanic/Latinx communities. Being hired at H.A.S. was a first for the organization as I was the first black, openly gay male in administration.

THE LIBERAL FAÇADE

In 2016, my husband and I moved to Madison. Initially, I was concerned about moving to a smaller city, but we were often told how liberal and welcoming Madison is to diverse populations. To be completely honest, since moving to Madison, I have experienced the most trauma in my professional career. A combination of systemic/structural racism, institutional racism, and oppression has caused me to experience racial trauma and interpersonal racism.

My professional journey in Madison started at ARC Community Services Outpatient Program. I was hired as the Program Supervisor of the Court Diversion Program. Unknown to me prior to accepting the position, I was the first black, gay male hired in this position. After a few months when my license transferred from Illinois, I accepted a position at Tellurion as the Program Supervisor of ARP (Inpatient Substance Abuse Program). Again, I was the first black, gay male hired in this position as well. For a few months, I was employed at Journey Mental Health as a Clinician, followed by a position at Sacred Hearts as the Clinical Supervisor. At Sacred Hearts, I was also the first black, gay male hired.

My traumatic experiences during my professional career in Madison is what led to my decision to become self-employed. My mental health had become increasingly unmanageable, as I would have panic attacks about attending work every day. I began isolating myself out of fear and distrust that someone would hurt me.

For all my accomplishments and accolades, I was made to feel unworthy, stupid, tokenized, humiliated, and unsafe in predominantly

white spaces. I've been falsely accused and investigated for drug use and intimidation brought on by employees. I've been harassed about my sexuality and race by my subordinates. Once I was told, "I am on colored people time" by a white employee. I've been scrutinized for my attire, stating my clothes are "too tight." I've had my white supervisor's son rub my skin during a meeting amongst all-white staff. Then to be told by my

To be completely honest, since moving to Madison, I have experienced the most trauma in my professional career. A combination of systemic/structural racism, institutional racism, and oppression has caused me to experience racial trauma and interpersonal racism.

supervisor that her son is infatuated with black skin because his nanny was black. I've had a fully grown Rottweiler brought into my office by my white supervisor after submitting my resignation.

RECLAIMING MY POWER

In 2017, I decided to start New Beginnings Counseling Center, LLC. After moving to Madison and working at several agencies as an administrator and therapist, and my own personal experiences as a person represented in marginalized communities, I noticed a lack of diverse providers, which became a barrier to adequate treatment for the individuals within the marginalized communities. Many agencies were ethnocentric in their services to culturally diverse populations, which resulted in treatment approaches that were color-blind.

New Beginnings Counseling Center, LLC addresses the underutili-

zation of mental health services by minorities, which continues to be an ongoing issue in the behavioral health field. In the beginning, I was a single practitioner offering low-cost, self-pay therapeutic services to children, adults, and families of marginalized communities. New Beginnings Counseling Center, LLC empowers patients in a safe and non-criticizing environment and develops skills to promote the healing of the wounds that have become a barrier for them to move forward in their lives. We encourage a transition from "Existing in Life" and to start "Living Life!"

In addressing the barriers associated with mental health and marginalized communities, New Beginnings Counseling Center provides culturally specific services and broaches dimensions of race, ethnicity, gender identity, sexuality, and culture during the counseling process. Also, by giving attention to these identities and the intersectionality of clients, NBCC addresses the barrier to receiving culturally competent care in hopes that the clients feel validated and affirmed.

Since opening, New Beginnings Counseling Center has not only grown into a behavioral health outpatient clinic but has seen a substantial increase in referrals for historically underserved populations. We have obtained several contracts with insurance companies, including Medicaid and Medicare. In 2018 New Beginnings Counseling Center, LLC joined the platform Open Path Psychotherapy Collective, providing affordable, in-office, and online psychotherapy sessions for individuals, couples, and families for between \$30.00 and \$80.00 per session. In 2020, New Beginnings Counseling Center, LLC received a contract with RISE in Dane County. In 2021, New Beginnings Counseling Center, LLC received a contract with the Oregon School District to provide behavioral health services to the students, families, and staff at the elementary, middle, and high schools.

Overall, New Beginnings Counseling Center, LLC practices a person-centered therapy approach that involves treating the person, not the problem. Staff displays unconditional positive regard for clients and utilizes a non-directive and empathic approach, which ultimately empowers clients to achieve their treatment goals.

I believe that one single approach does not work for every individual. Individuals and families representing the marginalized communities we serve at the clinic have experienced transgenerational and intergenerational trauma. The reported trauma experiences correlate to issues such as transracial adoption, racial trauma, and various forms of racism (i.e., systematic/structural, institutional, interpersonal, internalized, reverse, and oppression). They experience overt racism and bigotry far too often, which leads to a mental health burden that is deeper than what others may face. Racism is a mental health issue because racism causes trauma, and trauma directly leads to mental illnesses that need to be taken seriously.

MY NEW BEGINNING

Founding New Beginnings Counseling Center, LLC saved my life and gave me the motivation and resilience to provide a space for others who have been through what I've experienced. I gained renewed confidence and perspective on my purpose in life. It has been a long, hard journey, and at times I thought about giving up. Instead, I made the decision to stop giving my power away to others and allowing them to place their expectations, insecurities, and judgments upon me to keep me from succeeding. Right now, I am still that overachieving, insecure smart kid with big glasses who wanted to be noticed by his peers, but I have realized my strengths and abilities and have taken my power back.

I am grateful for what has transpired in my life. I have unconditional love and support from my sister, my husband, my in-laws, and my closest friends. Through my healing journey, I can sit back and watch others experience something special, and most importantly transition from "Existing in Life" to starting to "Living Life!" ■



madpl.org/pride

Live Well @ Your Library

madpl.org/live-well



SOMEHOW THE MORE YOU TALK ABOUT MONEY, THE LESS YOU END UP WORRYING ABOUT IT



We see it every day. The more women open up about their money, the more confident they become. Because when you stop second guessing and start getting real about your financial goals, the knowledge you earn can really pay off. So, do you want to buy a new home? Make your side hustle full-time? Retire early? Let's talk! Then let's make it happen.

SUMMITCREDITUNION.COM | 800-236-5560 | 608-243-5000



JEWELERS WORKSHOP

CUSTOM DESIGN

YOU DREAM IT WE MAKE IT!

EXPERTS IN CUSTOM DESIGN & REPAIRS

2110 ATWOOD AVE. MADISON, WI 53704 | 608.251.7705 | JEWELERSWORKSHOP.COM



Queering Doula Care

Tori Freund, midwife-in-training **J. Dale Gardner**, and **Lexy Ware** seek to provide inclusive, affirming support and full-spectrum care for people through their pregnancy and birth or abortion experience—and beyond.

HEALTH & WELLNESS DOULAS QTBIPOC ABORTION RIGHTS

THE SPARK TO BECOME A DOULA happened when Tori Freund interviewed a midwife for a Women & Gender Studies paper in college. Even after finishing their paper, Tori kept coming back to the midwife for answers to questions and book recommendations. The midwife became pregnant and invited Tori to witness the homebirth.

“It was incredible,” Tori remembered. “I had never attended a birth before. I had only seen what we all see in Hollywood movies, which is really not accurate. When I walked into the house, I heard her working through her contractions and heard her midwife. I felt like I was where I was supposed to be. I was 110% hooked from the second I left that birth. I got trained as a doula in 2019, opened my practice, and have been attending births ever since.”

As a doula, Freund provides continual emotional, physical, and resource support for people through all of their life’s options, from pregnancy and birth, to adoption, pregnancy loss, abortion, gender-affirming reproductive care, and end-of-life care. They have heard a lot of misconceptions about doulas: that doulas are only for homebirths, that doulas are “hippies,” that doulas aren’t advocates for clients, and that doulas are all cisgender women.

“I think it has to do with the fact that what we do isn’t mainstream,” they said. “We get defensive about our profession because it has value. We want to dispel myths, but we also all do our work differently, and we specialize in different things.”

BREAKING THE CIS-TEM

Freund’s approach to being a doula is as inclusive as possible. They ask about their clients’ pronouns, which they describe as the basement of gender-inclusive services, but they also ask about what has and has not made clients comfortable in medical care. That conversation is important to putting clients in a position to be able to make decisions about their bodies based on what they feel is right. As a survivor of sexual assault, Tori is sensitive to the importance of body autonomy, personal power, and comfort in an innately intimate form of care.

Freund also explains that the medical system for reproductive health and birth is deeply binary and gendered. Services are focused on a feminine experience and female bodies, though people who are queer or transgender have been having families since the beginning of time.

“We deserve to be heard, respected, and cared for by a system that

Definitions

FULL-SPECTRUM: when referring to pregnancy, full-spectrum means that a doula or other resource provider can give support on issues from birth control, pregnancy health, birth and post-partum care, to abortion access and care after a miscarriage.

PREGNANCY RELEASE: a general term for ending a pregnancy either through abortion or miscarriage.

PREGNANCY CONTINUATION: continuing a pregnancy and giving birth.

is not set up to see us as our full and authentic selves,” Freund said. “That’s why I ask people how they want me to show up for them. I make sure they are the driving force in the care they are receiving. This is true for everyone. Whether or not you are queer or trans, medical care has decentered us from our own care. Gender-affirming care is important for cisgendered and heterosexual people, too. Not everyone uses the same language for their body. Not everyone wants to be a ‘mama.’ But this is especially important for marginalized communities.”

Freund’s services changed during the COVID crisis. Hospitals limit the number of people in a hospital room during delivery. That’s why they are getting trained as a midwife in order to provide more options. While doulas offer general support, midwives have similar medical training as OB/GYNs, minus surgical training for cesarean procedures.

REPRESENTATION MATTERS

Like Freund, J. Dale Gardner is attending nursing school to offer midwifery services. Gardner is a Black, genderqueer doula who is perceived as a Black woman and whose identity and life experiences come with them in their work and in their classes. They are actively calling attention to class instruction that is outdated, binary, and unnecessarily erases gender diversity.

“I’m just not being quiet any more,” said Gardner. “I’ve brought it to the attention of my instructors and I’m already seeing a difference. Instruction is going from only using the words female or male to describing a person with a penis or a person with a vagina. I’m already seeing a change. It’s small and language-based, it doesn’t change the root of the problem, but I take some solace in the change and celebrate little wins.”

GOING BEYOND PRONOUNS

For Gardner, the issues of discrimination in reproductive health care



go beyond the use of gender-diverse pronouns. Often issues of language are literal communication barriers between the doctors who are immersed in the health care system and patients who may speak English as a second language (or not at all) or who aren’t experts in all of their options for a safe and healthy birth. Gardner questions whether patients are truly able to give informed consent in situations where they are pregnant, in labor, and being pressured into medical interventions like a C-section.

“Maternal and fetal death rates are still bad for people of color,” said Gardner. “It’s astronomical, especially for the Black and Indigenous community. As a doula, I’m working to combat those death rates and poor health outcomes. My clients know their bodies, so I can be that link when there are communication disruptions or when it isn’t said in a way that my client can understand as best as they can during labor and delivery. You can give ‘permission,’ and anybody can say ‘yes’ (to a medical intervention), that doesn’t mean that’s informed consent, especially for those who don’t speak English as a second language.”

POST-DOBBS

Basic rights to body autonomy and the right to abortion shifted

GAY, LESBIAN, BI, TRANS, STRAIGHT.
Honestly, the only label we care about is **FAMILY.**

The Wisconsin Fertility Institute is proud to help gay and lesbian couples create the family of their dreams. Schedule your private consultation today, 608.824.0075.

wisconsin fertility INSTITUTE

wisconsinfertility.com
3146 Deming Way, Middleton

photo: bornarchivalco.com

significantly in 2022. When the decision of the U.S. Supreme Court to overturn the landmark *Roe vs. Wade* decision hit the news, Freund started getting calls. Freund had faced their own ectopic pregnancy in 2020, so the issues of the right to abortion care “to protect the life of the mother” hit immediately home to them.

“After not even twelve hours after *Roe* fell, I got calls from people who were pregnant and scared about the things that could go wrong if they needed help getting an abortion,” said Freund. “People are more scared about the implications of their care, forced birth, and pregnancy that can kill them. It’s hard to conceptualize because the ramifications of that decision could reach into other aspects of care like access to birth control, ‘morning after,’ or emergency contraception, down to the sex ed they receive about their own bodies. It’s hard to fathom because we’ve seen politicians making very large, sweeping decisions about these things for years, and now they have more leeway.”

As a genderqueer, Black person who’s been perceived as a Black woman, Gardner’s take on the SCOTUS decision is different.

“The post-*Roe* news is not surprising to me,” they said. “It’s like how the Black Lives Matter movement has been going on for some time—much longer than the murder of George Floyd—this is nothing new and nothing we haven’t experienced. It’s status quo for a Black person. I can see this perspective of ‘Oh my god, they took away our rights,’ but as someone who has been perceived as a Black woman, it is not surprising to me at all. This country is run by cis, white, old men and I have no interest in trying to change their minds on anything. Not that I’m not going to vote, but where I take my fight is through doula care.”

WHAT IS AN ABORTION DOULA?

When people who are pregnant decide to end their pregnancy, they might want to talk to Lexy Ware.

Ware is a full-spectrum doula and reproductive justice advocate who

serves as the pregnancy options call line coordinator for Pregnancy Options Wisconsin: Education, Resources & Support, Inc., or P.O.W.E.R.S. She works with trained volunteers who take calls from people who want practical support for abortion resources.

“I’m the front line,” she explained. “When people call, I’m the first person they speak to for resources and support. That’s the first part of my job. The second part is coordinating volunteers who take shifts to be available to answer people’s questions.”

About a year and a half ago, Ware trained as a doula. She first reached out to P.O.W.E.R.S. before her doula training because she knew the organization had strong community connections. But it wasn’t until after training as a doula that P.O.W.E.R.S. needed a phone line coordinator and Lexy got more deeply involved with the organization.

“The typical day is me making sure I can be available to answer when someone calls,” she said. “The phone isn’t ringing off the hook every day, so calls vary depending on what people need and when they need it. I just try to show up with the assurance people need when they ask for help with funding for an abortion, or to be connected with other resources they need.”

WHY IS AN ABORTION DOULA NEEDED?

Ware believes she still provides help as a doula, but in a different way than most doulas give support in pregnancy, birth, and postpartum care. As a full-spectrum doula, her services can include talking to people about all of the options they have to release a pregnancy (from self-managed medication abortions, to where to find legal abortion services in a clinic), and she answers questions about non-emergency miscarriage care.

“P.O.W.E.R.S. is a mainly volunteer-run organization of midwives, doulas, doctors, nurses, and activists,” said Ware. “They are people who care about pregnant people and who got together to form this organization in 2018 to provide practical, emotional, and resource support.

P.O.W.E.R.S. is an all-options organization.”

Trained volunteers talk to callers about pregnancy continuation, including birth and adoption, as well as pregnancy release, including miscarriage and abortion.

“We talk to people about all options and all ways pregnancy takes place. That means all options of care. Our motto is that we ‘trust pregnant people.’ Pregnant people have to have full agency and autonomy over their own body, and no one else should have power over their care.”

WHY IS P.O.W.E.R.S. UNIQUE?

When Lexy describes the group’s approach to sharing advice, it’s clear that P.O.W.E.R.S. has a unique approach through being radically inclusive. The organization’s perspectives honor all of the ways people can become pregnant or not be pregnant, as well as all the experiences those who call and those who are trained to help are valued. Their website, pregnancyoptionswi.org, is deeply educational and inclusive as well.

“It is time for people to realize that it’s not just women who have babies, or who are impacted by abortion bans or maternal mortality,” said Lexy. “P.O.W.E.R.S. wants to support everyone. When we say ‘trust pregnant people,’ we mean it. We’ve done our best to include and support all people. When I answer the phone line, I often will ask people about their pronouns, and I’m careful when directing them to abortion funds. There are things you can do to be inclusive that not enough people are doing yet. But changing language is not that hard. P.O.W.E.R.S. realizes it’s not hard.”

At this time, access to abortion for Wisconsinites is more complicated. Minnesota and Illinois clinics offer medication abortion and in-clinic abortion care, but the expense, travel, and wait times are clear barriers for people to access medical guidance, prescriptions, or services that allow them to self-manage abortions or get the care they choose.

“I would say that post-*Dobbs*, the change looks like how much harder it is for people. You can still go to a nearby city, but it’s expensive. I hear a lot about abortion rights, but really it’s more important to talk about abortion access. Is abortion accessible. What *Dobbs* did is begin to make abortion inaccessible. Our discussion needs to be more about access.”

HOW CAN PEOPLE SUPPORT THIS EFFORT?

Ware says the best way to help P.O.W.E.R.S. is to make a tax-deductible donation to their educational mission.

“You can also give to an abortion fund,” she said. “Locally you can give to the Women’s Medical Fund. They also go by WMF, and they help everybody. There is also a National Network of Abortion Funds that supports abortion funds all over the country.”

“The work can be emotional—but I do want to help people—and through P.O.W.E.R.S. we can give real, practical support,” Ware said.

FULL-SPECTRUM CARE SERVICES

Ware, Gardner, and Freund are all doulas who provide full-spectrum care. They can be resourceful for those who plan to give birth, but also for those who are undergoing gender-affirming medical services like hysterectomies or top surgeries. Gardner explains that transgender patients are more deeply scrutinized when they request gender-affirming medical care. For people who might not have supportive family or partners to help with changing bandages or physical tasks, doulas can fill the gap.

“It’s great when you have friends who say ‘call me if you need anything,’ but when you’re recovering from surgery, it can be hard to ask for help,” Gardner said. “Queer-friendly doulas can drop off medical supplies and organize meal trains. If someone wants to help you, you can just say ‘contact my doula,’ and it takes the pressure and fear off of asking for help.” ■

Abortion Rights

In a decision leaked in May and published on June 24, the U.S. Supreme Court made a ruling that overturned decades of abortion rights protections. The case, *Dobbs v. Jackson Women’s Health Organization*, involved a challenge to Mississippi’s ban on abortion and was brought by the Center for Reproductive Rights and its partners on behalf of the last abortion services clinic in the state.

In reversing the landmark 1973 *Roe vs. Wade* decision that recognized the constitutional right to an end a pregnancy before viability (around 24 weeks), SCOTUS not only sided with the state government on its 15-week abortion ban, it also said states can ban abortion at any point in a pregnancy. The decision triggered more lawsuits as well as states, including Wisconsin, to revert back to pre-*Roe* laws.

While SCOTUS judges do not officially represent a political party, the conservative-leaning composition of the court could reverse a generation of civil rights and social justice progress. Three conservative court judges are newly appointed by President Trump including Justices Gorsuch, Kavanaugh, and Coney Barrett. Chief Justice Roberts and Justices Thomas and Alito were appointed by President George W. Bush. Justices Sotomayor and Kagan were appointed by President Obama, and Justice Brown Jackson was appointed by President Biden.

Abortion service information on the P.O.W.E.R.S. website describes the change plainly: *As of June 24, 2022, providing abortion is illegal in Wisconsin because of a law still in place from 1849. This 173-year-old law criminalizes the provider of abortion services but has protections from criminalizing the pregnant person seeking abortion. All clinical abortion services (except to save the life of a pregnant person) are now on hold in Wisconsin.*

A team of experienced lawyers committed to the rights of the **LGBT Community**.



BALISLE FAMILY LAW

LEGAL COUNSEL, S. C.

Linda S. Balisle, Attorney
Lindsey E. Cobbe, Attorney | Ashleigh M. Hacker, Attorney

Our mission is to ensure that your rights and best interests are protected as you navigate the complexities of the legal system.

Divorce
Power of Attorneys
Partnership Agreements
Wills

Marital Property Agreements
Child Custody Disputes
Non-traditional Families
Mediation

608-765-1001 | balisfamilylaw.com
11 E. Main St., Suite 403 Madison, WI 53703



Your financial needs are unique.

Whether you want to provide for your loved ones, support the organizations that are important to you, or plan for your own comfortable retirement, I can help you plan for your goals. I’ll look at all aspects of your finances, then find solutions that are right for your unique needs. I’ll be there to adjust your plan as life unfolds.



Shannon M. Anderson, CFP®, APMA®, ADPA®

Financial Advisor

Eventus Wealth Advisors

A private wealth advisory practice of Ameriprise Financial Services, LLC

608.819.0520

2916 Marketplace Dr, Ste 104, Fitchburg, WI 53719

shannon.m.anderson@ampf.com

ameripriseadvisors.com/shannon.m.anderson

Not FDIC or NCUA Insured | No Financial Institution Guarantee | May Lose Value

CA Insurance #0G04178

Certified Financial Planner Board of Standards Inc. owns the certification marks

CFP®, CERTIFIED FINANCIAL PLANNER™ and CFP (with plaque design) in the U.S.

Investment advisory products and services are made available through

Ameriprise Financial Services, LLC, a registered investment adviser.

© 2022 Ameriprise Financial, Inc. All rights reserved.



Collaboration in Care

UW Health launches integrated transgender health services clinic.

HEALTH & WELLNESS | GENDER | HEALTH CARE | ADVOCACY

AN INITIATIVE YEARS IN THE MAKING

has finally reached the finish line, with Madison welcoming its first integrated, multi-disciplinary transgender health services clinic. The UW Health Comprehensive Gender Services Program was developed by a group of medical providers from across the UW Health system who sought increased collaboration spanning multiple medical disciplines. “For many years, there were lots of us that were doing gender affirming care, kind of in our own silos,” says Dr. Ronni Hayon, co-medical director for the Comprehensive Gender Services Program.

A MULTIDISCIPLINARY MODEL

In 2017, Dr. Katherine Gast, a UW Health surgeon who specializes in gender-affirming surgical care, joined the team, and the concrete brainstorming for increased collaboration began. “We all started collaborating really closely and started dreaming about putting together a multidisciplinary clinic where patients could get access to multiple specialists at once,” Hayon says.

“The idea for a multidisciplinary clinic was based on other clinics spanning multiple specialties already in place at UW Health,” says Callen Smith, program coordinator and patient navigator for the Gender Services Program.

This clinic is UW Health’s largest multidisciplinary clinic; however, with collaboration across 12 different specialties comprising family medicine, speech and voice, ear, nose and throat (ENT) services, facial surgery, plastic surgery, OB/GYN services, behavioral health, urology, endocrinology, fertility, and social work.

The Madison-based clinic, which officially opened its doors last spring, provides comprehensive health services to transgender and gender-nonconforming individuals of all ages.

“Based on the number of consult requests, the reception from the community has been considered a huge success,” Hayon says.

Smith handles the vast majority of consult requests and notes that the clinic is currently booked out until March 2023, adding “I think that says a lot about the need for trans health care.”

The variety of specialties involved in the clinic provides the ability to individualize care for each patient.

“That’s really the cornerstone of gender-affirming care—that you individualize your care to what the patient in front of you needs,” Hayon



Dr. Ronni Hayon

says. “Not every trans or nonbinary person is going to want or need any kind of medical intervention. So our goal is to provide really patient-centered, evidence-based care.”

HOW PATIENTS CAN GET STARTED

The team has created a simple and user-friendly process to establish care at the clinic through a consultation request form on its website. Smith said establishing care can be really intimidating. Through the form, prospective patients are asked to list what areas of health care they hope to access. The list includes various options from surgical services and hormone treatment to laser hair removal and voice therapy. It’s Smith’s job to sift through the consult requests and point patients in the right direction.

“Those consult requests come straight to me, and if patients are mentioning that they’re interested in multiple services, then I can provide the information about our multidisciplinary clinic,” Smith says.

Care will usually begin with a consultation at the comprehensive clinic, then a follow-up with a visit to the clinic where the specialty physician is based. This provides a jumping-off point to help patients understand what care will look like going forward, Smith said.

WHY IT MATTERS

The opening of the clinic is a critical step in providing care to members of the transgender and gender-nonconforming community, Hayon said. The timing remains imperative, too. More than 300 anti-LGBTQ+ pieces of legislation had been proposed by local, state, and federal politicians in the first three months of 2022 alone, according to data collected by Human Rights Campaign. Nearly half of those bills seek to limit or ban access to gender-affirming medical care.

Studies show providing gender-affirming care to transgender individuals has been proven to save lives, and the benefits go far beyond just medicine. The Columbia University Department of Psychiatry issued a report in March 2022 demonstrating the benefits. According to data gathered by The Trevor Project, a national organization aimed at reducing suicide among LGBTQ+ youth, 54 percent of transgender or gender-nonconforming youth have reported seriously considering suicide, with 29 percent having made an attempt to end their lives. Providing gender-affirming care directly reduces these risks, says the American

Academy of Pediatrics. Transgender and gender-nonconforming adults have shown similar benefits.

By gathering 12 specialties under one roof, the clinic is also able to track patient demand and better quantify need.

“With services being siloed in different departments, like urology or plastic surgery or OB/GYN, that might not necessarily be giving an accurate picture of just how many patients need trans health care,” Smith says. “We’ve started to really look at ways that we can capture that information so that we can continue to fund where services are needed.”

The clinic not only provides access to comprehensive care for Madison-based patients but also serves as a good option for patients from more rural areas of the state.

“It’s really great to be able to just come to one place and see all the people that you need,” Hayon says.

WHAT’S NEXT?

There is always room for further growth, Hayon said, and eventually the clinic may expand in services offered.

“We’re all really enjoying the work that we’re doing now,” Hayon says, “and every time we hold a clinic I think we also see opportunities for growth.”

One potential area includes educational opportunities for other doctors. This could provide a potential to educate clinicians across the UW Health system—and across the state—on gender-informed care.

“I think there are also all sorts of ancillary services and medical services that folks need that are hard to get access to—whether that’s hair removal or dermatological procedures—we could potentially include those in the future,” Hayon says.

The inclusion of preventative care as an additional service in the program is one that has Hayon’s attention.



Callen Smith

“That would be another really great way to serve folks in Wisconsin who don’t have health care providers that they feel safe with,” Hayon says.

Most preventative care falls under the purview of family medicine and OB/GYN services typically. As those specialties are already involved in the clinic, adding that level of care would just be a matter of expanding the services those specialties offer.

“Things that I’m thinking about are sensitive screening exams, like breast or chest cancer screening and cervical cancer screening. It can feel really vulnerable for people to have those exams,” Hayon says.

That vulnerability is a potential for all patients, she notes.

“And specifically for trans or nonbinary or gender-diverse people, there’s kind of a whole extra layer on top of that, that can make it challenging,” Hayon adds.

But for now, in a time when trans rights are continuously under political attack here in Wisconsin and across the country, the launch itself and the community reception are big wins for caregivers and, especially, for patients.

“I feel very fortunate that we have so many advocates and allies within the system who really wanted to see this clinic launch, because it was the right thing to do,” Hayon says.

That level of support is a critical element to care.

“It’s not just this one small area of UW Health, but I think as an organization really changing the culture and the foundation and the education we do, that’s across the whole organization,” Smith says. “This work is a priority, and I think that’s really shown in the support that we’ve had and the growth we’ve seen. The ripple effect has been really positive.” ■

DeWitt LLP **Law Firm**
Connecting Clients to Creative Legal Solutions

“A great thought begins by seeing something differently, with a shift of the mind’s eye.”

—ALBERT EINSTEIN

DeWitt attorneys see things differently while creating solutions to meet client needs.

At DeWitt, we utilize our creativity to offer proactive and effective legal advice in more than 30 areas of law while serving publicly and privately held companies, individual clients, family-owned businesses, municipalities and more. With attorneys practicing in Wisconsin and Minnesota, our firm handles matters for clients nationwide.

When you need a trusted, full-service law firm, please visit our website at dewittllp.com or email info@dewittllp.com for more information.

MINNESOTA : WISCONSIN

dewittllp.com



funding wisconsin's LGBTQ+ communities since 1984

RAISING MONEY

tax-deductible donations, community fundraising events, workplace contributions, and planned giving

GIVING BACK

awarded over \$375,000 to organizations promoting LGBTQ+ rights, services, culture and community development in Wisconsin

contact us to learn how you can make a difference

info@newharvestfoundation.org
www.newharvestfoundation.org

PO Box 1786
Madison, WI 53701-1786



IMPROVE → OUR HISTORY

OURLIVESWISCONSIN.COM



ARTS & ENTERTAINMENT GENDER HISTORY THEATER QTBIPOC

Celebrating a Trans Pioneer

"Ralph Kerwineo and the Refining Influence of Skirts" tells the historic figure's notorious story to new audiences.

ON MAY 2, 1914, Milwaukee police arrested Ralph Kerwineo. The official charge was disorderly conduct, but the accusation was that he was biologically, in fact, she. For 13 years, Ralph had effectively lived his life as a man. He was described as the perfect gentleman, the most well-dressed and well-educated, and among the finest sportsmen in Milwaukee. He worked in men-only jobs at the Plankinton Hotel, Gimbels, and Cutler-Hammer.

Ralph informally married Mamie White in Chicago in 1906, but he couldn't limit himself to just one woman. The relationship was long riddled with affairs, and Mamie grew tired of Ralph's smoking, drinking, cursing, and gambling. In 1914, Ralph obtained a groom's health certificate and legally married his lover, Dorothy Kleinowski. When Mamie found out, she went straight to the police and outed Ralph as a "cross-dresser."

The sensational story of the "Girl-Man of Milwaukee" made international news headlines for weeks. Milwaukee was no stranger to gender non-confirming pioneers; in fact, court reporters reflected on the strange case of Frank Blunt only 21 years prior. The resulting trial could have written the last chapter in the life of Ralph Kerwineo. But something curious happened: The public began to sympathize with the wayward womanizer—even rallying to his cause—making Ralph Kerwineo an unlikely, unstoppable, yet unknown hero of his time.

Nearly a century later, the story of Ralph Kerwineo was recalled to life in 2013 by author Matthew J. Prigge for the *Wisconsin Magazine of History* and by the Wisconsin LGBTQ History Project's recent *Milwaukee Drag: Seven Generations of Glamour*. "Ralph Kerwineo and the Refining Influence of Skirts," a stage production by Emerald Condor Productions, ran October 10–23 at Inspiration Studios in West Allis. Writer-producer Chris Holoyda and director Jarvell Williams share the inspiration and craft behind their tribute to a long-lost trans ancestor.



What did the intersection of racial, sexual, and gender identities mean in Ralph's era? How did being biracial affect Ralph's overall place in society?

HISTORIANS ASIDE, FEW PEOPLE IN MILWAUKEE HAVE EVER HEARD OF RALPH KERWINEO. WHAT INSPIRED YOUR PRODUCTION?

The inception was really my friend Matt (Prigge's) story about Ralph for *Milwaukee* magazine. Matt gave his research materials for the "Girl-Man" article to another playwright, but nothing ever materialized, so he passed the information on to me. I had the same reaction: This was one of the most compelling stories I'd never heard of. My circle of friends was really surprised to hear about it. So, it was a challenge accepted: Let's see what we can do here.

I wrote the first draft in 2019. The original goal was to let the story shine through, without putting too much of a modern perspective on it, except to honor Ralph's identity as a man. It's clear to me that he experienced himself as a man, despite the trapping of anatomy and society at large. I had no intention of fictionalizing his story. This is a sincere retelling of history.

And the story really told itself. It was incredibly satisfying to see it come to life. I

hadn't read the original source material for some time before we started production, and I'd forgotten how much of it was directly from the research. The fun and the challenge of my role was seeing that the basic story was there, waiting for us to fill in the blanks and be true to the characters and the story.

But it's not just an historical piece, it's a living piece. So many parts of Ralph's story are still around us today. That's why it feels important to bring to the stage. I don't profess to be a LGBTQ historian necessarily, but from my script research, there's a standard script of queer people moving to big cities and finding their community. Milwaukee was no different. The question becomes, how did people who were gender non-conforming fit in? What did the intersection of racial, sexual, and gender identities mean in Ralph's era? How did being biracial affect Ralph's overall place in society?

There's also an alternate, often-overlooked narrative of people who were non-gender conforming who lived in rural areas. How did those people adapt (or not adapt) to their communities, and what do their experiences tell us about Ralph? The short answer is that these experiences are still happening. People are still navigating the same challenges today. And that's why it's important that Ralph's story is told.

WHAT CAN YOU TELL US ABOUT YOUR CAST?

We have a great cast, and it's diverse in terms of race and queerness, which is extremely exciting to us. It's also especially important in telling our story. After parting ways with the original director due to creative differences, the production moved forward in an unorthodox way: The cast largely directed themselves, conducting rehearsals on their own with occasional input from the writer. This method provided greater opportunity for a spectrum of racial representation and queer representation, allowing the performers to contribute their diverse voices and experiences through a unique, collaborative process.

WHAT DO YOU HOPE AUDIENCES WILL LEARN FROM RALPH'S LIFE EXPERIENCE?

Alternative avenues are important and have always been important. "Don't Say Gay" legislation is demonizing LGBTQ youth—who are politically powerless—just to rile up the conservative base. I have to wonder how schools will cope with this pressure over time.



MICHAIL TAKACH is a historian, author, reporter, and communications professional. He earned his master's in communications and history at U.W.-Madison. As a fifth-generation Milwaukeean, he supported various non-profits over the past two decades, including Historic Milwaukee, the Milwaukee County Historical Society, the Walker's Point Association, and Milwaukee Pride. Michail is currently the curator of the Wisconsin LGBTQ History Project, a not-for-profit devoted to connecting local LGBTQ people with their hidden history and heritage.



"Ralph Kerwineo and the Refining Influence of Skirts"

ANY CLOSING WORDS?

We were so proud to bring people to Inspiration Studios. We could not be more grateful that we had this space. Erico Ortiz, owner and manager, was instrumental to our project. We brought something to West Allis that you won't see in many suburbs. Inspiration is very embedded in creating an experience: It's not just show-in/show-out. They've built a community around this beautiful and multifaceted space. ■

Learn more about the illustrious life of Ralph Kerwineo at the Wisconsin LGBTQ History Project website: wislgbthistory.com

Dental Insurance You Can Smile About

Momentum DENTAL PLANS



Personalized and Affordable for Individuals & Families.

Enroll Online Today! MomentumPlans.com

608.729.6500

Locally owned and operated in Madison

LOCAL CLINICS. OUTSTANDING CARE.



7 Convenient Locations

Sun Prairie • Fitchburg • University East • Gammon • Old Sauk • Downtown



DENTAL HEALTH ASSOCIATES
dhamadison.com



QTBIPOC DISEASE INTERVENTION MENTAL HEALTH

Silent No More

Vel Phillips Memorial High School Sophomore **Devon Wells** speaks about coming out and giving back.



I HAVE ALWAYS BEEN musically inclined. Even as a small child I had a passion for singing and a knack for writing. When I write songs, I pull from raw emotions, some of which are brought up by childhood trauma. I acquired PTSD at the age of eight after experiencing a tragic event that caused me and my family to uproot our whole lives and move to Wisconsin. I was too scared to tell people how I was really feeling. On top of that, I was dealing with new feelings; I was developing crushes on boys. I was beginning to realize that I was gay, and I was in denial.

FACING THE TRUTH

I had read enough books, and seen enough movies, to know the kinds of prejudice and bias held against the LGBTQ+ community (and I held some of my own). I stayed in denial until 6th grade when I was forced to face my first undeniable crush. This was the moment when I realized there was no way I could keep denying it. I was gay, and it scared me. The next year, I finally got the courage to come out to my friends.

After this, I slowly began to come out to a few more, then to the whole population of my middle school. By the time I started high school, I had already been openly gay for a year and a half. When I got here though, I was, and still am, one of a few openly gay, male-presenting kids at my school. I am constantly worried people are staring at me, worried about being harassed and bullied, and worried that people are constantly talking about me behind my back. I had to navigate coming out with no one to look up to, no one to answer my questions, and no one who is like me. I was on my own, and in a way, I still am.

ACTIVISM THROUGH SCHOOL

When I was asked by Sherie Hohs from GSAFE about presenting at a rally to get greater queer-inclusivity and representation into our school district, I was all but jumping at the opportunity to make my voice heard. When I gave my speech, it was pouring rain, but that didn't matter to me, because it meant the world for me to get the opportunity to share my story and perspective. That day, I had my first experience in public speaking. In the crowd were school board members, most notable being Ali Muldrow, one of my teachers and role models. Later, I was invited to join Foundations of Leadership, an advocacy class she runs after school on Mondays, that focuses on the stories of queer youth, youth of color, and other marginalized groups.

PATCH PROGRAM

Shortly after I gave my speech, I was invited to apply for the PATCH Program (Providers And Teens Communicating for Health), a non-profit organization whose goal is to empower adolescent youth to take control over their health care. I am a youth advocate working virtually with others across the state. We have presenters who share about the work they do in the healthcare field, and we also work through a rigorous seven-part curriculum where we discover what advocacy topics we are passionate about.

Last year, I chose to focus on changing the sexual education curriculum in MMSD to be more queer-inclusive, because the sex ed I received was not helpful for me. This is an endeavor that I have decided to continue to pursue over the next nine months. I don't yet know what a comprehensive, queer-inclusive sex ed curriculum looks like but I know that I want to make it a reality, so that people have the information that is actually useful for them. PATCH has introduced me to a whole new family, full of mentors, friends, and loved ones. ■

Make a Gift, Change a Life



Your gift helps animals find a home for the holidays



giveshelter.org/cannoli

Agrace is here to support you.

We are sage Platinum certified

LGBT elders who choose to use health care services from Agrace can feel confident knowing our local, nonprofit agency has earned SAGECare Platinum Certification for 2022. That award means at least 80 percent of Agrace's staff have completed cultural competence training about the needs and concerns of the LGBT community.

Agrace is one of only two hospices in the country that are SAGECare Platinum certified.

Diversity, Equity & Inclusion are priorities at Agrace

Agrace has a DEI team that helps reinforce our values of heart, resourcefulness and belonging. We welcome all patients, clients and their families, and we personalize their care.

LGBTQ grief support

Losing your life partner to death can be devastating. Agrace provides support from a trained counselor and others who understand the emotional nature of this loss in our Spouse/Partner loss grief support groups. Contact griefsupport@agrace.org to express your interest in a future group.



Age at Home • Adult Day Center • Supportive Care • Hospice Care • Grief Support

(800) 553-4289 | Agrace.org

THE DREAM OF A BETTER, MORE INCLUSIVE TOMORROW STARTS FROM WITHIN.



Being named the best place to work for LGBTQ+ Equality by the Human Rights Campaign Foundation for seven years running reflects our ongoing commitment to an inclusive culture.



While we are proud of this achievement, we also recognize that there is so much more to be done to address the systemic inequities that affect the LGBTQ+ community every day:

- **13.5%** of LGBTQ+ respondents lived in a household that experienced food insecurity compared to 7.4% of non-LGBTQ+ respondents.*
- **Nearly a quarter (21.6%)** of LGBTQ+ respondents reported the loss of employment income in their household compared to 16% of non-LGBTQ+ respondents.*
- **36.6%** of LGBTQ+ adults lived in a household that had difficulty paying for usual household expenses in the previous seven days, compared to 26.1% of non-LGBTQ+ adults.*

In 2022, the American Family Insurance Dreams Foundation, along with American Family's LGBTQA Business Resource Group, proudly supported Gay For Good, The Trevor Project and OutReach LGBTQ+ Community Center.

AT AMERICAN FAMILY INSURANCE, OUR COMMITMENT TO FOSTERING A MORE DIVERSE AND INCLUSIVE CULTURE EMPOWERS OUR MOST VALUABLE ASSET — OUR PEOPLE.

We've seen firsthand how diverse teams are more productive and innovative in an inclusive environment. That plays a critical role in helping to solve customer challenges through unique perspectives, real dialogue and empathy.

Learn what we're doing to support inclusion for all identities.



Our mission is to inspire, protect and restore the fearless dreams your family is pursuing. That's why for LGBT History Month, and every month, we're proud to support and celebrate all families — at home, in the workplace and in our communities.

*US Census Bureau, Household Pulse Survey, July 21, 2021 - September 13, 2021
American Family Mutual Insurance Company, S.I. and its Operating Companies,
6000 American Parkway, Madison, WI 53783 ©2022 20397 — Rev. 10/22



For resources on allyship or to learn more about the Human Rights Campaign Equality Index, please visit www.hrc.org.

