Welcome to Pride Fest 2023 loved ones!

I labored long and hard over what to say to you all this Pride season. As much as I would love to be all rainbows all the time, it can be hard to hold on to joy in a world that seems to want to take our joy every chance they get. I could write about all the horrible attacks and anti-LGBTQIA+ legislation that have happened this year, but we don’t need reminders of the real life horrors we face every day. I could repeat the tried and true adage of “It gets better!” But admittedly, some days that really doesn’t feel true.

I know what you’re thinking, what a bummer of a welcome to Pride season. And yes, I could be more cheerful and optimistic, but I’m more of a realist these days. And the real thing I have found that keeps me going even on the hardest, scariest, most dysphoric days is the family and community that I have found here in CU. I don’t think it’s an exaggeration when I say that getting involved with Pride Fest in 2021 saved my life. The people who came into my life, both just for the day or the ones who stuck around, truly showed me the power of queer community and how even just one affirming person or interaction can make an incredible impact on the love you choose to show yourself.

So that’s what I want my message to be to you, loved ones. Community, chosen family, support systems, whatever you choose to call it, is the life force of the LGBTQIA+ community. Even in the darkest most dangerous times of our history, queer folks have found solace and safety in creating their own spaces and gathering together. We haven’t always done it perfectly and sometimes we have been guilty of excluding those who need our support most, but we are learning. We are growing. And we are loving. This year we have chosen to honor our queer elders as the grand marshals of the parade. I encourage you to take the time to meet, get to know, and learn from those who paved the way for us and learned how to build a community when it seemed like an impossible feat. As you enjoy a drag show, shop for rainbow adorned swag, or expand your knowledge at one of our educational programs this week, take a look around at the community we have built and the power and safety of LGBTQIA+ people coming together in unity to celebrate, grieve, learn, and love.

You all are my chosen family. Even if I’ve never met you, know that I love you and I see you. You are valid, you are whole, you are worthy, and you are loved by your community. I sincerely hope that Pride Fest 2023 is exactly what you need it to be and that you find joy and peace and laughter and rainbows, and above all else, community.

VALENA “V” HEDIN (they/them)
BOARD PRESIDENT
Uniting Pride of Champaign County
The history of pride.

Pride commemorates the Stonewall Uprising, which began in the early hours of June 28, 1969, after police raided the Stonewall Inn bar in New York City's Greenwich Village neighborhood. This was a time when homosexuality was criminalized and people were often harassed by police or arrested for wearing “the dress of the opposite sex,” although no formal regulations against crossdressing, drag, or transgender people actually existed.

The Stonewall Inn was a popular place for members of the LGBTQ+ community to spend time, but because it was known to serve LGBTQ+ people, the New York State Liquor Authority refused to give the bar a liquor license. The police used this as an excuse to raid the bar, as they did with many gay bars at the time. On June 28th, patrons of the bar fought back against police harassment and violence. This was one of the first major displays of LGBTQ+ people fighting for their rights in the United States, and it inspired many more LGBTQ+ people to make themselves visible and advocate for their rights.

The following year, the first march was held to commemorate the Stonewall Uprising on the last Saturday of June 1970. It was called the Gay Liberation March at the time, and marches took place in New York City, Los Angeles, and Chicago. While all three marches started small, they grew to have thousands of participants as each march moved through their respective cities. Many believe that without this first march to commemorate Stonewall, today's Pride would not exist. The next year these marches happened in more places, and more the year after that. Today, Pride events are held world-wide to celebrate where the fight for equal rights has made progress, to name where we still have work to do, and to give queer people and their loved ones a place to gather out and proud on the streets of the communities where they live.

Pride Fest has been in Champaign-Urbana since 2009. Although many places hold their celebrations in the month of June around the anniversary of the original Stonewall Uprising, these days many Pride programs are held outside that timeframe. In some cases it’s so smaller communities aren’t in direct competition with the programs in major metropolitan areas that draw people in from all over. In other cases, it’s about a community’s culture and situation. Here in CU, so many folks take time away from home to go on vacations or visit family in the summer, and of course the University community is largely gone from May to August. We host June Pride programming for those who are around, but then we host our much larger Fest in the Fall when the majority of our community can attend and participate fully.
2023 Grand Marshal:  
Local Educators

Uniting Pride is pleased to honor our LGBTQ+ Elders as our 2023 CU Pride Fest Grand Marshals. As we face this new wave of anti-LGBTQ+ sentiment, aggression, legislation, and violence, it’s critically important we look to those who have been in this fight for decades. “Those who do not learn from history are doomed to repeat it”, they say. We have a wealth of knowledge, wisdom, experience, and heart within our elder community and we can and should honor it. We can and should learn from it. We can and should carry it with us as we continue to move forward.

IMPORTANT: we do not define “elder” based on age! A number on a birth certificate is not a measure of what this role truly is. What we are talking about here are those who have put in the years of work. Those who have tirelessly poured themselves into this community. Those who have been fighting. Those whose shoulders we stand on as we continue this fight.

We would not be here today without you, elders. And we simply cannot thank you enough for the incredibly hard work you’ve done to lead us to the progress we’ve made. We need to listen to you as we continue the work for even more progress to come, and properly acknowledge how you walked so we could run.

If you consider yourself an elder in our LGBTQ+ community, please come and march with us on Saturday, September 30th at 2:30pm in a place of honor in our Pride Parade. Please RSVP so we can be prepared for the participation level.
“We Are Here” Block Party

Please join us for the 2nd “We Are Here” Block Party for BIPOC LGBTQIA2+ students, campus and community members, and allies! Celebrate Pride and the diverse histories and experiences of BIPOC queer folks with an afternoon of music, food, games, and campus and community resources! We look forward to seeing you there!

West Nevada Street, Urbana
Between Goodwin and Matthews
1PM

FREE TO ATTEND
Donations Accepted

SUNDAY SEPT 24

Pride Papermaking Workshop

In this workshop we will learn the western papermaking technique by pulling and pressing sheets of vibrant colored pulps that you might incorporate into future art projects, poetry and collage. We will have materials ready and you are encouraged to BYOP: papers, journal pages, photos and old documents to turn into pulp. The process of breaking down old notes and letters and transforming them into something new can be magical. Because the fibers have the potential to hold so much history, the medium works on its own to tell stories, disrupt or establish an archive, and ask questions about origin. This practice is integral to queer experiences of being and forever becoming. You’ll find that paper is also very forgiving, loose, and fun!

Fresh Press Studio
2116 S Griffith Dr,
Champaign
11AM - 2PM

SUGGESTED DONATION:
$50 Adult
$20 Child/Student
sliding scale/BIPOC scholarships available

Ages +14

This workshop has a 15 person limit so sign up now!

REGISTER HERE

#gaypride
We celebrate One Community Together: Urbana, Champaign, & the University of Illinois.

We are proud to support our beautiful local community this year at Pride.

Our group has extensive training and experience in ADHD and autism spectrum disorder. We offer assessments and ongoing therapy services for clients of all ages.

JamieStevensCounseling.com
(217)840-2785

Mental Health Services for the Neurodiverse

We’re proud all year round.

With a largely queer staff, we know the difference feeling seen and understood can make in a person’s life. We are thrilled to be a part of this amazing community event that not only offers a sense of belonging, but actively celebrates the LGBTQ+ community. Happy Pride from all of us at Clanin Marketing, your local creative agency!

claninmarketing.com
KEYNOTE SPEAKER
Rae Lewis Thornton
“Aging with HIV/AIDS”

Rae Lewis-Thornton is an Emmy Award winning AIDS activist and renown social justice advocate. Rae received national acclaim for her story of living with HIV/AIDS in the Essence Magazine December 1994 issue. She is credited with changing the face of AIDS for Black women in America. For three decades Rae has traveled worldwide educating and challenging stigma around HIV/AIDS. She will be featured in an up-coming OWN documentary on Essence Magazine and Black Women. Rae earned a Master of Divinity Degree from McCormick Theological Seminary. Rae graduated Cum Laude from Northeastern Illinois University where she received the distinguished alumnae award. She is currently working on a Doctorate of Ministry at Methodist Theological School in Ohio. Rae has written three books: Amazing Grace: Letters Along My Journey, The Politics of Respectability, and her bestselling life story, Unprotected: A Memoir. Rae continues to speak across the country on HIV/AIDS, childhood trauma, and surviving and healing from trauma.
Panel: Behind the Mirror, an Inside Look at Drag

Join us for a truly unique experience! In this session, local drag stars Mona Monclair, Spank Knightly, and Karma Carrington will be interviewed while they paint their faces. The audience will watch as performers go from who they are offstage and out of makeup, to transforming into their drag performance personas, all while they answer moderator and audience questions.

Panelists
Mona Monclair
Karma Carrington
Spank Knightly

Spurlock Museum of World Cultures
600 S Gregory Street
Urbana
7:30PM

FREE TO ATTEND
Donations Accepted

#bipride
Lunch & Learn!
Biblical Self-Defense: a dialogue about faith & LGBTQIA+ identities presented by Rev. Leah Robberts-Mosser

Ever notice how certain Biblical passages get used as weapons against LGBTQIA+ folx? Join Rev. Leah, ordained minister at the Community United Church of Christ (CUCC), for a discussion and learning the history and context of these so-called Biblical “clobber passages”. AND learn what scripture passages affirm the goodness and worth of LGBTQIA+ people.

This event is co-sponsored by UIUC Diversity & Social Justice Education.

University YMCA
1001 S Wright St,
Champaign
12PM

FREE TO ATTEND
Lunch Included
Donations Accepted

Educational Event

#panpride

Let’s keep moving forward, Champaign Urbana.

paulfaraci.com
Join us at Red Herring to enjoy some food and community. Some of our LGBTQ+ elder 23 Pride Fest Grand Marshals have been invited to sit at stations around the space and be ready to tell their stories, answer questions, and engage across generations to preserve this deeply important component of queer life. Before the internet, the only way for younger queer folks to learn was to sit with our Elders and listen. And while we're thrilled that so many now have access to stories we never had before, we believe the human component remains vital to our community's health and wellbeing. So come take this irl moment to meet some amazing individuals whose shoulders we stand on today and thank them for the work they've done and the impact they've had on all of us.

A screening of the PBS documentary, "The Stonewall Uprising" will follow this event so the learning and community can continue!

Elders who will be with us this evening include: Doug Barnes, Jerry Carden, Ceduxion Carrington (Marcus Wilder) Danielle Chynoweth, Robert Michael Doyle, Tim Hutchison, Kimberlie Kranich, Sophie Michaels, Mona Monclair (Damon Rule), Kathie Spegal, and Lynn Sprout.
Resist Erasure Exhibit
Opening Reception

The McKinley Foundation’s Artists’ Alley presents a new juried art show: “Resist Erasure”. This is a show of student art work created with the theme in mind. “Resist Erasure” is meant to inspire students to respond to the current political climate toward LGBTQIA2S+ students and young adults: facing limiting legislation, book bans, harassment and more, students say they are being “erased” from the U.S. education system. Join us for an opening celebration of this important show!

FREE TO ATTEND
Donations Accepted

McKinley Foundation
809 S Fifth St,
Champaign
5PM - 7PM

#intersexpride
makeitcu.com/cwc

We’re here to help you feel right at home. Get connected today!
makeitcu.com/cwc

To learn about our local group, email cking@compassionandchoices.org

You Are Your Best Advocate
 Ensure your loved ones know your end-of-life care preferences.

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We’re creating a welcoming community. BRILLIANT.

CHAMBAWELCOME CREW

We know her, we love her, and we miss her! This movie honors the late, great Whitney Houston in all her glory. But even better, at THIS showing you can belt along with all your favorite Whitney hits! Yes, this is a SING-A-LONG!

We’ve chosen this film to be part of Pride Fest because of the touching and nuanced way in which it deals with her same-gender romantic relationship with her longtime friend and manager, Robyn Crawford. It addresses Whitney’s struggles to exist in this world at that time and how she felt like she couldn’t be fully who she was without too big a cost. That her full story can be told now is a gift to her legacy and those of us who have loved her and her work for so long.

We’re grateful for the partnership on this program from The Virginia Theatre, Mix 94.5 Throwback Thursdays, the UIUC Women’s Resource Center, and the UIUC Bruce D. Nesbitt African American Cultural Center. Please join us to celebrate and sing!

The Virginia Theatre
203 W Park Ave, Champaign
7PM
Doors open at 6 PM
$7
GET TICKETS HERE

Compass Counseling and Consulting strives to ensure that each member of the community is valued and respected. We strongly believe in the inclusion of all sexual orientations and gender identities/expressions. It is our commitment to provide affirming mental health services to you and your family. And the community we share.

We are a group of committed and dedicated professionals with over 40 years of combined experience in the mental health field. Our goal is to help you uncover your true self and potential, and to lead a life that is worth celebrating and full of PRIDE.

Affirming Counseling Services for LGBTQIA+
For individuals, couples, families, and groups

Including
TRANS SUPPORT GROUP
Open to all adult gender minorities
Every Thursday at 6:30pm

201 W. Springfield, Suite 1002
Champaign, IL 61820
(217) 693-4918
www.compasschampaign.com

#genderfluidpride
Youth & Family Pride Party

Join Uniting Pride and the Urbana Park District for an incredible event focused on families, teens, and littles! UPD will present a Pride themed Teen Hangout Zone inside the facility, while we have games, crafts, free Kona Ice, a bounce house, and music outside designed for youth and families of all ages!

Friday Sept 29

Phillips Recreation Center
505 W Stoughton, Urbana
3:30PM - 6PM

FREE - ALL AGES
Donations Accepted

With Carle, you’re seen, valued and represented.

COUNT ON Carle
Queer Homecoming

Get your fancy duds ready because our Queer Homecoming Dance returns! But this year featuring the incredible artistry of Defy Gravity and Carnival Debauche! Get up the nerve to invite that date, pick out something shiny, sparkly, fancy, dapper, or whatever makes you feel like your best self, and come live out that quintessential school dance experience. But while feeling free to be your whole self in a safe and affirming space! You'll get to dance your hearts out to DJ Silkee, plus enjoy a thrilling show courtesy of our favorite burlesque and pole entertainers. This is going to be a night to remember and will kick off Pride Fest weekend with a bang!

We want to thank our generous event sponsor: Pavlov Media!
CU Pride Nature Hike in Busey Woods

Celebrate CU Pride Fest, and share your pride and love of the outdoors by enjoying a guided hike! Relax in the sights, sounds and smells of nature as we explore Busey Woods. Everyone is welcome, but space is limited. Call 217-384-4062 by 5pm on Friday 9/29 to sign up.

Busey Woods
Anita Purves Nature Center
1505 N. Broadway Ave, Urbana
9:30AM - 10:30AM
RSVP REQUIRED
Call 217-384-4062
FREE TO ATTEND
All Ages (under 15 with adult)

#agenderpride

Established in 2000, the Coalition of Rainbow Alliances is a non-profit volunteer group that offers opportunities to get involved for and with the LGBTQ community throughout Central Illinois.

Our mission is to build a LGBTQ inclusive community that provides visibility and advocacy with our core values of building upon our community, offering fellowship to all of our allies, being open and accepting, and showing support and encouragement.

We support the community through the year by hosting events such as The Ritz in March, a Pride Picnic in June, Pride Night with the Lucky Horseshoes, and a Thanksgiving Diner in November. Throughout the rest of the year, we work with our partners and supporters with other activities like food drives for Central Illinois Food Bank, construction with Habitat for Humanity, walking with Juneteenth for BLM and Out of the Darkness for suicide prevention, and attending Pridefest celebrations with other Illinois festivities in the region.

To follow us or get involved, please join our Facebook page at facebook.com/CORALSpringfield and visit our webpage at www.springfieldcoral.org. We would love to have you!

Champaign County Democrats
Supporting LGBTQ+ causes and candidates 365 days a year.
CU Pride Parade & Fair

Join us for the signature Pride Fest programming - our Parade & Fair! We take over downtown Urbana once again featuring locals businesses and artists, community resources, entertainment, games, crafts, food, and fun!

PARADE & FAIR DETAILS

Campustown & Downtown Urbana
11AM
FREE TO ATTEND
Donations Accepted

#acepride

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STAY | MEET | DINE

Elevate every moment with us at the I Hotel + Houlihan's and Illinois Conference Center

Call 217.819.5005 to learn more about our offers and packages!

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UCRJ’s vision for our community includes...

Abortion Access:
Abortion care is safe, accessible, and without stigma.

Gender-Affirming Care Access:
All people receive respectful, full-spectrum, supportive care without judgment.

Birth Justice:
All people are supported to have healthy pregnancies by choice, and have labor and delivers or their own terms.

Food Security:
All people in our community have access to enough food year-round.

Safe, Affordable Housing:
Safe, affordable housing is available throughout our community.

Menstrual Equity:
Menstrual products are freely available in public locations.

Join us as we work to achieve reproductive justice for all!
www.ucrj.org

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KC COUNSELING, LLC
EATING DISORDER CLINIC

- Individual Psychotherapy
- Nutrition Therapy
- Meal Support
- Support Group
- Group Psychotherapy
- Eating Disorder Education
- Outreach Services

217-377-0299
www.kccounselingllc.com
kccounselingllc.2019@gmail.com
CU Pride Fest Fair

The Pride Fest Fair is back in Downtown Urbana at the intersection of Race and Main streets. We'll shut the area down and have entertainment, vendors, activities, art, community organizations sharing information, and more!

We're so excited to have the One Community Together stage back again for the second year in a row!

STAGE SCHEDULE:
1pm Amasong
2pm Bow-dacious String Band and the BBL Jazz Ensemble
3pm Sixth Street Brass Band
4pm Marching Illini

We have also added a 2nd Stage at the Rose Bowl Tavern.

ROSE BOWL SCHEDULE:
1pm Chris Jacobson-Chism
2:30pm Anika Emily
4pm Sing It UP Choir

And don't miss Drag Story Time with the Urbana Free Library at Elm & Race at 4pm!
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<td>PRISM Studios MYPRIDE365</td>
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**FOOD TRUCK VILLAGE**

- H1 Pastamania
- H2 Stango Cuisine
- H3 Sugga Shaii
- H4 Juanitos
- H5 Jurassic Grill
- H6 Kona Ice of Champaign
- H7 El Oasis

**CHAMPAIGN COUNSELING**

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champaigncounseling.com
217.203.2008
CU Pride Fest Drag Extravaganza

ARE YOU READY FOR THE LALA RI EXPERIENCE?!?

Fresh off winning the RuPaul’s Drag Race All Stars Season 8 Fame Games, LaLa comes to CU to light this place on fire! But that’s not all! This show also features local faves: DJ Silkee, Ceduxion Carrington, Just Sue, Mx. Chambana 2023 Karma Carrington, Spank Knightly, Peach of the Midwest Carrington, Mx. Chambana Supreme 2023 Asiannah B. Carrington, the Uniting Pride Dance Team, and Special Guest Host Callie Luttman from Mix 94.5. VIP is already sold out and GA is going fast! Don’t wait to get your tickets or you might miss out!

Canopy Club
708 S Goodwin, Urbana
7:30PM - 2AM

$20 ADV
$25 DOS
$40 VIP

GET TICKETS HERE

SATURDAY SEPT 30
MyPride365 Drag Brunch:
Drag Circus & Sideshow
Close out the 2023 CU Pride Fest week
with an amazing drag brunch hosted
by MyPride365! Delicious food and
drink and the best drag CU has to offer!

Holiday Inn Champaign
101 Trade Ctr Drive,
Champaign
10AM
Starting at
$15
GET TICKETS HERE
Thank you!

Uniting Pride of Champaign County wants to thank everyone who helped make the 2023 CU Pride Fest a huge success! But our work doesn't end here. If you want to stay involved, sign up for our newsletter or volunteer through our website: unitingpride.org.