



# PERCEPTIONS

## SAGINAW VALLEY

Serving the Tri-City Area's LGBT Community

**February 2013**

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

**Free**

### **Holiday Gala, Smashing Success**

Ben Dowd

December 1, 2012 was a night to remember for the Perceptions family and supporters. All guests to the event were treated to a wonderful evening of entertainment, great food, laughs, and most of all – FUN.

As guests entered the banquet center at Apple Mountain, they were greeted with many items set up for a silent auction. Items included gift baskets, gift certificates, services such as massage, keepsake items, collectables, and this area served as a great reception time before the main event. Guests were also treated to using a photo booth complete with props for a fun token to take home.

The collaboration of money raised during the event was split for a donation to the USO Warrior & Family Care Program. Money was raised through the silent auction, a live auction, ticket sales, and even a contest of ugliest sweater – modeled in person. All of these events helped the evening to be very enjoyable for all.

A great highlight of the evening was the video messages from both of the U.S. Senators who represent Michigan. These messages seemed to set a sense of pride in the room for the evening by showing the support that not only the LGBT community has, but Perceptions specifically.

The night ended with a full dance floor, lots of smiles, and another successful gala complete. Perceptions hosts the gala annually as its main source of revenue. The generosity and support of everyone that made the event a success is what makes our community such a GREAT place to call home. We are already looking forward to plans around the 2013 gala – and hope to see you all there again.

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Get your copy of the Newsletter sent to you free with your paid membership. The Newsletter is always free to view online. For more information visit [www.PerceptionsSV.org](http://www.PerceptionsSV.org)

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.

## THANKS FOR A RECORD-SETTING HOLIDAY GATHERING!

Dear Members, Volunteers, and Attendees,

We want to extend a huge **Thank You** to all for your efforts in making the **Perceptions 10th Anniversary Celebration & Holiday Gathering** such a success! Whether you volunteered, donated, and/or attended, we could not have done it without you.

We went all out to celebrate this important achievement in our organization's life. We sought to celebrate, educate, and reach outside ourselves. We initially communicated the following intended outcomes of this event to Perceptions' board:

- **Education** – Educate current and future members and friends and supporters about Perceptions, the GLBT community, and our partnerships.
- **Networking** – Build connections between members, potential members, friends, and supporters.
- **Services** – Create awareness of partners that provide services to the GLBT community.
- **Enrichment** – Show value in GLBT lives in an inclusive cultural, diverse setting.
- **Empowerment** – Demonstrate Perceptions as a valid part of the community and open doors for members to other connections and opportunities.

**All of us together ensured these outcomes became reality.**

We appreciate your support and volunteerism. Please use this achievement as a springboard into the New Year and continue your volunteerism in 2013. As Senator Stabenow said in her recorded statement to us: ***"10 years. It's a lot to celebrate. A lot of wonderful work...And I know there's a lot more to come."***

Sincerely,

Chris Lauckner &  
Greg Gwaltney

### **Perceptions set records in Holiday Gathering Attendance and Event Fund-raising!**

- Attendance: **Over 200 of you and our allies! (The most diverse we've had.)**
- Profit: **Over \$10,000**
- Donation: **Over \$5,000 to USO Warrior and Family Care Program!**
- Auction Items: **Over 175 Auction and Raffle Items!**

## LGBT Advocacy Issues

Leo R. Romo

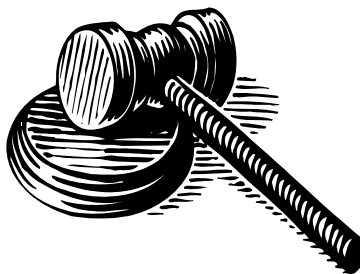
### Appeals Court Upholds Same-Sex Benefits for State Employees

The Michigan Court of Appeals recently ruled that domestic partners of state employees are entitled to health care benefits. The 2-1 ruling was in favor the Michigan Civil Service Commission's decision to offer the State Health Plan to "other eligible adult individuals" who live with state employees. That includes same-sex partners.

Michigan Attorney General Bill Schuette contends that it violates the state constitution's prohibition against recognizing any agreement other than "the union of one man and one woman in marriage" as "a marriage or similar union for any purpose."

The appeals court ruled the policy doesn't conflict with a 2004 gay marriage ban that prohibits the recognition of "similar" unions. The majority ruling says it is clear state employee could share benefits with other people besides a gay partner. Judges Amy Ronayne Krause and Stephen Borrello wrote the opinion - "Consequently, there is no ab-

solute prohibition against same-sex domestic partners receiving benefits through their relationship with an employee so long as that receipt is not based on the employer's recognition of that relationship as a marriage or similar union." (Edited *Saginaw News*, Jan. 10, 2013)



### Less bullying and more kindness through Hero in the Hallway program

Saginaw Township's White Pine Middle School started the Hero in the Hallways program where students and staff members who do good deeds or acts of kindness can be nominated, selected and honored on a regular basis. Principal Kristen Hecht said the program, which is led by the school's sixth-, seventh-, and eighth-grade counselors, is meant not only to prevent bullying but it helps

to promote kindness.

"We're looking at working on the overall culture and the bystander," Hecht said. "The victim, the bully, the bystander - and that largest group is the bystander. We give them the tools to know how to react, how to report it, and how to intervene, to make the situation better."

Sixth-grade counselor Julie VanTol said there are Hero in the Hallway boxes positioned in the sixth, seventh and eighth grade buildings, along with forms that students and staff can fill out to anonymously report bullying or nominate heroes.

Students don't have to sign their names in the bullying reports but they often do. "Very rarely do we get anonymous reports. They sign their names because they want it stopped, too."

Seventh-grade counselor Jill Fletcher said that the state has required all school districts to develop an anti-bullying policy, which Saginaw Township Schools has, but "we just decided we wanted to do something more." (Edited article *Saginaw News*, Jan. 18, 2013)

## Meeting the Board

Ben Dowd

First, I would like to thank the Perceptions Family for the opportunity to serve on the board. I am eager to be involved with such a wonderful organization. So – a little about me... I grew up in Oscoda, MI, and then attended Central Michigan University until 2003. I moved to Saginaw in 2004 and finished my 2 degrees online through Colorado Technical University. I have been in the banking industry since 2002 and have turned that into my career – I suppose until I get tired of money...but is that possible??

I have been active in LGBT groups through two different banks, and have been able to be a voice of the community to the companies. I have also served on the AIDS Walk Committee the past two years and have been looking for the opportunity to be involved in Perceptions – and now is the time.

My hobbies include cruise vacations, concerts, amusement parks, camping, boating, and most things outdoors – so long as it is warm! I am a big fan of warm weather and sun, and care very little for snow.

I look forward to getting to know all of you and serving the group and our community for the next three years.

Cheers.

## Chocolate Party

Rick Farrand

Keep this Date Open  
Saturday March 16, 2013  
5:00 pm to 8:00 pm  
CHOCOLATE PARTY

If you have always wanted to see what the [Castle Museum](#) looked like inside or always wanted to go see one of its exhibits, then you are in for a treat! This year's Chocolate Party will be held at the former Saginaw Post Office, now the Castle Museum of Saginaw County in downtown Saginaw. Built in 1898, this will surely be a once in a life time excursion into Saginaw's rich past. This year they will have the history of corner stones! Sometimes called foundation stones, these are set in a prominent location outside a building, with displays and engravings commemorating the time a particular building was built.

Tom Trombley, Deputy Director at the museum will be giving us guided tours, so we can see and learn a little bit about the museum and any upcoming exhibits and displays. There is a free will donation and this event is cosponsored with PFLAG. We are sure this will be a night you won't want to miss. Oh, did I forget to mention chocolate! There will be a large variety of mouthwatering treats and delicious desserts to try. If you have a favorite chocolate recipe that you would like to share with us, bring it along, we would love to try it!



### 2013 Membership Incentive

Compliments of The Mixx Nightclub & Metro Grille

Throughout 2013, show your Perceptions Membership Card at the door and receive \$2 off adult cover or \$3 off minor cover (18 to 20).

This offer is good for regular nights and most show nights. Exclusions apply for Fundraisers, New Years, and Special Shows.

## Current Events

events.PerceptionsSV.org

▼ **February 1st - Friday Night Dinner** 7:00 pm. Join Perceptions friends this week at **The Turkey Roost**, [2273 S. Huron Rd.](#), Kawkawlin. If you plan to attend, please reply to [RSVP@PerceptionsSV.org](mailto:RSVP@PerceptionsSV.org) by 3:00 pm Friday.

▼ **February 8th - Friday Night Dinner** 7:00 pm. Join Perceptions members and friends this week at **Court Street Grill**, [100 Michigan Ave.](#), Saginaw. If you plan to attend, please reply to [RSVP@PerceptionsSV.org](mailto:RSVP@PerceptionsSV.org) by 3:00 pm Friday.

▼ **Sat., February 9th - Perceptions Valentines Dance** 7:00 - 11:00 pm. Come out for a night of dancing, food, merriment, and activities. We are at a new venue this year with a built-in sound system and tons of room to break out the dancing shoes. UCC of Midland, [4100 Chesnut Hill Drive](#). Again this year, there will be no admission charge to get in. A free will donation will be accepted. See article on page 8.

**Sun., February 10th - Genesee County PFLAG Meeting** 2:00 - 4:30 pm. The meeting takes place at the Unitarian Universalist Church of Flint, [2474 S. Ballenger Hwy.](#) For more information, contact [pflagflint@yahoo.com](mailto:pflagflint@yahoo.com).

**Sun., February 10th - Valentine's at the Savoy** 6:00 pm. Proceeds benefit Potter Street Station Preservation. A candlelit dinner for two, only \$60 per couple. Your choice of appetizers (brochette, spinach artichoke dip, or shrimp cocktail); your choice on entrée (garlic herb crusted prime rib, creamy chicken angle hair pesto pasta, or baked ruby red trout); your choice of dessert (crème brulee or chocolate cake). Full cash bar available. **The Savoy Grill**, [127 S. Franklin St.](#), Saginaw. Limited availability. Call 989-754-9660.

**Wed., February 13th - 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 989-392-6874.

▼ **Thurs., February 14th - Card Players Club** 1:00 to 3:00 pm. **The Alderton Bldg.**, [301 Cass St.](#), Saginaw. The group will decide the games depending on the crowd. Bring your favorite beverage and/or snack. Some refreshments will be provided. Join us for a fun afternoon of fellowship. Repeats on the second Thursday of the month. Please direct questions and suggestions to [Mike Mercer](#).

▼ **February 15th - Friday Night Dinner** 7:00 pm. Join Perceptions friends this week **Rusty Saw Smokehouse BBQ**, (new location) [1205 Washington Ave.](#), Bay City. If you plan to attend, please reply to [RSVP@PerceptionsSV.org](mailto:RSVP@PerceptionsSV.org) by 3:00 pm Friday.

**Sun., February 17th - PFLAG Meeting** 2:00 - 4:30 pm. The meeting takes place at Our Saviour Lutheran Church,

[2525 Hemmeter Rd.](#), Saginaw. For more information contact [pflag@pflag-mbs.org](mailto:pflag@pflag-mbs.org) or 989-941-1458.

▼ **Tues., February 19th - Men's Discussion Group** 7:00 to 8:30 pm. **The Alderton Bldg.**, [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](mailto:Thomas@PerceptionsSV.org) for additional information or to let him know you'll attend. Light snacks will be provided.

**Wed., February 20th - 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 989-392-6874.

▼ **Thurs., February 21st - Perceptions General Meeting** 7:00 pm. Join Perceptions for our monthly meeting, featuring a presentation by Leo Romo about the history of the LGBT community in the Saginaw Valley region. **The Alderton Bldg.**, [301 Cass St.](#), Saginaw. Refreshments will be served. All are welcome. For more information, contact [Perceptions](#). See article on page 7.

▼ **February 22nd - Friday Night Dinner** 7:00 pm. Join Perceptions friends this week at **Macy's Lakeshore Grill**, [4750 Fashion Square Blvd.](#), Saginaw. If you plan to attend, please reply to [RSVP@PerceptionsSV.org](mailto:RSVP@PerceptionsSV.org) by 3:00 pm Friday.

▼ **Thurs., February 28th - Saginaw Meet & Greet** 7:00 to 9:00 pm. Join Perceptions friends each month for an evening of games of skill or chance or just for friendly conversation. Board games and cards will be available if you'd like to play, or bring your own game. Sandwiches and snacks will be available in The Metro Grille, as well as coffee, soft drinks, and a full bar. **The Mixx**, [115 N. Hamilton Street](#), Old Town Saginaw.





**Sat., March 9th Michigan LGBT ComedyFest** 8:00 pm. Ford Community & Performing Arts Center, Dearborn. Four comedians in one huge show: Jackie Monahan, Gloria Bigelow, Ted Morris, and Bridget McManus. [Tickets](#) \$35.

▼ **Sat., March 16th Chocolate Party** 5:00 to 8:00 pm. **The Castle Museum**, 500 Federal St., Saginaw. Enjoy delicious chocolate treats and take a tour of the museum led by Deputy Director Tom Trombley. Free will donations support the programs of Perceptions and PFLAG Tri-Cities. See article on page 4.

▼ **Event Sponsored or Endorsed by Perceptions.**

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

# FEBRUARY 2013

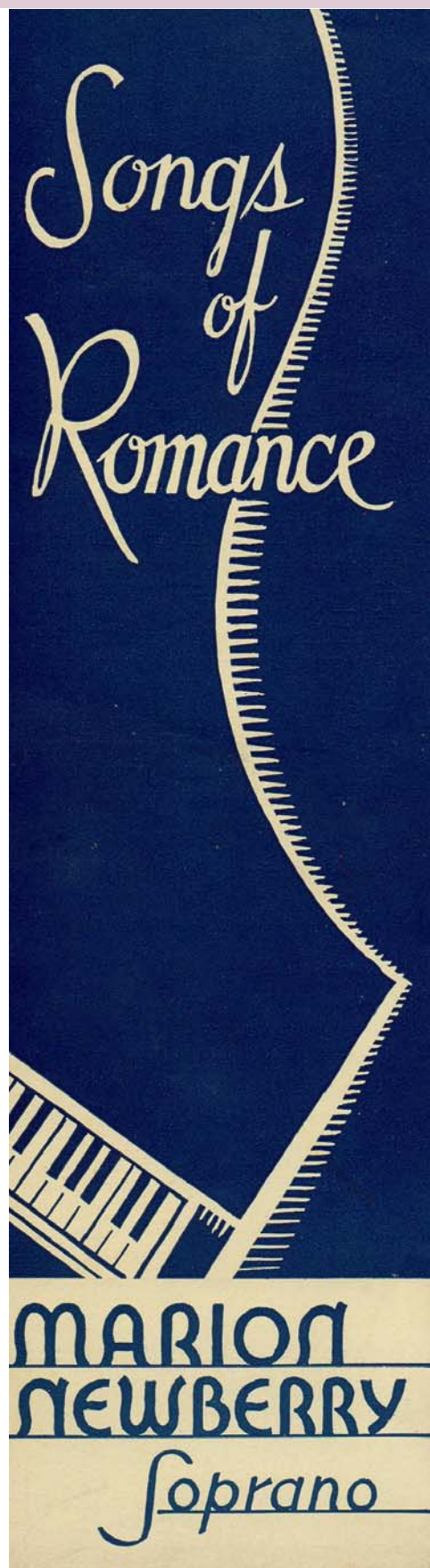
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**Saginaw Valley LGBT History Continued – Making It Alive**  
Leo R. Romo

301 Cass St.  
Old Town Saginaw  
2/21/2013 at 7 p.m.

Leo Romo will finish ***Saginaw Valley LGBT History – Making It Alive Continued*** at the Perceptions General Membership meeting, Thursday, Feb. 21 at 301 Cass St. at 7 pm. Leo started the program in the October meeting but he was not able to share all the program that night. The audience asked many questions and people shared their stories and that was wonderful. The February program includes local LGBT people, groups, businesses, and events in our history.

Leo will share other digital slides of photos/posters/clippings/etc. and others will share their “stories.” **Daniel Sedwick** will tell us about **John Monahan** - the first local ‘out’ LGBT activist, more information about **Marion Newberry**, who became a NYC romantic soprano (Thank you, **Dann Federico**), the formation years of the organization Dignity Tri-Cities, PFLAG Tri-Cities, Wellness Networks, the first transgender support group and maybe **YOU** can share your story.



## Meeting the Board

Greg Gwaltney

Greg Gwaltney is from Midland and has participated in Perceptions for 5 years. He is on Dow Chemical's Corporate Audit Staff and holds an Accounting Degree from Purdue University and a CPA license from the state of Indiana.

Having grown up and lived in Indiana his whole life, he moved to mid-Michigan 5 years ago. When deliberating on his job offer, he made contact with Perceptions and received multiple responses on the area and its LGBT community. This helped him make a decision to move to a place where he knew no one. Over the past 5 years, his participation in Perceptions has been invaluable in his transition to Midland. Having spent time learning about the organization and its people, he has appreciated the support received and returned it by assisting the organization meet its goals, particularly related to the 2012 Holiday Party and the 2012 Valentine Party.

Prior to his move to Midland, he sat for 12 years on the Board of Directors of the Indiana 4-H Foundation, a statewide not-for-profit organization committed to actively obtaining contributions to support Indiana 4-H programs (over \$6 million). He participated and/or led most committees including finance, membership, fund-raising, and the executive committee.

After 5 years of participation and understanding, Greg would like to assist in leading Perceptions. He thinks Perceptions sits at a time when it can review its past, consider its goals going forward, strategically build its approach to the future, and strengthen its connection with its membership.

We welcome Greg to the board.

## Perceptions Valentine's Dance

Daphne Barkley

**Free Admission!**  
**Come one, come all!**  
**All are welcome!**

There will be food, activities, and of course dancing. Our venue this year offers a large dance area and ample on-site parking. Even take a walk in the garden if weather allows.

**Saturday, February 9<sup>th</sup>**  
**7:00 p.m. to 11:30 p.m.**

UCC of Midland  
**4100 Chestnut Hill Dr.**  
Midland, MI



### Directions From Saginaw/Bay City

1. Take 10 towards Midland to Business 10 (the exit for Business 10 is on the left hand side)
2. Take the Waldo Rd Exit off business 10.
3. Turn left onto Patrick Rd
4. Turn right onto Waldo Rd.
5. Proceed on Waldo until you reach Ashman. Turn left onto Ashman.
6. Turn Right on Greenway Drive. Greenway will end at E Sugnet.
7. Turn left on Sugnet and then turn right onto Chestnut Hill Dr.
8. You will pass Chestnut Hill Elementary on your right.
9. The UCC is on your right immediately after the school as the road starts to curve.



## Annual Meeting

Tim Atkinson

The Perceptions Annual Meeting was held on Thursday, January 17<sup>th</sup> at the Alderton Building. The formal part of the meeting began with a welcome by current chair, Tim Atkinson, followed by general announcements of upcoming events. Jim Kleinsorge then presented the membership report.

Jim prepared a summary of membership statistics at a glance. He reported that in 2012, Perceptions had 90 paid members. The memberships broke down to 33 individual memberships, and 44 who joined as part of a family membership. In addition, we have 13 lifetime members. Broken down by gender, 67% of members identify as male and 33% identify as female.

See the pie chart on page 10 for a break down of how our members identify as gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgender, or straight ally. Jim reported that the average age of our paid members this year was 55. Another pie chart shows where our members live.

Tim continued the presentation with a review of the organization's activities and accomplishments in 2012. Reminding the audience that Perceptions has tax exempt status as a 501(c)(3) educational organization, we partially fulfilled our educational mission by presenting a speakers series.

Tim explained that the CCN is the Community Center Network, an association of LGBT community centers from across Michi-

gan, and that Perceptions is a

face to face with State Senators, Representatives and their staff members.

Perceptions did outreach in the Saginaw Valley region by setting up a table at the VA Hospital's Women's Health Fair to educate attendees about LGBT issues; by setting up a table at Midland Center for the Art's production of *The Laramie Project* where we educated attendees about the lack of protections for LGBT employees in Michigan; and we had a booth at Tri-City Pride on Ojibway Island.

Perceptions hosted two support groups throughout the year. The Men's Discussion Group celebrated its 6<sup>th</sup> anniversary in 2012 and met monthly. The Transgender Group met several times and is currently going through a restructuring.

### Message from 2011 - 2012 Chair

I have announced to the Board that I desire to step down as Chair, but that I do wish to help with the transition to new leadership and continue to be involved in a diminished role. It has been a privilege to represent this organization as Chair for the past two years and to work with the great group of volunteers that keep this organization functioning. I know that the future holds great things for this organization and the LGBT&A Community with the continued support of our volunteers, members, and other friends.

*Tim Atkinson*

member. These community centers have teamed up to share resources and work together for common goals. Perceptions sent a group of about 12 people to Lansing to participate in Equality Action Day. The day started with a "civics lesson" as participants prepared to meet with elected officials and discuss matters of LGBT equality. Participants met

### Featured speakers included:

- Ann Sage, [Northwestern Mutual Financial Network](#) – "Investment and Retirement Planning for LGBT People."
- Emily Dievendorf, [Equality Michigan](#) – "State of LGBT Rights in Michigan."
- Dave Garcia, [Affirmations](#) – "Next Steps for Equality in Michigan"
- Tom Brubaker, Master Gardener – "Container Gardening."
- Ryan Sullivan, [Michigan Consumers for Healthcare](#) – "Affordable Care Act and the LGBT Community."
- Leo Romo – "Saginaw Valley LGBT History."

### Advocacy Activities included:

- Gay Families Matter (Jan 18th) – Lansing rally [CCN Collaboration]
- Don't Change Yourself, Change the Law - signature drive [CCN Collaboration]
- GOTV / Go Down on the Ballot [CCN Collaboration]
- Hungry for Equality [CCN Collaboration]
- Equality Action Day (May 24th)
- Battling Bullying
  - The Great Lakes Bay Great Read
  - [The Bullycide Project](#) @ Delta & SVSU
  - [Fagbug](#) @ SVSU

## Annual Meeting continued

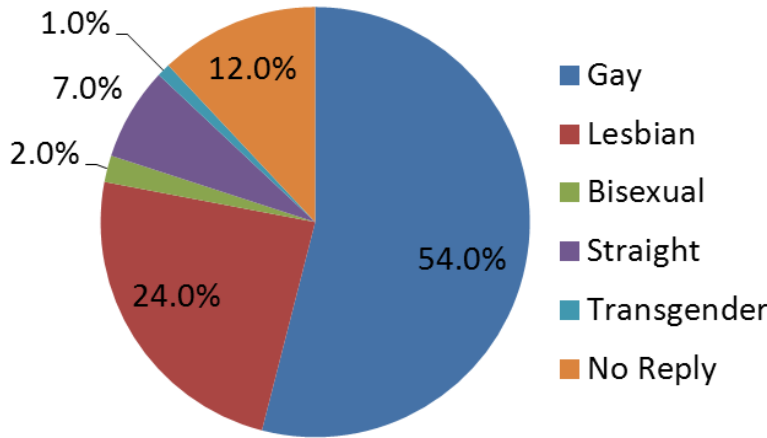
Perceptions hosted several events for socializing and networking. These events included the Saginaw Meet & Greet (also known as Game Night at the Mixx), an afternoon Card Players Club, Friday Night Dinners, and a Valentines Dance.

The communications team of Perceptions was kept busy by publishing a monthly Newsletter, sending a weekly email message with a summary of local news and events to 653 subscribers, maintaining a [web page](#), and keeping a presence on Facebook with a [Group](#) where members can interact (148 members) and [Fan Page](#) for publicizing official news and events (185 Likes). Perceptions also has a SMS Text Message service to distribute important reminders and urgent news.

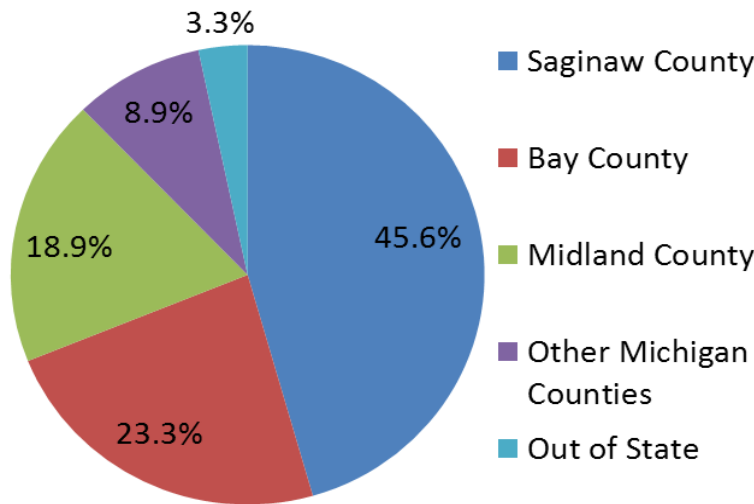
Perceptions co-hosted two fundraisers with PFLAG in 2012. In March, we had the Chocolate Party at Terry Z's in Bay City and in July, we had the Garden Party hosted by Phil & Ginger Lisik in Hemlock.

We engaged in several community service activities. Our Adopt-A-Highway volunteers cleaned our stretch of I-75 three times. Many thanks to Rick Farrand for organizing that effort. Between our Charity Yard Sale and our Walk Team, we raised over \$1000 for AIDS Walk Midland / Bay City / Saginaw. Our Thanksgiving food drive collected a truck full of non-

perishable items for Innerlink Services to benefit homeless and runaway youth. Finally, our [scholarship](#) fund provided scholarships to two local students.



Special events in 2012 included a January Open House at the Alderton Building where 75 guests learned about our organization's mission and our plans for future programming at The Alderton. We hosted the 4<sup>th</sup> Annual Pride Awards Banquet where we recognized the contributions that local individuals and business have made toward equality for all re-



gardless of sexual orientation or gender identity. And finally, we hosted a very successful Holiday Party that highlighted our 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary as an organization and raised over \$5000 for the

[USO Warrior & Family Care Program](#). Over 200 people attended this event, making it our largest to date.

The State of the Organization Report concluded with a financial report by Treasurer, Daphne Barkley.

Time was allowed for members to ask questions, offer suggestions and make comments, before the election was conducted. The Nominating Committee had identified three new candidates for the Board of

Trustees. A brief introduction was given for each of the new candidates: Greg Gwaltney, Chris Lauckner and Ben Dowd. Tim Atkinson was also nominated for re-election. There was an opportunity for nominations for additional candidates from the floor, but none were offered. The service of out-going board members (Kay Sural, Rick Farrand, and

Jim Kleinsorge) was recognized. When all of the ballots were counted, all four candidates were elected to the 2013 Board. Chris, Greg, and Ben were given 3 year terms and Tim was given a 2-year.

When the nine members of the 2013 Board meet for the regular February Board Meeting, they will select a Chair, Vice-Chair, Secretary, and Treasurer.

They may also appoint Advisors, who are non-voting members of the Board. The terms of all Advisors end with the Annual meeting but they may be re-appointed for the coming year.