



Updated April 13, 2020

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Dear Great Lakes Bay Pride sponsors, vendors, volunteers, and friends,

June is Pride Month and will continue to be celebrated across the country, likely with many more virtual opportunities. The Great Lakes Bay Pride planning team will continue working on new ideas to foster connections and build community. At all times of the year, the LGBT+ population faces a higher risk of social isolation. Connecting with fellow community members and allies is vital as we navigate our daily lives through this historic time.

Due to the ongoing public health concerns regarding COVID19, the Great Lakes Bay Pride Festival has been rescheduled to Saturday, August 8, 2020 at the same location in downtown Bay City's Wenonah Park. The After Party will also be rescheduled for the same day at the Dow Event Center in downtown Saginaw. At this uncertain time, our organization believes it is our duty to actively protect our vulnerable communities by following local, state, and federal guidelines to stop the spread of this virus.

We'd like to extend a heartfelt thank you to all of our sponsors, vendors, and volunteers who've already signed on to participate in the Great Lakes Bay Pride Festival this year. We will be reaching out to each of you as soon as possible to discuss this date change. Thank you, again, for your continued support of our regional celebration.

While this announcement focuses primarily on the festival and after party, it's important to note that Great Lakes Bay Pride hosts other events and activities throughout the year. Some events have already been rescheduled while others are being thoughtfully reviewed to determine the best course of action.

Again, a sincere thank you goes out to all of you reading this message. Your continued support is appreciated. If you have questions, concerns, need assistance, or just need to connect, we are here for you. Please feel free to contact us any time at info@perceptionsmi.org.

Stay home. Stay safe. Stay GREAT LAKES BAY PROUD!

Sincerely,

Beth Sibray
Board President

Scott Ellis
Executive Director

March 30, 2020

Hello friends,

I hope everyone is holding up well as we practice social distancing. I have a few updates to share today.

1. **March 30** – Unfortunately, Dr. Pionk’s webinar has been postponed until we clear this COVID19 pandemic. Dr. Pionk and healthcare professionals around the world are battling this virus and caring for us. Please join me in celebrating and thanking all of the healthcare workers and first responders!
2. **March 31, 4:30 p.m.** – We had a great response to Virtual Coffee Chat last Friday morning. Thank you to those who were able to join us. We decided to try out a Virtual Happy Hour this week. Please join us tomorrow, Tuesday, March 31 at 4:30 p.m. via Zoom (<https://zoom.us/j/484016128>). More information can be found on our calendar here: <https://www.perceptionsmi.org/calendar/>
3. **March 31 – International Transgender Day of Visibility** - The first step to Empowerment is Visibility. International Transgender Day of Visibility was created by Transgender Michigan as a day to visibly celebrate being transgender. Also, for allies to show their support for the transgender community. There is a virtual event hosted by TransLash Media at 7:00 p.m. More information can be found here: <https://www.facebook.com/events/523351758559670/>
4. **April 2, 6:00 p.m.** – The Transgender Support Group has been moved online. Zoom details can be found here: <https://www.facebook.com/events/2446282685613991/>

If you have any questions, please feel free to reach out any time to me via email at scott@perceptionsmi.org.

Stay well,
Scott Ellis
Executive Director

March 24, 2020

Good afternoon,

I wanted to share a few updates on upcoming events, meetings, and groups taking place virtually over the next three weeks.

1. **March 27, 9:30 a.m.** - Social distancing is hard and we want to check-in with our community this Friday morning during Virtual Coffee Chat! Check out the Facebook event for more details and Zoom login details: <https://www.facebook.com/events/851235778724552/>

2. **March 30, 7:00 p.m.** – We've set up Dr. Pionk's presentation as a webinar! Register here: https://zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_Re52RWfhTgaMXHsaYSAUTA
3. **April 2, 6:00 p.m.** – The Transgender Support Group has been moved online. Zoom details can be found here: <https://www.facebook.com/events/2446282685613991/>
4. If you don't receive our weekly email messages, you can check out this week's here: <https://mailchi.mp/242af53dc496/march-2020-week-four>

I've also come across this resource from HelpGuide.org titled Coronavirus Anxiety: Coping with Stress, Fear, and Uncertainty (<https://bit.ly/2UxwrYZ>). We are a resilient community and I hope activities like Virtual Coffee Chat and our other programs will allow us to check-in on one another from afar.

If you have any questions, please feel free to reach out any time to me via email at scott@perceptionsmi.org.

Stay well,
Scott Ellis
Executive Director

March 17, 2020

Greetings,

This week we've seen unprecedented cancellations and closures in response to the growing number of COVID-19 cases emerging across the country. As of this email, twelve cases have been confirmed right here in Michigan according to the Department of Health and Human Services. I'm sure this email is not the first you've received regarding the topic.

Perceptions and other LGBTQ+ organizations are taking precautionary actions to mitigate possible exposure in the coming weeks. I'm writing today to share information about the steps we're taking at this time.

Friday Night Dinners

Weekly dinners will be suspended for the next 2 weeks (3/20, 3/27). Dinners will tentatively resume on Friday, April 3.

Harmony Diversity Choir

Rehearsals will be suspended for the next 3 weeks (3/15, 3/22, 3/29) and will tentatively resume on Sunday, April 5 at the regularly scheduled time, 6:30 p.m. at St. John's Episcopal in Midland. Please visit our calendar at www.perceptionsmi.org for any updates.

Transgender Group

Transgender Social Group meeting on Saturday, March 21st is canceled. Please visit the calendar at www.perceptionsmi.org or the Perceptions Transgender Group on Facebook for details. At this time, the **Support Group** meeting scheduled for Thursday, April 2nd will tentatively proceed pending further evaluation and recommendations from the State of Michigan.

Other Local Programs/Events

March 15 – St. Patrick’s Day Parade, Bay City – CANCELED

March 15 – PFLAG Great Lakes Bay, Saginaw – CANCELED

March 30 – Dr. Pionk at Central Michigan University – Exploring virtual option.

Canceling or postponing programs and events is not an easy decision for any organization. We care deeply about the health and wellbeing of our communities. We will continue to monitor this ever-changing situation and keep you informed as things develop. The good news is we’re not alone.

Perceptions is an active partner of the newly established Michigan LGBTQ+ Community Centers Network which brings together other organizations across the state to share best practices, learn what others are doing, and work together as representatives of Michigan’s LGBTQ+ population. Just yesterday, a number of network partners collaborated to share a message about the increased risk of COVID-19 on the LGBTQ+ community. You can view the news announcement using the link below.

[Michigan LGBTQ+ Community Centers Network – COVID19 News Announcement](#)

Some information in this announcement was derived from the National LGBT Cancer Network. Their website is a great source of information regarding COVID-19 and the LGBTQ+ community. Visit <http://bit.ly/2IJFNLB> to learn more.

As we all seek to stay well over the next few weeks, please remember the CDC’s guidelines:

1. **Wash your hands often with soap and water.**
2. **Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth.**
3. **Avoid close contact with people who are sick.**
4. **Stay home if you are sick**, except to get medical care.
5. **Cover your mouth and nose** with a tissue when you cough or sneeze or use the inside of your elbow.
6. Wear a facemask **if you are sick**
7. **Clean AND disinfect** frequently touched surfaces daily.

<https://youtu.be/d914EnpU4Fo>

Additional CDC Resources: <http://bit.ly/2wQZbtU>

Michigan DHHS Resources: <http://bit.ly/33iW9UR>

We also want to ensure that folks in our communities have access to necessities. If you are in need of assistance, please call **2-1-1** for information about local resources. Many local individuals and organizations have stepped up to offer assistance. If you have any questions, please reach out to us at info@perceptionsmi.org.

As things evolve, please refer to our online calendar at www.perceptionsmi.org for program date changes and cancellations. We will do our best to communicate any changes through the various mediums we utilize including Facebook, our website, and email.

Thank you for your support and understanding as we make these tough, but necessary, decisions to keep our communities safe. If you have any questions, please don't hesitate to reach out to me via email at scott@perceptionsmi.org.

Stay well,

Scott Ellis
Executive Director
