



PERCEPTIONS

SAGINAW VALLEY

Serving the Tri-City Area's LGBT Community

April 2012

www.PerceptionsSV.org

Free

Laramie Project comes to Midland Center for the Arts



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Perceptions Saginaw Valley is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization. Your contributions are deductible as charitable donations for federal income tax purposes.

Perceptions is Mid-Michigan's leading resource for enriching and empowering LGBT individuals and their community.

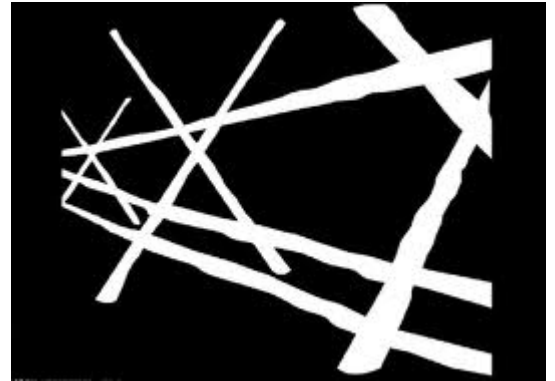
MISSION STATEMENT

Our mission is to provide superior educational programs, networking opportunities and services for the well being of Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender individuals and their community.

THE LARAMIE PROJECT comes to Midland Center for the Arts!

Greg Gwaltney

Perceptions will witness a first as the Midland Center for the Arts ([MCFTA](http://www.MCFTA.org)) addresses a part of GLBT history, the first nationally publicized case about hate in our community. As described by MCFTA, "The Laramie Project is a breathtaking theatrical collage that explores the depth to which humanity can sink and the heights of compassion of which we are capable."



The Laramie Project, written by Moisés Kaufman and members of the Tectonic Theatre Project, is a play about the reaction to the 1998 murder of University of Wyoming gay student Matthew Shepard in Laramie, Wyoming. The murder was denounced as a hate crime motivated by homophobia and brought attention to the lack of hate crimes laws in various states, including Wyoming.

The play draws on hundreds of interviews conducted with Laramie residents, company members' own journal entries, and published news reports. Divided into three acts, eight actors portray more than sixty characters in a series of short scenes.

The April 13th performance at 8 pm is designated as Perceptions night. Perceptions member may receive a discount by using code "Shepard" when ordering tickets at the MCFTA box office. Please order tickets directly through the Ticket Office by calling 989-631-8250 or 800-523-7649 Monday - Friday 12 noon to 6 pm and Saturday 12 noon - 4 pm. If you have already purchased your ticket but would like to sit with the group, call the box office and use the code as well.

Members will meet at the Golden Buffet, [979 South Saginaw Road](http://www.GoldenBuffet.com), Midland, for dinner prior to the show at 6 pm. Other MCFTA performances of The Laramie Project will take place April 12 and 14 at 8 pm and April 15 at 3 pm. There will be a talk-back with the actors and director after each performance.

First Highway Cleanup of the year!

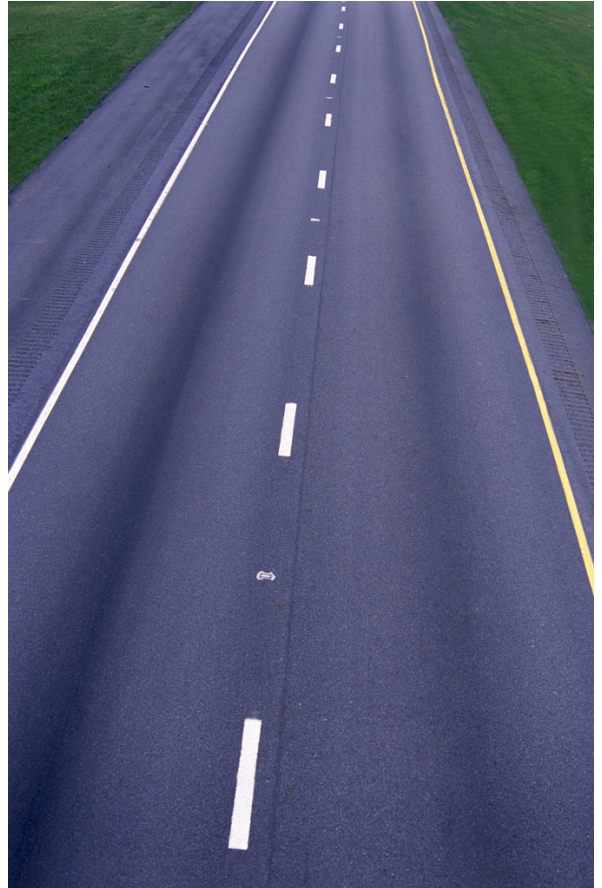
[Rick Farrand](#)

Come one come all to the first Highway clean up of the year!
Saturday April 21st at 10:00am!

It is that time of year again, and after a 2 year absence, due to construction, we can now go back to cleaning up our stretch of the highway on I-75! Doesn't this sound like fun!?!? Well it really is! We will meet at the [Rest Area](#) on Southbound I-75, just south of exit #160 from M-84 (Westside Saginaw Rd.).

We will have a short safety meeting and go over rules and regulations, and pass out fabulous safety vest, while enjoying donuts that I will bring. Make sure that you dress according to the day. Dress in layers and wear waterproof footwear. Have a hat to protect your head from the sun, and I will have sun screen and Benadryl for those that need it!! If you have never been before, then you should come and enjoy being out in the day while working with friends on a community project. It is really uplifting! For those of you who participate, you will then be able to take part in the cook out afterward at my house! So you get free food, what could be better?

If it is raining it will be cancelled. If you have any questions please call me at 989-799-3034. Thank you in advance, and I hope to see you there!



VA Hospital Women's Health Fair

By Rick Farrand

The Aleda Lutz VA Hospital of Saginaw was having a Women's Health Fair and their LGBT Program Manager asked Perceptions if we would like to be there to promote our group. We found this kind of odd, since although the military no longer officially operated under "The Don't Ask Don't Tell" rule we were not sure of the reception we would receive. However, since they asked, we jumped at the chance to go. Leo and myself were the ones who signed up for this, Leo representing PFLAG, and me, representing Perceptions, and it turned out to be a very good day! We were both welcomed and shown where our table would be, and as we waited for the day to start. Leo, knowing everybody, went to chat with some of the other people. The day got off to a slow start; we were getting mostly employees that were getting out of work, but as the day went on, we were getting lots of visitors. Most of them were just curious, but all were very friendly and did seem interested! We even saw some familiar faces and got to meet some great people! Leo even went around to let the others know about the Pride Festival on Ojibway Island in June, so that they could be there and promote their business. All in all, it turned out to be a great day and you just never know who we might have contacting us because of being "Out and Proud" at the VA!?!?



State of LGBT Rights in Michigan

Tim Atkinson

Our guest speaker for March was Emily Dievendorf. As Director of Policy for [Equality Michigan](#), Emily advocates for LGBT-friendly policies among legislators and other political leaders throughout the state. Prior to joining Equality Michigan, she worked in the Michigan House of Representatives for Democratic state legislators Alexander C. Lipsey of Kalamazoo and Andy Coulouris of Saginaw. Ms. Dievendorf served as Chief of Staff to Representative Coulouris, who was Chair of the House Committee on Banking and Financial Services.

Emily presented an overview of legislative activity effecting LGBT individuals in Michigan and nationally. The stage was set for our current environment of anti-gay legislation in the 2010 election. Progressive voters did not turn out to vote in 2010. In spite of that, exit polls showed that 65% of voters did support amending Michigan's Elliott-Larsen Civil Rights Act to protect citizens from discrimination based on sexual orientation or gender identity. However, the leadership elected does not reflect those views.

As evidence that there is growing public support for LGBT equality, Emily pointed out that 50% of Fortune 500 companies already have anti-discrimination policies protecting LGBT employees. This year, the city of East Lansing marked the 40th anniversary

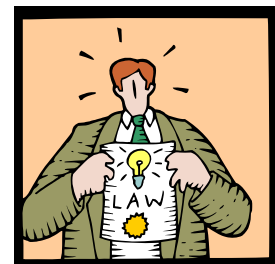
of its ordinance protecting LGBT citizens. The City of Muskegon recently drafted an ordinance that includes LGBT individuals among those it protects from discrimination. Muskegon was able to do this without much resistance and without outside forces pressing for action.

Contrary to this public support for LGBT equality, many bills that threaten equality are moving forward in this legislative climate. There have always been ugly bills introduced, but now they are moving beyond committee and passing. The most threatening bill is HB 5039 which would eliminate local protections, such as those enacted by East Lansing and Muskegon. The bill was introduced by Tom McMillin of Rochester Hills. Other examples of anti-gay bills include HB 5040, dubbed the "First Do Harm" bill, which would allow counseling students at Michigan colleges and universities to refuse service to LGBT people based on the student's religious beliefs. This bill passed the House of Representatives along party lines in spite of testimony that such a law would cause these schools to lose their accreditation. Another bill, pushed by the American Family Association, would prohibit public funds from paying for sex change operations. Their justification is that tax payers should not have to pay for prisoners to undergo a sex change operation. In the history of Michigan, no

inmate has ever had sex reassignment surgery so this bill has the potential to save tax payers exactly \$0.

Emily suggested a couple of strategies to help reverse this regressive trend. Progressive minded people need to fund pro-equality candidates. There are very few out gay candidates or elected officials. If there were visible gay officials, putting a face on those they seek to dehumanize, others lawmakers would likely feel some accountability to their colleagues. LGBT people and our families need to talk about these issues and give feedback to lawmakers. Story-telling is an effective means of changing minds and winning support.

There is an Equality Action Day being planned for May 24th at the State Capitol. The Action Day will include a demonstration at the Capitol asking for pro-equality measures. There will also be lobby training and the opportunity for attendees to speak with their elected officials to tell their own story about how their life is effected by inequalities and discrimination. Other activities are planned for those who may not be comfortable speaking to their Representative one-on-one.



Current Events

events.PerceptionsSV.org

Tuesday, April 3rd - Equality Denied?

7:00 pm. Delta College Lecture Theater. Perspectives on equal benefits for domestic partners: equality denied or preservation of traditional values. The panel discussion will explore the legal/constitutional arguments relating to equal protection and religious freedom; the personal impact on Michigan families; and how this issue impacts jobs, the budget and the Michigan economy. Panelists will include **Gary Glenn**, President of the American Family Association of Michigan; **Jay Kaplan**, Staff Attorney for the [ACLU of Michigan's](#) LGBT Project; **Darlene McKinnon**, Culture of Employee Engagement, Director, Dow Chemical Corp.; and **Elizabeth Ullrich**, Assistant Professor of Political Science, Delta College. Moderated by Dave Baskind, Associate Professor of Psychology, Delta College. The forum is sponsored by the Delta College Foundation and is free and open to the public.

▼ Friday, April 6th - Friday Night Dinner

7:00 pm. Join Perceptions members and friends each week at **The Savoy Grill**, [127 S. Franklin St.](#), Saginaw. Please reply to RSVP@PerceptionsSV.org by 3:00 pm Friday if you plan to attend.

Sunday, April 8th - Genesee County

PFLAG Meeting 2:00 - 4:30 pm. Today's meeting will feature a video followed by a group discussion. The meeting takes place at the Unitarian Universalist Church of Flint, [2474 S. Ballenger Hwy.](#) Contact pflagflint@yahoo.com for more info.

▼ Wednesday, April 11th - Freeland

Meet & Greet 6:00 to 8:00 pm. **Riverside Restaurant**, [8295 Midland Road](#) (M-47), Freeland. Private room. Famous homemade pies.

Wednesday, April 11th - Open Hearts

6:00 pm. Positive thinking group for disabled members of the LGBT community. Discussion, speakers and support. Meets at Butman Fish Library in Saginaw. For info call Rev. Kathy VanBuskirk at 989-755-2618.

▼ Friday, April 13th - Friday Night Dinner

6:00 pm. Join Perceptions members and friends this week at **Golden Buffet**, [979 South Saginaw Road](#), Midland. If you plan to attend, please reply to

RSVP@PerceptionsSV.org by 3:00 pm Friday. We're eating earlier than usual this week so that you have the option to attend "*The Laramie Project*" at MCFTA afterward. You will need to purchase your ticket in advance to secure seating for the performance. Call the ticket office at 989-631-8250 and use group code "Shepard" to purchase a discounted ticket in the block of seats reserved for Perceptions.

April 13th to 15th - The Laramie Project

Dramatic, real-life narrative of the small town of Laramie, Wyoming, during the aftermath of the brutal murder of gay University of Wyoming student Matthew Shepard. The Laramie Project is a breathtaking theatrical collage that explores the depth to which humanity can sink and the heights of compassion of which we are capable. Each performance will have a Talk Back by the director, actors, and members of the GLAD Network from Dow. [Midland Center for the Arts](#), Little Theatre. 8:00 pm on Fri. & Sat., 3:00 pm on Sun. Tickets \$19 adult / \$11 student.

Sunday, April 15th - PFLAG Meeting

2:00 - 4:30 pm. The guest speaker, **Ron Goetz**, will present "LGBT and Religion - Face to Face." Ron is a proud PFLAG father, speaks for PFLAG nationally, attended several conservative seminaries and was an assistant pastor. The meeting takes place at **Our Saviour Lutheran Church**, [2525 Hemmeter Rd.](#), Saginaw. For more information contact pflag@pflag-mbs.org or 989-941-1458.

Wednesday, April 18th - Womyn's

Room II 6:00 pm. This women's group is designed as a safe place for Lesbian, Bisexual and Transgender women, who are out or not, to come for support and socialization. For more info. contact Rev. Kathy VanBuskirk at 989-755-2618.

Wednesday, April 18th - Men's Friend-

ship Room 7:00 pm. Men's Friendship Room is designed as a safe place for Gay, Bisexual and Transgender men, who are out or not, to come for support and socialization. It meets at David Younk's home in Saginaw. For more information, contact David Younk at 989-771-9721 or DavidY513@hotmail.com or Rev. Kathy VanBuskirk at 989-755-2618.

▼ Thursday, April 19th - Perceptions

General Meeting 7:00 pm. Our guest speaker will be Antonio David Garcia, Executive Director of [Affirmations](#). All are welcome. The Alderton, [301 Cass St.](#), Old Town Saginaw. For more information, contact info@PerceptionsSV.org.

▼ Friday, April 20th - Friday Night Dinner

7:00 pm. Join Perceptions members and friends this week at **Rattlesnake Rick's**, [708 Saginaw St.](#), Bay City. please reply to RSVP@PerceptionsSV.org by 3:00 pm Friday if you plan to attend,

Friday, April 20th - Day of Silence

The [Day of Silence](#) is a student-led national event that brings attention to anti-LGBT name-calling, bullying and harassment in schools. Students from middle school to college take a vow of silence in an effort to encourage schools and classmates to address the problem of anti-LGBT behavior by illustrating the silencing effect of bullying and harassment on LGBT students and those perceived to be LGBT.

▼ Tuesday, April 24th - Men's Discussion

Group 7:00 to 8:30 pm. The Alderton, [301 Cass St.](#), Old Town Saginaw. This gathering is intended as a discussion and informal support group for gay and bisexual men. The group will be facilitated by Thomas Brubaker. You may contact him at Thomas@PerceptionsSV.org for additional information or to let him know you'll attend. Light snacks will be provided.

▼ Friday, April 27th - Friday Night Dinner

7:00 pm. Join Perceptions members and friends this week at **Fuzzy's Restaurant**, [1924 Court St.](#), Saginaw. Please reply to RSVP@PerceptionsSV.org by 3:00 pm Friday, if you plan to attend.

There will not be a Game Night at The Mixx in April due to Old Town's Martini March happening on our regularly scheduled night.

The Perceptions Transgender Group has not planned a meeting in April.

▼ Event sponsored or endorsed by Perceptions.

To be informed about upcoming events, simply send a blank email to: PerceptionsSV-subscribe@yahoogroups.com

APRIL 2012

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8  Genesee Co. PFLAG Meeting UU Church of Flint 2474 S. Ballenger Hwy, Flint 2:00 - 4:30 PM	9	10  Perceptions Board Meeting 7:00 - 9:00 PM	11  Freeland Meet & Greet Riverside Restaurant 8295 Midland Road 6:00 - 8:00 PM	12	13  Friday Night Dinner Golden Buffet 979 S. Saginaw Rd. Midland, 6:00 PM <i>The Laramie Project</i> MCTFA, 8:00 PM	14																																																																																				
15  Tri-Cities PFLAG Meeting Our Savior Lutheran Church 2525 Hemmeter, Saginaw 2:00 - 4:30 PM	16	17	18	19  Perceptions General Meeting 301 Cass, Saginaw 7:00 - 9:00 PM	20  Friday Night Dinner Rattlesnake Rick's 708 Saginaw St. Bay City 7:00 PM	21  Adopt-A-Highway Clean Up Bay City Rest Area I-75 South 10:00 AM																																																																																				
22	23	24  Perceptions Men's Discussion Group 301 Cass, Saginaw 7:00 - 8:30 PM	25	26	27  Friday Night Dinner Fuzzy's 1924 Court St. Saginaw 7:00 PM	28																																																																																				
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St. Patrick's Day Dance



Tim Atkinson

On Saturday evening, March 17th, the [Midland Resort & Conference Center](#) hosted a Saint Patrick's Day Dance for LGBT people. They advertised the dance in Perceptions Newsletter and in [Between the Lines](#). They also contacted area LGBT organizations to try to get the word out. To my knowledge, this was the first time that a local business has reached out to the LGBT community to host such an event.

The Dance was held in their Conference Center, which is a very nice, well maintained facility. A large dance floor was set up and a DJ from Jay Samborn Entertainment spun tunes from the stage. On either side of the dance floor, there was a large area with linen-covered tables and chairs. The room also had a well stocked cash bar. Drink specials ranged from \$1 Jello shots to \$3 and \$4 mixed drinks. They charged a \$5 cover charge for admittance.

In spite of their best efforts, attendance at the dance was low with fewer than 30 people stopping by over the course of the evening. Those that did show up were pretty evenly divided between men and women. Most of the people who did show up stayed and had a very good time. As it turned out, nearly everyone there knew everyone else so it gave people a chance to catch up with friends that they hadn't seen in a while.

The hotel offered a room package to go along with the dance, but they didn't book any rooms. All of the attendees were locals, with most coming from the Bay City and Saginaw area.

The organizer of the event, the hotel's public relations manager, said it was something that she wanted to try and she was not terribly disappointed by the results. Based on the response to this one, she is not sure if they will try to do another such event. I think that whether you attended or not, it would be a great thing if several people from our community took the time to thank them for their efforts. You can email the hotel at MidlandResortEvents@gmail.com

Battling Bullying Initiative

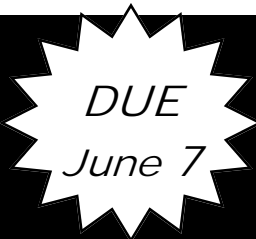
Daphne Barkley

Perceptions recently took part in an anti-bullying initiative in the Tri-Cities. Organized through the Saginaw Township Community School, The Great Lakes Bay Great Read was designed to immerse 80 middle school classrooms in a multi-pronged program. The students will collectively read the award-winning book, "Touching Spirit Bear," told from the viewpoint of a bully; attend a presentation by the author of that book, Ben Mikaelson and then embark on a field trip to see an art project created

by a man in response to his lifetime of being bullied. Additionally, our classroom sponsorship will afford the students the opportunity to go on a guided field trip to the John Pratt Mosaic House in Midland County. Pratt reacted to his lifetime of being bullied by creating colorful mosaic works of arts on the exterior of the family home in a prime example of what is called folk art. Our sponsorship will also cover bus transportation for the two field trips as well as an art supply kit and instructions for each classroom student to cre-

ate his/her own Pratt-style mosaic.

Bullying is an issue which has reached epic proportions and touches the lives of many LGBT individuals as well as allies. It is our hope that through participation in this anti-bullying initiative may change the hearts and minds of youth in a positive manner and show them that bullying is not the answer as well as give hope to those who suffer from bullying.



PRIDE AWARD NOMINATION FORM

for The LGBT & Ally Pride Awards Banquet

June 28, 2011 Andersen Enrichment Center

Nominate people who have helped the Saginaw Valley LGBT community.
 Read the award descriptions below and use as a guide.
 Follow the directions in the black box (bottom).

Lifetime Achievement Award The highest award given to an individual who has demonstrated a lifelong commitment to help gain a better life for LGBT people and who has demonstrated effectiveness at reaching the goal for equality, fairness and justice for all LGBT community.

Business Pride Award Given to a business that has contributed its share of support to the success and progress of the LGBT community.

Political Pride Award Given to an outstanding leader who has worked to improve the quality for LGBT people through the political or electoral process.

Pride Award(s) Given to an individual(s) who has shown outstanding leadership and commitment through their advocacy of acceptance, equality and respect for all people, regardless of sexual orientation, gender identity or expression. The nominee has been a model for other LGBT people and allies. The Pride Award Selection Committee may select one or more individuals for the Pride Award.

Nominees will be evaluated on the basis of leadership, impact and commitment to the LGBT community.

Pride Award Selection Committee members are ineligible for an award.

To help us to evaluate the nominees, please answer the following questions thoroughly and succinctly.

1. Describe the nominee's involvement in the LGBT community. Be as specific as possible.
2. Briefly describe why this nominee deserves an award at the Saginaw Valley Pride Banquet.
3. Describe how the nominee's participation in the LGBT community has made a difference in the Saginaw Valley, or at the state or national level.

I NOMINATE _____
First & last name of the nominee or organization.

Nominee's phone: _____

Nominee's email: _____

Name of Award: _____

My name: _____

My phone: _____

My email address: _____

Submit this form & one typed page that describes the nominee.

Mail, or scan & email to:
 PRIDE Nomination Committee
 c/o Perceptions
 P.O. Box 1525
 Midland, MI 48641
 Or Pride@PerceptionsSV.org

DUE: June 7, 2012 by midnight

**Saginaw Valley LGBT & Ally
 Pride Awards Banquet**

Tuesday, June 26, 2012
 Andersen Enrichment Center
 120 Ezra Rust, Saginaw

6 pm Reception
7 pm Dinner and Program

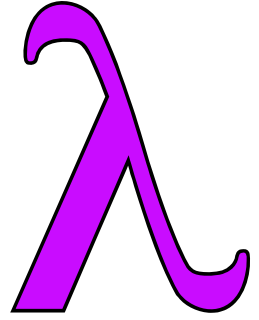
**Tickets or info: www.PerceptionsSV.org
 or 989-891-1429**

Cost: \$25 (\$15 for students)

SAVE THE DATE: TUESDAY JUNE 26, 2012 SAGINAW VALLEY PRIDE AWARDS BANQUET!

Rick Farrand

This will be the 4th year for our Pride Awards and Leo is letting me take over this endeavor. He needed a break and who can blame him. He has done an excellent job providing us with this program and I hope that I can do as well as he. So.... to get the ball rolling we need your help with nominations! If there is any one who you think has gone above and beyond in the Gay Community or any one who has stepped up to the plate to help our community, now is the time to let this person know how much they are appreciated! We need to get those ballots in by Thursday, June 7. We will have last year's recipients go over all nominations, along with Tim, the Perceptions Chair, Leo, and myself, and we will all help pick out this year's honorees. If nominating some one is not your thing, but still want to help, then this is your chance to [become a sponsor](#). We have varying sponsorship levels of: Harvey Milk \$100, Ellen DeGeneres \$50, Advocate \$25, and Patron \$10. All sponsors will be listed in the program. Wine reception and hors-d' oeuvres will be at 6, Dinner will at 7 and awards presentation will be from 8 to 9. We will have Michelle E. Brown as our speaker. She is an author, activist and excellent public speaker. Let's make this year's Banquet, as good as the last 3, as I would really hate to have to disappoint Leo. Any questions or comments, nominations, and sponsorships, can be directed to me at Pride@PerceptionsSV.org.



Walk Across America for LGBT Rights

Daphne Barkley

Something amazing is happening beginning on April 23, 2012. Mike Chall, a transgender individual who has been living as a man for the last 15 years although having been born a female is planning to walk from San Francisco, California to Washington DC to bring the issue of LGBT rights to the forefront. Mike will be start his walk at Dr. Brownstein's office in San Francisco. Dr. Brownstein, MD is a long time supporter of the LGBT community and currently only does female to male chest reconstructive surgery because of the large need and his experience.

What the project is looking for are more supporters like Dr. Brownstein. There is need for individuals, organizations and companies to lend moral, financial and material support for the almost 3,000 mile walk. Material items needed include several pairs of hiking/running shoes, camping materials, water, food, clothing/socks and hiking backpacks with water reservoirs.

The hope is to raise awareness of the plight of the LBGT Community, to bring this topic into the public debates and actually gather enough support to make a change in the laws of this country. During the walk, Mike's fiancée will update the blog with stories of the journey as well as photos and clips from the walk. After the walk a documentary will be created of the recorded journey along with those who join for a portion of the walk.

For more information about this amazing initiative and to help support the cause, please go to:

<http://www.the2ndclasscitizenproject.org/>

Saginaw Valley LGBT & Allies Pride Awards Banquet Sponsorship & Ticket Form

Yes, I will support the Saginaw Valley LGBT Pride Awards Banquet to be held on June 26th at the Andersen Enrichment Center!

Sponsorship

Names of contributors will be printed in the evening program unless instructed otherwise. Select your level of sponsorship below.

- \$10 Patron \$25 Advocate \$50 Ellen DeGeneres
 \$100 Harvey Milk Other Amount \$ _____

Clearly PRINT the exact name(s) for the program: _____

(You may include "In memory of ..." or "In honor of ..." in the program.)

- Anonymous Donation of \$ _____.

Sponsorships must be received by June 23, 2012 to be included in the program.

Tickets

- I wish to purchase _____ tickets @ \$25 per person.
 I wish to purchase _____ discount tickets @ \$15 each for students or persons with limited funds.

Name: _____ Telephone: _____

Street Address: _____ Email: _____

City, State & ZIP: _____

Make checks payable to **Perceptions** with the notation "Pride" in the memo.

Mail to: Perceptions
PO Box 1525
Midland, MI 48641



Cut & Save

Saginaw Valley LGBT & Allies Pride Awards Banquet
Tuesday, June 26, 2012
Anderson Enrichment Center, 120 Ezra Rust Dr., Saginaw, MI.

6:00 pm Appetizer Reception

7:00 pm Dinner

8:00 pm Program & Pride Awards recognizing local LGBT people & Allies.

Tickets: \$25 per person. Information: www.PerceptionsSV.org or 989-891-1429 or Pride@PerceptionsSV.org

Challenges of LGBT Seniors- Part Two of a Three Part Series

David DePeal, Guest Columnist

Note: Services and Advocacy for Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual and Transgender Elders ([SAGE](#)) two years ago released a report on the challenges faced by LGBT seniors. The SAGE report highlights three key areas where LGBT seniors face challenges: financial security, health care and social supports. This is the second part of a three part series on those key areas. This article is simply meant to entertain and inform. In no way is it meant to convey the opinion of a medical provider. If you are in need of health services, please consult a trained medical professional.

Access to medical care is an important element in promoting an individual's health and life. Many studies show, however, that same-sex partners often do not have medical coverage of any kind due to the fact that many employers are not required, and therefore, do not offer any domestic partnership benefits including health insurance. With little or no access to health care because of out-of-pocket cost prohibitions, many LGBT partners, particularly lesbian women, delay or forego, needed regular health maintenance check-ups such as mammograms and PAP smears. As a result, when serious health issues are detected, they are often in the later stages of the disease with considerably grimmer prognosis.

However, choosing the right medical provider is also important for many reasons, and for LGBT individuals it is even more so than their heterosexual counterparts. Study after study shows that individuals who have sexual relationships with other individuals of their own sex have different health concerns than those who do not. For example, men whom have sex with other men are at considerably higher risk of developing colon, rectal and prostate cancer as well as certain sexual transmitted infections such as genital warts and HIV and certain STDs.

Likewise, women who have sex with women are at significantly higher risks levels of developing breast, ovarian and cervical cancers due to fewer protective hormones being released during childbearing and breast feeding. In addition, lesbian and bisexual women are also heavier on average than heterosexual women, and therefore have higher concentrations of conditions that are associated with obesity including diabetes, high blood pressure, and pulmonary and heart disease.

Many LGBT individuals, due to loneliness and being isolated and stigmatized, also suffer from substance abuse and depression as well. Suicide rates among LBGT individuals are as much as four times higher than those heterosexual individuals at all ages with younger gay and bisexual males having the highest rate of completed suicides altogether in the United States and Canada.

Many of these conditions affecting LGBT individuals can be adequately treated or even cured if presented to qualified medical and mental health professionals at an early stage. However, studies among gay organizations find that anywhere from 14% to 61% of LGBT individuals (depending on age, location, sex, marital status, comfort level, etc.) are not out to their medical provider. As a result, those conditions that impair LGBT individuals' health go undiagnosed and untreated. Therefore, it is essential to your health to be as honest and upfront with your regular medical provider as much as possible. As such, it is a good idea to be as comfortable with her/him as a professional as possible.

For many, this may mean a medical provider of the same sex, for some it may mean a medical provider that is lesbian or gay or at least sensitive to LGBT issues. Only you know your comfort level. By law, medical professionals cannot release your medical files to employers or anyone else unless you sign off giving them expressed permission to do so. Failure to follow these laws can result in a lawsuit by those harmed by such disclosure of the information. In the event that you do not have medical insurance, talk with your local health department and family aid agencies to see what options and plans are available. Often, these agencies can help or can at least refer you to other possible agencies that might.

If you need to find a LGBT friendly medical provider, please consult the following sources:

Online sources such as Gay and Lesbian Medical Association (<http://www.glma.org>) and Rate MDs (<http://RateMDs.com>)

Your local gay and lesbian community centers (Perceptions SV has new listing for medical providers coming soon!)

Other members of the LGBT community

Saginaw Valley LGBT History Meeting Planned

[Leo Romo](#)

Since people have lived in the Saginaw Valley, there have been LGBT people here. Our task is to document our history through photos, videos, films, recordings, flyers, posters, post cards, newspaper/magazine articles, newsletters, interviews, letters, journals, or items that an individual or group used. Documents put a human face on people and events. If you are interested in documenting Saginaw Valley LGBT history, continue reading.

Local community groups, services and bars have served the LGBT community: Dignity, Wellness, the Womyn's Room I and II, the Men's Discussion group, Men's Friendship Room, Metropolitan Community Church (MCC), the Unity Church, the Unitarian Universalist Fellowship of Midland, Divine Light Interfaith Ministry, PFLAG Tri-Cities, Perceptions, Transgender Support Group, BASIS/Sacred Heart Rehabilitation Center, Hearth Home, the AIDS Walk, Chocolate Parties, Garden Parties, several bars including Dutch's, Talullah's, Bambi's and Bambi's Bottoms Up, Whispers, the Heidelberg, the Mixx/Metro Grill, and Malickey's Pub. This list is incomplete. Tell us who or what is missing. Names will be not printed without permission.

Generally, we have a good "timeline" of Saginaw Valley LGBT history. We must update the information we have to enrich and expand it. A group of interested individuals will meet to do just that on April 30 at the Zauel Library, Saginaw Township at 7:00 pm.

Saginaw Valley LGBT History Meeting

Goal: To update/edit the timeline and document Saginaw Valley LGBT history.

When: Mon., April 30, 2012

Time: 7:00 pm

Where: Zauel Library, 3100 N. Center Rd., Saginaw, MI

Touch of Light Therapeutic Massage

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Saginaw MI, 48602
989-574-8097

BRIAN M., LRT, CMT

Offering Therapeutic Massage and Body Work,
Medical Massage, Hot Stone Massage, Reiki
and Other Energy Work.

Men's Discussion Group

Tuesday, April 24th
7:00-8:30pm

The Alderton, -301 Cass St., Old Town
Saginaw

Facilitated by Thomas Brubaker.

Lights snacks provided. You may bring
a beverage.

Please contact Thomas at
Thomas@PerceptionsSV.org for more
information and to let him know you
will attend