

PFLAG BUFFALO/NIAGARA



Our Next Sharing Meeting

Sunday, February 21st 1:00-2:30

Zoom Meeting # 555 112 0003 Passcode 700

Outside of virtual group sharing/support meetings, New Parent Virtual Meetings can be scheduled for those in need monthly meetings. Call our Helpline to request a meeting. Please reach out. We are here for you.

PFLAG Buffalo/Niagara
P.O. Box 617
Buffalo, New York 14207
Helpline-883-0384

info@pflagbuffalo.org
www.pflagbuffalo.org
www.facebook.com/pflag.niagara

We meet because we have learned someone close to us is gay, lesbian, bisexual, or transgender. We try to help one another deal with this information in a positive manner. Although we do not always agree, we try to be understanding. We offer help to those who seek it, but do not force ourselves on others. We strive to maintain anonymity while sharing on a level that is comfortable.

LINKS TO LOVE



***Love is love is love but especially during February!
Use these links to find some heartwarming stories and photos.***



NBC news shared stories of couples and their stories sure to warm hearts.

<https://www.nbcnews.com/feature/nbc-out/celebrating-queer-love-6-longtime-lgbtq-couples-share-their-stories-n1257706>



GLAAD offers a love story series; these stories celebrate trans love and romance

<https://www.pride.com/identities/2020/4/01/glaads-trans-love-stories-series-too-cute-words>



It has been a while since this newsletter recommended books but for Valentine's Day, we will share the recommendations from Penguin Books, UK.

<https://www.penguin.co.uk/articles/2020/feb/the-best-lgbtq-love-stories.html>

HAVE YOU HEARD ABOUT NIAGARA PRIDE?



We at PFLAG Buffalo/Niagara want to make sure our readers are aware of this local group and resource. Please read the yearly report from NP's president Ron Piaseczny and see the extraordinary activities and accomplishments shared.

We know that you will be incredulous to read of all that has been done in one year, a pandemic year no less, and from an organization that has only been in existence a brief time!

You will need to grab a cup of coffee as you read because Niagara Pride has done so much and is planning so much more.

After reading, please follow the link below to visit NP's website. Ron Piaseczny, Niagara Pride's president wants anyone who would like to receive the monthly electronic newsletter to reach out to him at president@niagarapride.org.

We are glad to introduce you to Niagara Pride and hope you share this information with others. If you are already aware of this group, we know you will still want to review all that has happened in 2021.

We wish Niagara Pride well as it heads into the new year and in its new home; we look forward to more connections between our groups in 2022.

HAPPY HOLIDAYS AND HAPPY NEW YEAR FROM NIAGARA PRIDE!!!!

As the President of Niagara Pride, I cannot express how fortunate I have been to serve in this capacity with Niagara Pride. Niagara Pride, Inc. began in October 2020 and in that short period of time, we have been able to do some amazing work for LGBTQ+ individuals and families, not

only in Niagara County, but throughout WNY. None of this would have been possible without our dedicated Board of Directors, who volunteer their time to run the programming and events that we have done this year. Niagara Pride would also not have been able to achieve its numerous milestones this year without our volunteers and community partners. Their support has been fundamental in our agency's ability to flourish.

In just over 12-month, Niagara Pride has been able to accomplish a number of things:

- Created WNY Shopping with Pride, an event which will be held yearly to showcase LGBTQ+ and ally-owned businesses throughout WNY
- Provided free Diversity and Inclusivity Training to various local businesses & agencies
- Helped Oliver Street Merchant Association launch the first ever Pride celebration in North Tonawanda
- Held a historic five Pride Flag Raising Ceremonies throughout Niagara County
- Hosted several Pride events in June 2021, including a LGBTQ+ Game Night & a Karaoke Night
- Implemented a LGBTQ+ Community Needs Assessment for Niagara County, which looked at how the LGBTQ+ community feels in terms of safety throughout Niagara County in addition to examining how open and affirming providers are in the fields of physical health, mental health, housing, and legal services
- Held several donations drives which resulted in 2,213 pairs of socks being donated to local homeless shelters and over 180 backpacks filled with school supplies being donated to WNY LGBTQ+ youth
- Created online and in person meet ups to provide safe and affirming spaces and opportunities for LGBTQ+ youth and adults to socialize during the pandemic
- In partnership with LifeSpan, conducted five focus groups to explore elder abuse amongst the senior LGBTQ+ population in Niagara County
- Partnered with The Niagara County Suicide Prevention Coalition to gather data needed to create and implement meaningful interventions throughout Niagara County
- Hosted a Speaker Event, where local authors and professors, Alex Bitterman and Daniel Baldwin Hess, presented on *The Life and Afterlife of Gay Neighborhoods*

- Created an online monthly provider townhall, Lunch & Learn, where individuals and families throughout WNY could interact directly with representatives from various local agencies and organizations to receive services
- Held free community trainings on topics such as banking and budgeting, healthy eating, minority-owned business opportunities in Niagara County, gambling addiction, financial disparities within the LGBTQ+ community, and other topics
- Created an online Provider Directory of LGBTQ+ affirming WNY providers, ranging from healthcare, insurance, mental health, legal, spiritual, and other services
- Created a Rainbow Garden in Niagara Falls to demonstrate that LGBTQ+ folks are present in the community and an integral part of Niagara County
- Partnered with SAGEVets to host two ongoing monthly meetings aimed at assisting LGBTQ+ Veterans with accessing services and benefits, as well as providing a safe space and supportive environment to socialize with other LGBTQ+ Veterans
- Created the first ever WNY Pride Interfaith Committee, where spiritual leaders, clergy, and leaders of faith-based organizations can meet on a regular basis to begin addressing the spiritual needs of the LGBTQ+ community throughout WNY
- Finally, through partnerships with other organizations, created several family events open to all WNY LGBTQ+ individuals during the summer and fall seasons

Not too shabby for an agency with no paid staff!!!!

As 2022 quickly approaches, Niagara Pride is looking to grow our services and find more ways to positively impact the lives of local LGBTQ+ folks. In 2022, Niagara Pride will not only continue the aforementioned programs and services, but will also be launching several new initiatives, including but not limited to:

- Establishing an LGBTQ+ Youth Vocational Training Conference – a free event to be held in the Spring and in the Fall of 2022 as a way to share information and knowledge with LGBTQ+ youth on how to do self-directed job searches, use career assessment tools to better understand the

job market and training requirements for certain careers, gain skills like resume writing and interviewing, and education about LGBTQ+ discrimination in the workplace

- Creating a virtual WNY Pride 5K Run/Walk
- Developing a scholarship for a local LGBTQ+ youth
- Expanding diversity trainings for the community

- Supporting programming aimed at LGBTQ+ seniors and people of color

- Cultivating and creating partnerships with other local providers and agencies to develop new groups, services, and programs to better meet the needs of the local LGBTQ+ community, including reaching out the most rural areas of Niagara County

Finally, thanks to the kindness and generosity of St. Peter's Episcopal Church in Niagara Falls, we will now have an office in Niagara County! Our new office space will serve as a place for our events and meetings. We are looking forward to using this location to bring incredible programming to Niagara County.

So as 2021 comes to a close, I want to personally thank everyone who supported our organization and made it as successful as possible. We look forward to working with all of you again and creating new connections. Happy Holidays and see you in 2022!!!

With Gratitude,

Ronald Piaseczny, JD, LMHC

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www.niagarapride.org



HAPPY NEW YEAR TO OUR READERS

Thank you for being on our team. We appreciate your support all year long.

Board of Directors

Julie Christiano, President
Lisbeth Ball, Secretary
David Barrett, Treasurer
Sharon Barrett, Director
Jeanne Mullen, Director

PFLAG Buffalo/Niagara is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization.