



PERCEPTIONS

SAGINAW VALLEY

Serving the Tri-City Area's LGBT Community

June 2013

www.PerceptionsSV.org

Free

Scholarship Award

Tim Atkinson

On the evening of May 20th, the Saginaw Community Foundation presented its annual Excellence in Education program at Horizons Conference Center to honor their 2013 scholarship recipients and donors. More than 600 people were in the audience to watch these outstanding local students receive scholarship awards totaling about \$300,000.

The Perceptions Saginaw Valley Scholarship was one of 112 scholarships awarded that evening. Kay Sural and I attended to represent Perceptions and present the award. As the Perceptions Saginaw Valley Scholarship was announced, the Perceptions logo and the scholarship name were displayed on large projection screens on both sides of the stage. The evening's program featured a 1/3 page description of our organization and the criteria for selecting the winner of our scholarship.

Planning and fundraising for the Perceptions Saginaw Valley Scholarship began in 2006. The first scholarship was awarded in 2008. Our scholarship is open to any Michigan resident who is a high school senior, college student or non-traditional student pursuing a graduate or undergraduate degree or vocational training. The candidate must have a minimum GPA of 2.5 and may be enrolled either full or part time. Applicants are scored on community service, leadership,

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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.

Pride Month is Upon Us!

Daphne Barkley

As Pride month kicks off June 1st, there are a lot of great Pride festivals that take place around the state. Please note Hotter Than July occurs July 27-28 and Michigan Pride in Lansing will be August 24th this year.

A brief history of Pride:

Early on the morning of Saturday, 28 June 1969, lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and questioning persons rioted following a police raid on the Stonewall Inn, a gay bar at 43 Christopher Street, New York City. This riot and further protests and rioting over the following nights were the watershed moment in modern LGBT rights movement and the impetus for organizing LGBT pride marches on a much larger public scale.

Christopher Street Liberation Day on June 28, 1970 marked the first anniversary of the Stonewall riots with an assembly on Christopher Street and the first Gay Pride March in U.S. history, covering the 51 blocks to Central Park

On the same weekend gay activist groups on the West Coast of the United States held a march in Los Angeles and a march and 'Gay-In' in San Francisco.

One day earlier, on Saturday, 27 June 1970, Chicago Gay Liberation organized a march from Washington Square Park to the Water Tower at the intersection of Michigan and Chicago avenues, which was the route originally planned, and then many of the participants extemporaneously marched on to the Civic Center (now Richard Daily Plaza).

The next year, Gay Pride marches took place in Boston, Dallas, Milwaukee, London, Paris, West Berlin, and Stockholm. By 1972 the participating cities included Atlanta, Buffalo, Detroit, Washington D.C., Miami, Philadelphia and San Francisco.

There have been many great advances for the LGBTQ community in the past few years from the repeal of DADT to marriage equality passing in 12 states to date. Pride is a chance for us to gather with friends and supporters during the month of June to celebrate our victories, make plans for further advancing equality, and to just celebrate who we are and how far we have come.

Here is a list of all the places around the state of Michigan which you can do exactly that:

Ferndale Pride

June 1, 9 Mile and Woodward in Downtown Ferndale

<http://www.ferndalepride.com/>

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Shore to Shore Equality Ride

Tim Atkinson

The Michigan LGBT Community Center Network is sponsoring a Shore to Shore Equality Ride to raise awareness about LGBT Equality issues in Michigan and at the same time build resources to work toward full equality for ALL Michigan citizens. The 4-day ride starts in Metro Detroit (Ferndale) and concludes in Saugatuck. Registration is \$100 and riders are asked to collect pledges. We hope you'll consider riding for "Team Perceptions." By selecting Perceptions when you register, your fundraising donations will then be tagged for Perceptions and used to advance equality in the Tri-Cities and throughout the state of Michigan. Volunteers to help support the ride are also needed.

The Community Center Network (CCN) is a collaboration of LGBT Community Center organizations across the state of Michigan including Perceptions Saginaw Valley, Affirmations, Jim Toy Community Center, KICK, The LGBT Network of West Michigan, and Kalamazoo Gay Lesbian Resource Center. The CCN wants to make LGBT equality a reality in Michigan. The Shore to Shore Equality Ride will help all the centers in the CCN work together for the future we all want!

Ride Information

Our daily mileage of between 45 & 60 miles per day makes this event perfect for novice or intermediate riders and something the entire family can enjoy. If you are a more experienced rider we have planned additional excursions along the route for your enjoyment. (All riders must be 16 years or older. Minors must be accompanied by a parent or guardian for the duration of the 4 day ride.)

We will stop each night at a tented campsite and enjoy delicious and nutritious meals, facilities to make the trek more comfortable and planned entertainment and programming to keep the riders motivated. Mingle with your fellow travelers and the many volunteers devoted to keeping the event safe and enjoyable from start to finish. There will be overnight stops in Ann Arbor, Albion and Kalamazoo.

On our last day the Community Center Network will host a closing celebration that will highlight the accomplishment of the riders and volunteers.

Why We Ride For Equality

At this time, it's easy to think that we all have the same rights and can enjoy them without restraint. The reality, in Michigan, is quite different.

- In Michigan it is not possible for people in the LGBT community to marry.
- In Michigan lawful marriages for members of the LGBT community preformed in other states are not recognized.
- In Michigan it is not possible for two single people to both adopt the same children. (This is not just a LGBT community issue.)
- In Michigan it is possible for a person to be fired for being, or for being perceived as being gay, lesbian, bisexual or transgender.
- In Michigan, public employers are not permitted to offer domes-

Continued on Page 7

Scholarship Award Continued

career goals, and a special essay. In their essays, the applicants explain how they have promoted respect and acceptance of diversity within their communities. Bonus points are awarded to members of Perceptions and PFLAG Tri-Cities and their immediate families.

There were about 20 applicants this year. Scoring is tabulated as the average of 9 volunteer reviewers. Five of the reviewers are provided by the Saginaw Community Foundation and four of the reviewers are Perceptions volunteers. This ratio satisfies federal regulations that stipulate that the donor (Perceptions) shall not exceed 50% of the decision making ability to select the winner. I'd like to thank Kay, Floyd and Mike who volunteered to read and score these applications. Everyone agreed that there were many deserving students among the applicants.

However, when all of the scores were tabulated, a clear winner emerged. We're proud to announce that the 2013 Perceptions Saginaw Valley Scholarship was awarded to Caroline "Carly" Sawatzki. Carly's mother, Kimberly, is a Perceptions member. This is the first time that the winner has been a member of Perceptions. We have awarded the scholarship to PFLAG members in the past.

Carly is a 2013 graduate of Saginaw Arts & Sciences Academy and plans to major in journalism. Carly told us that she aspires to become a journalist who shares the incredible stories of average people who have overcome personal or societal obstacles and accomplished extraordinary things. Through her journalistic pursuits, she wants to give a voice to those who are silenced by poverty or discrimination.

Carly has already proven to be a fierce advocate for those who are marginalized. In 8th grade, Carly organized a Day of Silence event at school. Carly's mother, Kimberly, wrote:

I am so proud of Carly's efforts in bringing "Day of Silence" to her school. The red tape she decided to use has symbolic meaning to the two of us. When she attempted to bring the idea to action, she encountered her first battle with "red tape." As a mom who is a seasoned veteran in the fight for equality and social justice for everyone, my first instinct was to step up and fight the battle for her. Instead I informed her that this was what it felt like every day for people who spend their lives battling the bonds of "red tape"....and I asked her... "so what are you going to do about it?" The picture says it all. She tore the red tape into pieces, shared them with her peers, and proceeded to display a visual message of support for those voices that are silenced by the majority. You go girl!!!

Carly's advocacy activities have continued beyond the school environment and into the community. She's been involved with Sacred Heart's AIDS Walk Bay City / Saginaw / Midland. She also participated in Hearth Home's "Femme Swap" which was an outreach to the M2F community. She's also assisted Health Delivery, Inc. with their Health Fair Round-Up which provides immunizations and back-to-school checkups for underserved children in Saginaw.

We believe that Carly has a bright future and we're proud to offer her financial support in her educational endeavors. We know that she will go on to do great things. We hope that you'll continue to support the Perceptions Saginaw Valley Scholarship so that we can continue to help students like Carly.

Current Events

www.PerceptionsSV.org/events

▼ **June 7th - Friday Night Dinner.** 7:00 pm. Join Perceptions friends this week at **Heather's**, 205 Third St., Bay City. If you plan to attend, please reply to RSVP@PerceptionsSV.org by 3:00 pm on Friday.

▼ **Fri. & Sat., June 7th & 8th - Charity Yard Sale.** 8:00 am to 4:00 pm both days. Our annual charity yard sale to benefit AIDS Walk Bay City / Midland / Saginaw will be held at 1688 Sullivan Drive, Saginaw. Contact Thom-as@PerceptionsSV.org for more info.

▼ **Sun., June 9th - Ride to Motor City Pride.** Ride with Perceptions members to Motor City Pride. We're driving a 15-passenger van, leaving Saginaw shortly after 8:00 am to arrive in Detroit in time for the Pride Parade and then attend the festival in the afternoon. To reserve your seat in the van or for additional info., send an email to RSVP@PerceptionsSV.org with "Pride" in the subject line. The ride is free but we will accept donations to offset the cost of gasoline.

Sun., June 9th - Genesee County PFLAG Meeting 2:00 pm. Guest speaker, LGBT Historian Tim Retzloff, will present Flint and Michigan LGBT History. UU Church of Flint, 2474 S. Ballenger Hwy, Flint.

Wed., June 12th - 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 at 989-392-6874.

▼ **June 14th - Friday Night Dinner.** 4:00 pm. The **Greek Festival** at St Demetrios Church, 4970 Mackinaw Rd, Saginaw. We will start meeting at 4 p.m. at the Festival. If you plan to attend, please reply to RSVP@PerceptionsSV.org by 3:00 pm on Friday.

Sun., June 16th - PFLAG Tri-Cities Meeting 2:00 pm. Our Saviour Lutheran Church, 2525 Hem-

meter Rd., Saginaw.

Wed., June 19th - 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.

▼ **June 21st - Friday Night Dinner.** 7:00 pm. **Diamond Jim's**, 101 E. Main St., Midland. If you plan to attend, please reply to RSVP@PerceptionsSV.org by 3:00 pm on Friday.

Sat., June 22nd - Tri-City LGBT Pride 1:00 pm to 8:00 pm. Ojibway Island, Saginaw.

▼ **Tues., June 25th - Saginaw Valley LGBT & Allies Pride Awards Banquet** 6:00 pm. Join Perceptions as we honor local people and businesses who have demonstrated their commitment to reaching the goal of equality, fairness, and justice for the LGBT community. **Andersen Enrichment Center**, [120 Ezra Rust Dr.](http://www.120EzraRustDr.com), Saginaw. Tickets are \$25 for general admission or \$15 for students. Contact Pride@PerceptionsSV.org for more information.



▼ **June 28th - Friday Night Dinner.** 7:00 pm. **Los Cuatro Amigos**, 310 E Midland St., Bay City. If you plan to attend, please reply to RSVP@PerceptionsSV.org by 3:00 pm on Friday.

Sat., June 29th - Flint Pride in the Park 11:00 am to 7:00 pm. U of M Pavilion Rink and adjacent Riverfront Park. The intent of the event is to celebrate diversity in Flint, affirm gay and transgender individuals, increase visibility and build a sense of community.

▼ **Event sponsored or endorsed by Perceptions.**

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

JUNE 2013

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Equality Ride Continued

tic partner benefits for their employees, resulting in loss of health care and family benefits for thousands of state and municipal workers. (This is not just a LGBT community issue.)

- In Michigan LGBT people across the state have no protection from employment and housing discrimination, except in cities that have specifically banned such discrimination.

How would you feel if your parent, or sibling, or friend, or coworker, or yourself were treated this way? Would you wonder what you could do to help fight against such inequality?

This is why we ride: To help insure that ALL people in this state, and in this country, are treated in the same way no matter where they live, no matter who they are. The Michigan LGBT Community Center Network (CCN) wants to work with all of our constituents across the state to bring equality to LGBT citizens.

For more information, visit <http://equalityride.dojiggy.com>

Website Redesign is Live

Kristopher Waugh

As you may have heard, Perceptions has a new website design that went live last month. This website will hopefully be easier to navigate, find information, and is definitely easier for Perceptions volunteers to update. The webpage is also cell phone and tablet friendly, automatically resizing to present the same information to you in a much friendlier format for those on smaller screens.

The new website keeps and improves upon some previous things that were present on the old webpage:

- A slider on the homepage which will include important updates and information for our members and guests.
- The Events page is now searchable, includes maps of the event location, and all the events are browsable by category.
- The Rainbow Referrals includes easily searchable categories. If you are looking for a LGBT friendly lawyer, have no fear, just click on the Legal category to be taken to a listing of Legal Services.
- Archives of the Newsletter are available from 2002 to this month.

Please make sure to point your web browser to our website at <http://www.perceptionssv.org/> to check it out.

If you experience any problems while browsing the website, please do not hesitate to email webmaster@perceptionssv.org with what is happening.



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.

Pride Month Continued

Motor City Pride

June 8-9, Hart Plaza, Detroit

<http://www.motorcitypride.com/>

Kalamazoo Pride

June 14-16, Arcadia Creek Festival Area

<http://kgllrc.org/pride/>

West Michigan Pride

June 15-16, Calder Plaza in Grand Rapids

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

Tri-City Pride

June 22, Ojibway Island Park Saginaw

<http://www.tricitylgbtpride.com/>

Holland Area Pride

June 29, Centennial Park, Park Theatre

<http://www.hollandareapride.com/>

Flint Gay Pride In The Park

June 29, Riverbank Park and Univ. of Michigan Pavilion Rink

<https://www.facebook.com/FLINTGAYPRIDE>

Hotter Than July

July 27-28, Detroit, mainly Palmer Park

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

Michigan Pride

Aug. 24, Lansing

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

2013 Pride Banquet

Leo Romo

It is time again to celebrate the 5th Saginaw Valley LGBT and Ally Pride Awards Banquet! We celebrate in honor of the 1969 Stonewall Rebellion and to recognize people and businesses that have helped the LGBT community in their way.

The Pride Awards Banquet has been a wondrous event: a wine and appetizers garden reception; dinner catered by the Savoy Grill, and an engaging program, speaker, and a Pride Awards ceremony. You will remember the evening.

You will find more banquet information in this newsletter: basic banquet information and the types of Pride Awards you can nominate. See you on June 25th!

Pride Award Banquet Information

Date: Tuesday, June 25th at the Andersen Center, 120 Ezra Rust Dr. in Saginaw.

Cost: \$25 per person, \$15 for students

6-7 pm - Reception at the Rose Garden

7-8 pm - Dinner catered by the Savoy Grill. (Vegetarians are welcomed. Tell us)

8-9 pm - Program, award ceremony and guest speaker, Emily Dievendorf of Equality Michigan.

Due Dates

June 7 - Pride Award Nominations are due

June 20 – Sponsorships forms are due. See the types of sponsorship in this newsletter.

June 25 – LGBT and Ally Pride Awards Banquet at the Andersen Enrichment Center in Saginaw

Where can I find LGBT Pride Nomination and Sponsorship Forms?

Perceptions website: www.PerceptionsSV.org/pride

Saginaw: Savoy Grill, 127 S. Franklin downtown Saginaw

The Mixx, 115 N. Hamilton

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2013 Pride Banquet Continued

Gourmet Cupcake Shoppe, 404 Court, Saginaw

Midland: Gourmet Cupcake Shoppe, 1908 S. Saginaw Rd. at the Kmart plaza (Ask a staff person for the forms.)

Bay City: Gourmet Cupcake Shoppe, 915 Washington Ave.

Types of Pride Awards

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 a leader who has worked to improve the quality for LGBT people through the political or electoral process.

Pride Award: Given to an individual or individuals who have shown 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 will select individuals for the Pride Awards.

For more information about the Pride Awards Banquet, contact Pride@PerceptionsSV.org or call 989-891-1429.

Can you SPONSOR for the Pride Awards Banquet?

Sponsorships fund the banquet – awards, gifts, award recipient dinners, printing, future programs, etc. Your name will be printed in your program or your sponsorship can be anonymous.

Sponsorships are affordable at different levels: \$10 as Patron, \$25 as Advocate, \$50 as Ellen DeGeneres or \$100 as Harvey Milk. We can create another name if you donate more!

Sponsorships are DUE Thursday, June 20, 2013.

No Summer Meetings

Kristopher Waugh

Due to people going on vacation and the urge to enjoy the great summer weather and sights in Michigan, Perceptions will have no general meetings during the summer months.



Have no fear for they will start back up again this fall.

While everyone is enjoying the summer please make sure to check out the Event and Calendar pages in the newsletter as well as on the Perceptions Website (<http://www.perceptionssv.org/events/>) for any upcoming events that you don't want to miss. Make sure you check out one of Michigan's many Pride celebrations as well as ongoing events by Perceptions.

As always I hope everyone has a great and memorable summer. If for any reason you need to contact Perceptions during the summer contact information is provided on page 2 of the newsletter.

Saginaw Equality Float Takes Second Place at Cinco de Mayo Parade

Leo Romo

Alberto Jimenez, a 33-year-old openly gay Saginaw Latino, never planned to be an equality activist, but now everyone thinks otherwise. He created an “Equality” float with LGBT and Mexican symbols for Saginaw’s 34th Cinco de Mayo Parade on May 4. While he made parade floats for his family in the past, the equality float was different.

The parade’s theme - Viva La Voz - means “Long live the voice” in English, so Jimenez wanted his “voice” to be heard. Well, everybody heard him loud and clear on May 4.

“It’s time for LGBT Latinos to stand firm and to keep pushing forward. Our struggles have been long and we never gave up. We stand up and are proud for our culture and our LGBT community,” said Jimenez.

His equality float was a 6-foot rainbow-colored shape of Michigan with the word “Equality” in the center, riding atop a 16 foot trailer. He hung PFLAG Tri-Cities and Perceptions banners – his LGBT sponsors – on the sides and raised rainbow, Mexican and American flags on poles. He wore appropriately themed apparel – a green poncho with rainbow stripes along with matching lime shoes. Jimenez celebrated his Mexican culture and his sexual orientation comfortably and without shame. He was a wonderful role model for young gay Latinos – no – for anybody watching.

What was the reaction from the mostly Mexican-Americans who watched the parade? They loved it. If people disapproved, then they remained silent. Most people waved and smiled as the rainbow float passed, and Jimenez’s friends distributed candy and PFLAG and Perceptions information cards along the route. Many thanked him personally for being honest about himself and they also showed support for LGBT equality. In fact, La Union Mexicana Civica (aka Civica), the parade’s sponsor and Saginaw’s oldest Mexican American organization, approved Jimenez’s equality float.

According to the Pew Hispanic Center, more Latinos now favor gay marriage. It seems Saginaw Latinos reflect the new reality, especially with the younger generation. As a part of that generation Jimenez said, “I want our rainbow family to be able to live with the right to marry and the right to work in any career with passion and without discrimination.”

The equality float took 2nd place and it was the first LGBT-themed float in the parade’s 34-year history. It was likely the first LGBT-themed parade float in Saginaw. Yes, times are changing. A Cesar Chavez quote is appropriate and captures this change, “Preservation of one’s own culture does not require contempt or disrespect for other cultures.”

