



Jackson Pride Center

Pride Newsletter Fall 2025

www.mijacksonpride.org

Welcome to the second edition of our newsletter! We're thrilled to be back with another issue dedicated to fostering inclusion, respect, and learning for both allies and members of the LGBTQ+ community.

In this edition, we're focusing on topics that spark conversation and encourage action. You'll find an article on why protecting the right to read is so crucial, as well as a piece that explores the art and history of drag. We've also included a list of important LGBTQ+ dates to add to your calendar, and we'll say a heartfelt farewell to our dedicated board chair.

We hope these articles provide you with new insights and inspire you to continue building a more inclusive and compassionate world. Thanks for reading and engaging with us!

Defending the Stacks: Why We Must Protect the Freedom to Read

Navigating the world of literature can be a challenge when some voices seek to limit what we can read. In communities across the country, books are being challenged or outright banned, with a disproportionate focus on stories that feature LGBTQ+ individuals and people of color. The argument for these bans often centers on a parent's right to decide what is appropriate for their child, but the effect is a form of censorship that restricts the freedom to read for everyone.

This movement is more than just a debate about a few books. It's an effort to silence voices, erase identities, and control the narratives that young people are exposed to. Organizations like the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) and GLAAD are at the forefront of this battle, fighting to ensure that libraries remain places of open access and intellectual freedom. GLAAD, for instance, launched a campaign to send hundreds of copies of banned LGBTQ-inclusive children's books directly to members of Congress, making a powerful statement that these stories are not a threat.

So, how can we support our local libraries and fight for the freedom to read?

Actionable Steps to Support Your Local Library

- **Attend Local Meetings:** Most book challenges are fought at the local level. Attending school board and library board meetings is one of the most effective ways to make your voice heard. Let local officials know that you support the library, the librarians, and the right to read.
- **Support Pro-Library Groups:** Look for and join local coalitions like [MI Right to Read](#) or national organizations such as the [ACLU](#) and [GLAAD](#) that are dedicated to combating censorship. These groups often provide resources, toolkits, and "calls to action" to help you get involved.
- **Write Letters and Speak Out:** Write letters to the editor of your local newspaper, contact your elected officials, or send a personal note of thanks to your library staff. A positive message of support can make a huge difference to librarians who are on the front lines of this issue.
- **Use Your Library Card:** The simplest act of support is using your library. Checking out books—especially ones that have been challenged—shows that the community values these materials. Your patronage demonstrates that the library is a vital resource that deserves funding and protection. You can also donate to your local library or its "Friends of the Library" organization.

By taking these steps, you can help ensure that our libraries remain a vibrant and inclusive space where everyone can find themselves in the stories on the shelves.

Read more at
gladd.org



- October: LGBTQ+ History Month
- October 11: National Coming Out Day
- November 20: Transgender Day of Remembrance
- December 1: World AIDS Day



Transgender Day of Remembrance (TDoR) is an annual observance on November 20, that raises public awareness of the hate crimes and fatal violence faced by transgender individuals, while also honoring the lives lost. It began as a vigil in 1999 to honor Rita Hester, a Black transgender woman who was murdered in Massachusetts. Since then, it has become a global movement of remembrance and solidarity.

Jackson Pride Events Calendar



Have questions about Drag?

What do you know about Drag and its importance in the LGBTQ+ community? Click the link below to read more.

[Understanding Drag: As American as Apple Pie](#) - article by Human Rights Campaign.

Uniting Closet of Jackson

- Do you have like new clothing or personal care items you would like to donate?
- Would you like to volunteer helping to provide support and build connections?
- Email unitingclosetofjxn@gmail.com or visit their Facebook page for more information.

Uniting Closet of Jackson - Facebook

Uniting Closet of Jackson

FREE Clothing Items
for those in need of

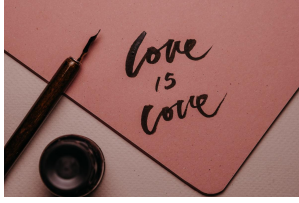
- Gender Affirming Clothes
- Personal Care Items
- Books/Magazines and MORE

3rd Saturday of EVERY MONTH
11 am - 1 pm

First Presbyterian Church
749 West Michigan Ave Jackson, MI

Uniting Closet of Jackson @unitingclosetofjxn
for more info email: unitingclosetofjxn@gmail.com

Who are we?
A non-profit community providing free affirming clothing items. Based in community care and solidarity, we create a safe space where everyone can access clothing that helps them feel confident, seen, and supported.



A Farewell as Chair, with Hope for What's Ahead

By Regina Pinney, Outgoing Board Chair, Jackson Pride

As my time as Board Chair of Jackson Pride comes to a close, I find myself reflecting on the journey we have taken together. When I stepped into this role, my focus was on strengthening the foundation of our organization—ensuring that Jackson Pride would not only exist for today but endure for the years to come. That work has not always been visible, but it has been vital. Over these past years, we built systems, clarified our governance, strengthened our volunteer base, and created the kind of organizational stability that small, grassroots centers rarely get the luxury to focus on. We put in place policies and practices that help us make good decisions, use resources wisely, and remain accountable to our community. This may not sound flashy, but it is the backbone of sustainability. Because of that groundwork, Jackson Pride now stands ready to move boldly into a new chapter—launching programming that will bring visibility, connection, and support directly to our community.

This next phase comes at a time when our resilience is being tested. Across the country, and right here in Michigan, we see hostile political efforts aimed squarely at LGBTQ+ organizations, families, and youth. It would be easy to retreat or shrink under this pressure. But Jackson Pride has chosen another path. We are leaning into strategic resilience planning—asking not only how we can weather these attacks, but how we can thrive despite them. The strength of our systems and the commitment of our volunteers give us confidence that we can continue to serve as a beacon of hope and belonging.

The truth is, small, volunteer-run Pride organizations like ours matter. We may not have the staff or resources of larger centers, but our impact is felt in deeply personal ways: the teenager who finds affirmation, the parent who discovers support, the community member who sees a rainbow flag flying downtown and knows they are not alone. Those moments—quiet, powerful, and profoundly human—are what sustain this work.

As I step down from the role of Chair, I am filled with gratitude. Gratitude for the board who has worked tirelessly to strengthen this organization, for the volunteers who have given their time and energy, and for the community who has shown up again and again in support of Jackson Pride. I am not leaving the board, nor am I stepping away from this work. I look forward to continuing as a board member and lending my energy to special projects that will advance our mission. Jackson Pride's future is bright, not because the challenges have disappeared, but because we are ready to face them—together, with courage, resilience, and hope. My call to you, our community, is simple: stay engaged, stay visible, and stay proud. This organization is for you, and with your support, it will continue to grow, thrive, and lead.

With deep gratitude and hope,

Regina Pinney

Outgoing Board Chair, Jackson Pride

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