



First Friday News & Views

SCHOLARSHIPS
Edition



Iowa's LGBTQ+ Newsletter of the First Friday Breakfast Club

July 2026 | Volume 31 | Issue 7

No Regular July
Breakfast Mtg.

**Donor Appreciation
& Member Party**
Saturday, July 11

July Location
**Temple for the
Performing Arts**

Recital Hall 4th Floor
1011 Locust Street

Free Event

6:00 – 9:00

**Beer, wine, food,
anniversary cake!**

Details on page 3

Website

ffbc Iowa.org



It's Time for an Anniversary Party!

by Byron Huff, Board President



What a wonderful Pride month we just experienced! Pride Fest in Des Moines shows that we have a robust community that shows up no matter what the weather throws at us. It was truly heartwarming to have a scholarship award winner and their friend join the FFBC group walking in the parade while waving their preferred flag! We were #3 in the lineup as we proudly represented FFBC as Capital City Pride's **2026 LGBTQ+ Organization of the Year**.

First Friday Breakfast Club has been around for 30 years, and based on a record number of scholarship applications this year, we will likely be around a lot longer. Our vision of an inclusive environment seems to be elusive as politicians attempt to use our community as a scapegoat for what ails our country. We all know this is simply a hurtful distraction that is used to rally support based the unknown. We hope our visibility will eventually make this sort of hate disappear into the fringes.

This month we will not have our usual First Friday meeting. As we have done for a number of years, we will have an evening party to celebrate our accomplishments; this will be held on **Saturday, July 11, from 6:00 to 9:00 PM**. This year will be at a new venue, thanks to the generosity of **Stuart Alexander**; we will have the beautiful Recital Hall (a smaller room just south of the Grand Hall) on the 4th floor of the Temple for Performing Arts (Centro and South Union Bakery). We will have food, drink, cake, and champagne to celebrate FFBC's 30th year! I hope all of you can join us. Please **RSVP** on our website to help us gauge food and drink so there is enough for everyone. The theme of this year's party is the **"Red Party"** (a fun throwback to some of FFBC's parties). We invite everyone to wear a little, a lot, or a FABULOUS amount of **red** to help us celebrate!

I also want to talk briefly about our monthly meetings. We have several payment options, but one is the pay-as-you-go every month for \$18. For that amount, you get a beautiful venue, a hot breakfast catered by Gateway Market, and a speaker that we hope will provide education and entertainment to start your day. FFBC has both fixed and variable costs to pay for both Hoyt Sherman (which they generously provide at a very low cost) and Gateway Market. Taking some rough estimates, we barely break even with 40 attendees each morning; the fixed costs create a "break even" that improves as we have more attendees. None of the money paid for monthly meetings provides support for our scholarships.

To sum up, celebrate and live authentically because that provides the best antidote against hateful rhetoric. Attend FFBC meetings and invite your friends to keep our organization strong. Contribute what you can to the scholarship program because our youth is our future and LGBTQ individuals need the extra help to combat discrimination.



WANTED

Want to join the FFBC Board as our new **Treasurer**? We are a 30-year volunteer organization that was named 2026 LGBTQ+ Organization of the Year. You will be rewarded many times over as we work to award scholarships to amazing Iowa high school students, helping them to realize their dreams. **A financial background with some experience with Quicken Online and Excel skills would be beneficial.**

TREASURER

100 Donors. \$15,000 Unlocked.

A generous Pride Month challenge will unlock \$15,000 for LGBTQ+ youth when 100 people make a gift.

100

Any amount. Every donor counts.



July 19

5:00 – 10:00
\$5.00

PRISM TABLETOP CLUB

LGBTQ+ GAME NIGHT

Play with Pride & Celebrate Diversity in Gaming
Held at Rook Room Game Lounge & Café

ROOK ROOM



Briefs & Shorts



We had an amazing **2026**

Scholarship Awards Ceremony

BRAVO!

at our June breakfast. Thanks to

Byron Huff for introducing our June speaker, **Zach Rus**, Executive Director of Iowa Safe Schools. Also, our appreciation goes out to the FFBC Scholarship Chair, **Ken Hanson**, and Scholarship Committee members, **Aria Shipston** and **Max Mowitz**, for emceeding our 2026 Scholar Awards Ceremony. Behind the scenes, **Phil Williams** and **Beverly Smith** did a superb job of organizing the breakfast for the event and working with our caterer, Gateway Market. Phil is also a master at managing the tech during our meetings. We are thankful that **Deb Madison-Levi** handled the hotel accommodations and gift bags for scholars and their families. Thanks to **Wade Petersen** for the registration, ceremony script, table programs, scholar PowerPoint, award plaques, and photos. We are always grateful to **Hoyt Sherman Place**, **Robert Warren**, and **Bryce Moyer** who skillfully coordinate our meeting needs throughout the year.

For FFBC's normal business, we thank **John Schmacker** for managing all of our finances, to **Nicholas Williams** for managing our Microsoft IT infrastructure, and to **Wade Petersen** for his work as our newsletter and website editor.

The **deadline** for the **August newsletter** will be **July 27**.

DEADLINE

If you have something that you would like to share, type it up and email to Wade (wadecpetersen@gmail.com) by the deadline.

Fundraising efforts are ongoing to fund our scholarship program. Since 1997, we have now awarded over **\$618,000** for **244** scholarships to Iowa high school seniors who have done remarkable, courageous things to reduce homophobia and teach about LGBTQ+ issues in their schools and communities. Please consider a tax-deductible **contribution** online or by sending a check. *Next year's scholars await!*





CELEBRATE! 30



30th Anniversary

Donor Appreciation & Member

Red Party

**THIS IS A
FREE
EVENT!**

Join us in celebrating 30
wonderful years of
First Friday Breakfast Club
at our annual donor appreciation
and member party!

Come dressed in a little or a lot of red!

**Beer | Wine | Champagne
Food & Desserts**

**Saturday, July 11
6:00 to 9:00 p.m.
Recital Hall | 4th floor
Temple for Performing Arts
1011 Locust Street**



"The mission of my life is to make queer people feel more connected to each other, and the idea that queer people anywhere are responsible for queer people everywhere. I took a quote from the Talmud that says, 'All the people of Israel are responsible for each other,' and I took that and made it gay."

- Andrew Gelwicks



Future Speakers



August 7:

Julia Franklin

Mainframe Studios

September 4:

Jackie Blount

Iowa Schools:
Sexuality & Gender

October 1:

Mazie Stillwell

Exec. Director Progress Iowa

November 6:

Deidre DeJear

President/CEO Oakridge
Neighborhood

December 4:

Nate Nims

Pastor, Walnut Hills
United Methodist Church



In re Ralph and More

by Jonathan Wilson

Iowa has some little-known history to be proud of. It dates back to the time before Iowa became a state. The Iowa Territory did have a nascent Supreme Court, and it was soon to become a “free state.” Missouri, on the other hand, had already been admitted to the U.S. as a “slave state.”

Ralph was a black man living in slavery in Missouri. Ralph was able to negotiate the purchase of his freedom, in installments. He was permitted by his owner to go to the Iowa Territory for work. Despite his employment, Ralph fell behind on his installment payments. His former owner hired a couple of bounty hunters to track down Ralph and return him to slavery in Missouri. He was located, captured, and going to be loaded onto a boat heading for Missouri.

It just so happened that Ralph’s Iowa employer was acquainted with a member of the newly established Iowa Supreme Court. He contacted one of them, Justice Wilson (no known relation) on Ralph’s behalf. A local court was directed to retrieve Ralph from the bounty hunters and hold him in jail until the matter could be decided by the Iowa Supreme Court.

In the first decision of the Iowa Supreme Court, the Court ruled unanimously that Ralph was a free man so long as he was in Iowa. While he still owed the original debt



First Friday Breakfast Club
Founder **Jonathan Wilson**

(current equivalent of \$17,500 plus interest), he could not be treated as collateral for the debt. He was released from jail.

But, there’s more. The Iowa Supreme Court ruled in favor of an African American girl who had not been allowed to attend the Muscatine public school in her neighborhood because “it was for whites only.” The Court ruled in *Clark v. Board of Directors*, that racial segregation in the Iowa public schools was unconstitutional. It took 86 YEARS for the United States Supreme Court to reach the same conclusion.

As a lawyer admitted to practice before the Iowa Supreme Court (now retired), I have little confidence that the current Court would rule with similarly enlightened and courageous decisions. We have to keep in mind that for more than FIFTEEN years, every nominee to fill a Supreme Court vacancy has been made by a Republican governor, and confirmed by a Republican dominated state Senate.



MORE THAN TESTING

The Project at PHC is more than a testing site



We provide:

- HIV treatment and ongoing medical care
- PrEP (daily and injectable)
- DoxyPEP
- Case management and support services

If you're looking for consistent, affirming care, we can help.



oneiowa Queer Joy Pool Party

July 18

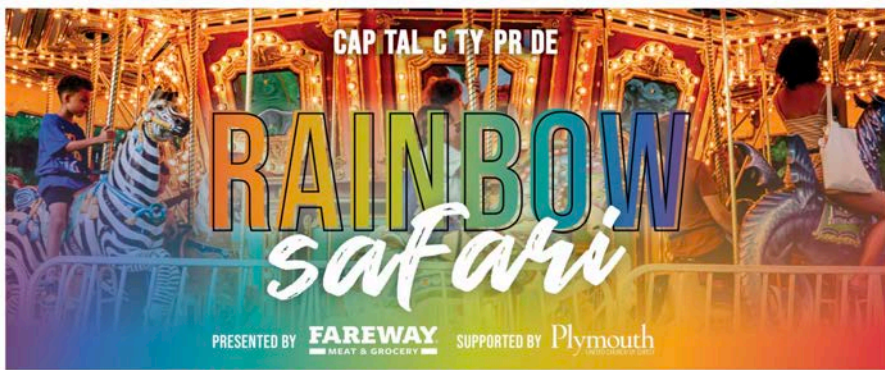
5:30 - 8:30 PM

Birdland Pool

Join One Iowa for their annual Queer Joy Pool Party!

This is a free event for folks aged 18+ in the queer and trans community to come together and enjoy an evening at the pool. A registration link will be posted closer to the event date, and they ask that folks please register so they can estimate the number of attendees.





THURSDAY, JULY 30, 5:30-9PM

BLANK PARK ZOO | \$2-4 ADMISSION | FOOD PROVIDED



July 10

Dinner 5:30

Show 7:30



Catch Jen Kober on her Whole Lotta Heart Tour at the Ingersoll Dinner Theater. Kober is hilarious and one of the top LGBTQ+ comedians working today.

**“Not all those
who wander
are lost.”**

J.R.R. Tolkien
The Fellowship of the Ring

National LGBTQ+ Calendar

glaad

- **July 13:** Lesbian Aunts Day
- **July 14:** Nonbinary Peoples Day
- **July 16:** International Drag Day

FFBC Membership

FFBC membership is open to all members of the LGBTQ+ community and their allies.

We welcome EVERYONE, regardless of sexual orientation, gender identity, or gender expression.

Meetings are held the first Friday of every month at Hoyt Sherman Place in Des Moines.

Membership Rates

The following rates help us to cover food and facility costs:

Annual Rate: \$180
(12 consecutive meetings)

Quarterly Rate: \$48
(3 consecutive meetings)

Individual Meeting: \$18

Full-Time Student: \$8

**No charge to attend
via Zoom**

Payment Options

We accept cash, checks, or credit cards at the meeting.



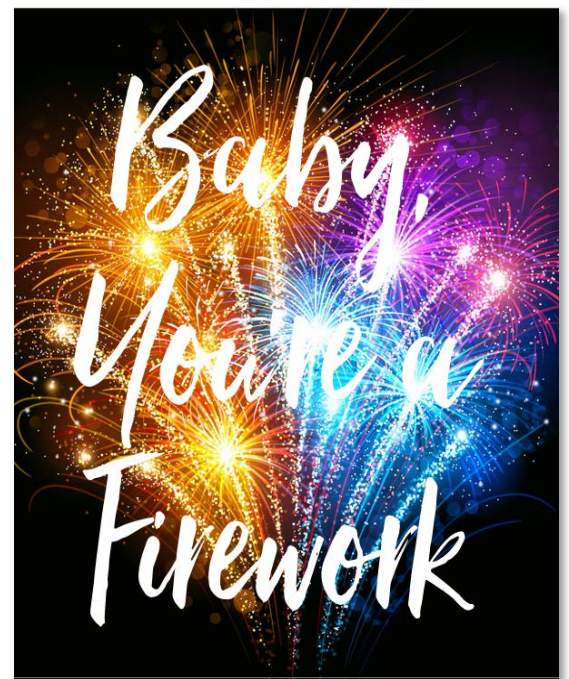
Meeting Schedule

6:30 a.m. - Doors open

6:45 a.m. - Breakfast service
begins

7:00 a.m. - Meeting
begins





PRIDE SPORTS LEAGUE OF CENTRAL IOWA

COME OUT AND KICK IT

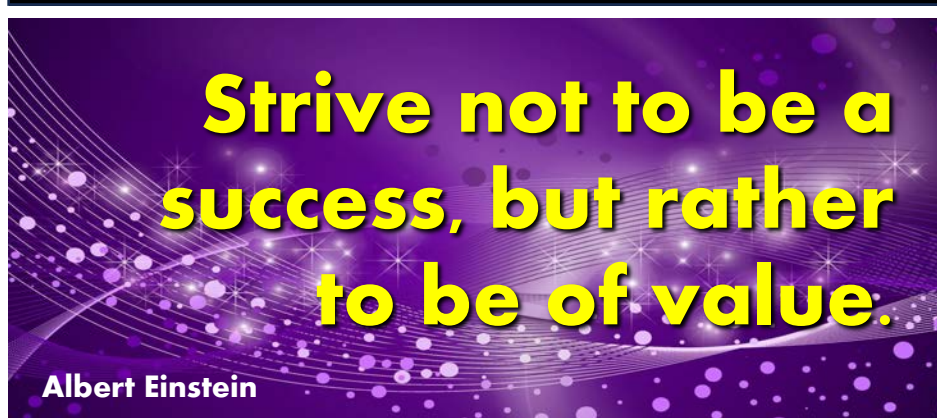
KICKBALL

WEDNESDAYS
6-10 PM
JULY 8 - AUG 19

@ CAMPBELL RECREATION AREA
12385 WOODLANDS PARKWAY
CLIVE, IA 50325

\$35 REGISTER AT LINK IN BIO
FREE AGENTS AND TEAMS WELCOME

NEVER PLAYED BEFORE? NEED A REFRESHER COURSE? >>>



The Iowa Trans Mutual Aid Fund financially supports Trans, Nonbinary, and Gender Diverse Iowans as they access gender-affirming care.

iowatransmutualaidfund.org



Iowa Safe Schools: Keeping Hope Alive

by Gary Moore

Zach Rus, Executive Director of Iowa Safe Schools, delivered an inspiring address at the First Friday Breakfast Club on June 5th. The breakfast held at Hoyt Sherman Place highlighted the 2026 FFBC scholars and celebrated young advocates.

Speaking to the 135 LGBTQ+ community and allies, Rus drew deeply from his personal background. Having grown up in rural northwest Iowa, he has a deep understanding of the unique challenges faced by students and families outside of urban centers. He emphasized that advocacy and equity must extend to every corner of the state, ensuring the LGBTQ+ youth in rural communities have access to the same support, resources, and sense of safety as those in larger cities.

"I knew I was different, even before I had words for it. I was eight years old when I learned what happened to people who didn't fit. My piano teacher was kind to me. He was fired, not because he wasn't good at his job, not because he didn't serve our community, but because he was gay." Rus added, "Even at eight, I understood what it meant for me. If people found out who I was, the same thing would happen."

How many of the LGBTQ+ community have a similar story? I know I do. A teacher in high school in Dubuque was suddenly gone halfway through the year. He was a good teacher. Someone reported he had a boyfriend back in Madison whom he saw on weekends. He was gone.

These are not the exceptions. These are the environments young LGBTQ+ people still face every day in some form or other, not 50 years ago. It still brings tears to my eyes thinking of the quiet pain young people go through struggling.

And there, in simple words, is why we have and need to support Iowa Safe Schools. This is why we have Gay Pride, One Iowa, Prime Timers, the Des Moines Gay Men's Chorus, and the first home for many, Iowa's gay bars, and the many places where LGBTQ+ people can be safe and have an environment to grow into their authentic selves. When you choose to show up for someone before they know they need you, you're not just changing lives, you're often saving them. Young transgender students spend every day calculating which spaces are safe and which aren't.

Zach noted his success depended on luck, on whether the right friend or the right adult was in the room at the right time. No young person's future should depend on chance. But in Iowa, we now have File 496. It's a law that pressures schools to scrub library shelves of diverse stories, restricts curriculum, and forces schools to out transgender students to their parents. It turns institutions meant to protect kids into places where they have to calculate safety before they even take a seat. **"That's why our team fights, day in and day out."**

Iowa Safe Schools is guided by core values and is tenacious, hopeful, empowering, and strategic. Their work reaches all 99 Iowa counties. They work with educators and professionals serving youth. The Governor's Conference of LGBTQ Youth is now in its twenty-first year. Their advocacy work changes policy and changes lives.

The morning served as a powerful showcase for the next generation of Iowa's leaders. Alongside his keynote, Rus helped honor the First Friday Breakfast Club's 2026 scholarship recipients, commending the graduating high school seniors for their academic achievement and community advocacy. He praised the scholars' resilience, noting that they represent a bright and inclusive future for the state of Iowa.



June
Speaker

Zach Rus

**Executive Director
Iowa Safe Schools**



Iowa Safe Schools Team: Zach Rus, Hannah Mitchell, Jordan Mix, Damian Thompson, Mark Turnage





Scholarship Awards Photo Gallery



133 Supporters in Attendance!



Ken Hanson
Scholarship Chair | Emcee



Aria Shipston
Ceremony Emcee



Max Mowitz
Ceremony Emcee



Byron Huff
FFBC Board President



First Friday Breakfast Club

SCHOLARSHIPS

At the FFBC meeting on June 5, 2026, people gathered to celebrate this year's group of 21 Iowa high school seniors who distinguished themselves with efforts to reduce homophobia and to educate about LGBTQ+ issues in their schools and communities.

Each scholar will receive a scholarship of **\$3,000**, in two installments, to be used for *any* expenses incurred during their post-high school educational endeavors. It matters not whether that endeavor is in college somewhere or a technical school. The scholarships are awarded to deserving students, regardless of gender, sexual orientation, transgender status, or other personal characteristic.

Thus far, \$618,000 has been awarded to 244 scholars, thanks to the generosity of FFBC members and LGBTQ+ allies. One hundred percent of the money raised goes to the scholarships; contributions are not used to raise the money, a somewhat unique thing that can be said about the FFBC scholarship program and fundraising. The more money raised, the more money given!

This year we honored: **Brynn Almond, Annabelle Baggett, Claire Coffey, Cian Collins, Gabriel Conzemius, Benjamin Emmart, Serenity Frantz, Rylan Grebin, Greta Gromacki, Remy Holladay, Ferdinand Hyatt, Zackary Jones, Kenneth Kane, Kolbie Kriegel, Marley Lytle, Alex McClure, Genesis Morelos, Brooklyn Neddermeyer, June Piepel, Ashton Robinson, and Georgia Steeples.** As you can see from their backgrounds on the following pages, their collective efforts have reached all across the state of Iowa.



Our 2026 Scholars



2025-2026

Scholarship Committee

Ken Hanson (Chair)

Jim Flansburg

Aria Huizenga

Max Mowitz

**Jonathan
Pogge-Weaver**

Chris Russell



2026 First Friday Breakfast Club Scholarship Winners

**Brynn
Almond**

Roland-Story High School



Brynn Almond (she/her) is a graduate of **Roland-Story High School**.

Brynn lives in a deeply red area where it is sometimes difficult to find LGBTQ+ support. Brynn is not ashamed of her sexuality and has been a beacon of support for others who are struggling to come out. She worked to make her GSA a bonding experience and a place to find trusted community allies. Brynn works to preach acceptance and show that LGBTQ+ people are no different from anyone else; she told us that the phrase "you can be whatever you want to be" does not stop with sexuality. Brynn's counselor said, "Brynn has navigated challenges with maturity, becoming increasingly confident, collaborative, and selfless. Her achievements reflect the character and resilience she brings to every opportunity. When I think of our best students, I think of Brynn." Brynn plans to attend Simpson College to study psychology. She is excited to meet a new, welcoming community of LGBTQ+ people and to try to mend misconceptions of the non-accepting community.

**Annabelle
Baggett**

Exira-Elk Horn-Kimballton High School



Annabelle Baggett (she/her) is our scholar from **Exira-Elk Horn-Kimballton High School**.

Because of the large issue her district has with Bullying and hate speech, Annabelle attempted to start the first GSA at her school to educate students and protect those being mistreated. Even after rounding up officers and filling out vast amounts of paperwork, the administration, unfortunately, created so many hurdles that eventually the club was put on hold...but the foundations, and Annabelle's legacy, have been put in place. She hopes younger students will be strong enough to push this through next year. Her math teacher said, "She is precisely the type of student who leverages intellectual curiosity with practical, high-level execution." Annabelle is graduating early and will attend the University of Iowa to pursue a degree in biology and then become an exotic animal veterinarian. Ideally, this is where she hopes to meet her future wife, dance off into the sunset, and have children who are educated and understanding.

**Claire
Coffey**

Carlisle High School



Claire Coffey (she/her) is from **Carlisle High School**. Claire is a strong ally

for LGBTQ+ students. She told us about backlash from a chorus video where a Pride flag in the choir room offended a parent, forcing them to remove it. To her friends, the flag was a symbol that said, "You're safe here. You're not going to be judged. You can be yourself." Claire became an officer in the GSA, and during "Culture and Identity Month," took initiative to focus on LGBTQ+ topics and organized a panel discussion where students shared their stories. She attended the Lead DSM Youth Leadership Program, which works with Des Moines area students to develop leadership skills and promote inclusivity. One of Claire's teachers described her: "I have witnessed countless instances of her welcoming others and offering a bright, encouraging smile to those around her." Claire will attend the University of Iowa to study business and political science, perhaps becoming a high school history teacher or an entrepreneur who promotes acceptance and advocacy.

2026 First Friday Breakfast Club Scholarship Winners

**Cian
Collins**

Pekin West High School



Cian Collins (**they/them**) is a scholar from **Pekin High School**. In school, Cian has stopped many LGBTQ+ kids from being bullied. As a kid who was bullied for being gay and different, they found it hard to just let people go through the same thing; they know how it feels to be helpless, alone, and scared. Helping and defending even just one person can make an incredible difference. Cian shared that harmful stereotypes (like believing being LGBTQ+ is just a phase) are belittling. Sometimes, explaining why negative comments hurt and taking it to a teacher if it persists can help people a lot. It not only helps that person, but can also stop others from being bullied for the same reason. Cian's English teacher said that they are "the kind of student every educator hopes to teach: capable, driven, collaborative, and deeply dependable." Cian wants to pursue a job in trades, specifically carpentry. In college, they want to construct safe spaces for people like them and to continue to speak up against people doing wrong things.

**Gabriel
Conzemius**

Ankeny Centennial High School



Gabriel Conzemius (**he/him**) is a scholar from **Ankeny Centennial High School**. Gabriel was involved in a school program that teaches about understanding different viewpoints and working to become future leaders. Within this program, he worked to build a better and safer school culture focused on empathy by mentoring a small group of students about understanding minority issues and LGBTQ+ rights. Gabriel felt like he really got through to these students. One of his references said, "It can't be easy being LGBTQ+ and a person of color in a very straight, very white Ankeny, let alone Hispanic in the current climate. Where those parts of his identity are beautiful and should be celebrated, I know at times they have also added another layer of anxiety for him as he navigates through the challenges of high school and life in general." Gabriel will attend DMACC followed by law school at the University of Iowa for a career practicing law in Iowa as a state prosecutor. He hopes to make a difference not only for gay rights, but also for minority rights.

**Benjamin
Emmart**

Moravia High School



Benjamin Emmart, (**he/they**) is from **Moravia High School**. Benjamin has felt the effects of anti-trans legislation when first figuring out their identity. Accommodations, a safe bathroom, and a legal right to be addressed the way they wanted were all taken away by the state of Iowa. Benjamin still fears for his life and the life of all in the LGBTQ+ community. With time, Benjamin has grown bolder and finally broke out of his shell with more confidence to be more active in his school community, and to perform and talk to others. One teacher said that he "...is one of the most diligent, reliable, and hard working students I have taught." Benjamin plans to finish their junior year and graduate early. They hope to attend Iowa State University, double majoring in Music Performance and education, and then become a high school teacher. Benjamin wants the world to understand that trans individuals can do everything and anything anyone else can—and Benjamin hopes to be a guiding light for future generations of queer people.

2026 First Friday Breakfast Club Scholarship Winners

**Serenity
Frantz**

Ottumwa High School



FFBC is thrilled to welcome **Serenity Frantz (she/her)**, a scholar from **Ottumwa High School**. The issue of discrimination and harassment towards LGBTQ+ people hits close to home for Serenity. At times, school has been rough when some students shamed and isolated her for being bisexual. Serenity believes we should meet people with love instead of judgment and hatred. Serenity lobbied her drama club to produce *The Prom* (a musical about a lesbian who faces homophobia and is told she cannot take her girlfriend to prom). Serenity got the lead role and was excited to help bring awareness to LGBTQ+ issues and to spread a message that would have a lasting impact. Despite some backlash, the show went on. Serenity especially wanted LGBTQ+ audience members to feel seen; in fact, a friend later told her that the show gave her the courage to come out. Serenity will attend Wartburg College and wants to become a vocal music teacher. She wrote, "I want to advocate for those who feel they have no voice."

**Rylan
Grebin**

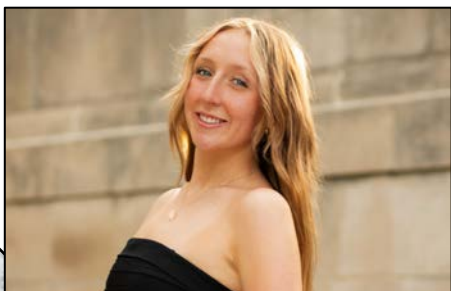
Stanton High School



Congrats to our next scholar, **Rylan Grebin, (he/him)** from **Stanton High School**. In his high school of fewer than 60 students, he has been called slurs and shut out of different groups of kids because of who he is. Rylan knows that many LGBTQ+ people are treated differently and are seen as less; he wants everyone to feel accepted, especially in public, like when he holds his boyfriend's hand. Rylan also has taken the initiative to confront students who use negative slurs. He has not been afraid to involve the principal, counselor, or parents for support. Sometimes small actions, in a small high school, can be huge. Younger kids look up to Rylan because he is always nice and accepting of anyone who talks to him. Being different doesn't mean you're less than or less deserving. Rylan said, "I want others to feel safe and normal around everyone. I want to make wherever I may go a happier place than it was before I was there." Rylan plans to attend Iowa Western Community College next year and to try out for the Dance Team.

**Greta
Gromacki**

Iowa City West High School



Greta Gromacki (she/her) is a scholar from **Iowa City West High School**. Greta is passionate about advocacy for gender-affirming care, especially for one of her close friends. She strives to support the outward expression of being truthful to one's internal identity. At school, Greta has helped reduce homophobia by co-creating a digital website full of resources about the LGBTQ+ community and about how to be an ally. The website is used to educate others, along with inclusive posters in the halls that link to the website. She encouraged fellow students to be allies to LGBTQ students by telling them, "Of course you can support others, you're human." Greta's goal is to be a screenwriter and director at DePaul University. She plans to write, direct, and hopefully produce films that advocate for the LGBTQ+ community. Greta's English teacher predicts that, at college, "She'll show up desperate to find and make meaning in the beautiful and the terrible, the extraordinary and the mundane. She'll read and write and live with joy and curiosity."

2026 First Friday Breakfast Club Scholarship Winners

**Remy
Holladay**

Louisa-Muscatine High School



Remy Holladay (he/they) is from Louisa-Muscatine High School. Being a transgender student has been challenging in a small community. Remy has unabashedly been himself in middle and high school and made it known what they wanted to be called and what being "trans" meant. Remy was involved in the GSA, but it never lasted more than two or three sessions each time they started it. Remy enjoys educating people and having meaningful discussions. They are not afraid to hold hands with their boyfriend in the halls or correcting people who do not use their preferred name. Remy's band teacher told us, "In my time as an educator, I have taught only a handful of students who have so wholeheartedly invested in the process of becoming the best version of themselves. Remy is one of those students." Remy will attend Loras College to study sociology, and then continue on to law school. Remy enjoys advocating for justice, and thinks there are too few people in legal positions who advocate for LGBTQ people.

**Ferdinand
Hyatt**

West Des Moines Valley High School



Ferdinand Hyatt (they/them) attends Valley High School in West Des Moines. At Valley, Ferdinand has been the president of the GSA for the past three years. They want to educate others on intersex people; the concept of a sex that's neither 'female' nor 'male' seems to be confusing to many. Ferdinand often feels left out at Pride when flying their intersex flag because many people do not know what that means. Ferdinand designed an informational poster featuring the transgender, nonbinary, and intersex flags. When posters were torn down, Ferdinand fought to keep putting them back up, making sure the perpetrators had consequences and sending a clear message that homophobic behavior would be punished. Ferdinand's French teacher told us: "He is kind, empathetic, and respectful, with a natural ability to connect with others." Ferdinand plans to go to Winona State University to become an ecologist. They are excited about joining a college group centered on personal identities and intersectionality.

**Zackary
Jones**

Carlisle High School



Zackary Jones (he/him) is from Carlisle High School and was influenced by his older gay brother's experience at a prom when the brother and his boyfriend were bullied. Zackary said, "The fact that most people in the LGBTQ+ community cannot go about their day without getting bothered just for being themselves is bizarre." Zackary is the president of his school's RALLY Club which increases awareness and advocacy of social issues, including LGBTQ+. The club takes students to the Iowa Safe Schools Governor's Conference to help learn about the issues that the LGBTQ+ community faces. Zackary's Spanish teacher said, "As student body president he sought to create inclusive opportunities and worked to ensure that student voices from a range of backgrounds were heard." Zackary will attend the University of Iowa to major in biochemistry and molecular biology. He then will apply to med school to become an orthopedic surgeon. He hopes to use his position as a doctor to get involved with politics and support the LGBTQ+ community.

2026 First Friday Breakfast Club Scholarship Winners

Kenneth Kane

Hudson High School



From **Hudson High School**, **Kenneth Kane (he/him)** is the first openly transgender student at his school, and the first trans person to graduate from his school. Living in a conservative town is almost impossible to not feel hopeless at times. Until he turned 18, he had to travel out-of-state to receive life-saving treatment. Transgender care has allowed him to become more confident and comfortable with himself. He has truly been able to become who he was always meant to be. Kenneth prides himself on being an excellent student and involved member in his community. Being a strong role model for his neighbors is how he supports the LGBTQ+. Ken's yearbook teacher described him as, "an exceptional student whose creativity, intellect, and character distinguish him as one of the most outstanding individuals I have had the privilege to teach." Kenneth plans to attend Pasadena City College to become a screenwriter. He wants to increase LGBTQ+ visibility in the film industry by writing scripts that showcase authentic queer experiences.

Kolbie Kriegel

Center Point-Urbana High School



Kolbie Kriegel (she/they) comes from **Center Point-Urbana High School**. As a member of the LGBTQ+ community, Kolbie faced harassment and bullying for being different, especially in middle school. Her experience is something that she hopes others will never have to go through. It hurts their heart to see so much hate in what they once thought was a loving and accepting world. Kolbie says, "I aspire to help those who are similar to me in identity and struggle. We as a community must continue to spread support despite how dark the world may seem today." As a freshman, they joined the school's DEI club in hopes of finding acceptance for their sexuality. The DEI club has hosted multiple events advocating for LGBTQ+ rights to reduce homophobia within their local community, including a recent school walk-out to protest anti-LGBTQ legislation in Iowa. Kolbie will attend the University of Iowa to major in English/creative writing and screenwriting. Kolbie has stories to tell and will try to implement LGBTQ+ themes to spread positivity about the community.

Marley Lytle

Cedar Rapids Washington High



Marley Lytle (she/they) is a scholar from **Cedar Rapids Washington High School**. She led her school's GSA as president to make a positive impact on student safety and to have a place for students to be themselves. She organized events and led a group to the state GSA convention. Marley, along with GSA co-leaders, talked with state senators and representatives about how anti-LGBTQ+ legislation would negatively affect them, only to have Iowa's governor sign the law to remove gender identity from the Civil Rights Act the next day. Her advisor told us that she spoke with "eloquence and courage" to legislators who did not share her perspective. He also said that Marley was "one of the most well-rounded students I have had the privilege of knowing. She exhibits intellect, empathy, and initiative in rare measure." Marley hopes to attend The University of Chicago or George Mason University and go into government and politics. She says, "I will create policies to help the LGBT+ community and vote against laws that hurt us."

2026 First Friday Breakfast Club Scholarship Winners

**Alex
McClure**

Center Point-Urbana High School



Alex McClure (he/him) is from [Center Point-Urbana High School](#). Alex is transgender and feels that living in a small district can be incredibly isolating. As a freshman, Alex was already educating teachers and peers with a presentation on gay rights activist Marsha P. Johnson. He also presented selections at speech contests about the experiences of LGBTQ+ people. Before his GSA shut down due to state laws against DEI initiatives, the club was making the school more inclusive, including a walkout to protest the “Don’t say gay” bill. Alex developed a zero-tolerance stance against any homophobia at school. Alex’s chemistry teacher told us, “He is unapologetically himself, expressing his identity, interests, and values with a confidence that is inspiring. His bold self-expression sends a powerful message to those around him that it is okay to be who you are.” Alex will attend the University of Minnesota for ecology and biology and said, “I’ve never seen much opportunity for queer people in STEM and conservation fields, and I want to change that.”

**Genesis
Morelos**

Storm Lake High School



Genesis Morelos (she/her) is a graduate of [Storm Lake High School](#).

Even though Genesis grew up in a diverse town where people’s identities and cultures are part of everyday life, the growing effort to erase or silence LGBTQ+ identities is still challenging. As someone who is bisexual, Genesis understands how harmful that kind of silence can be. Schools should be places where students can feel that their identity is valid and respected. Genesis and a friend worked with the administration to organize a student walkout in response to laws that restrict discussion of LGBTQ+ identities. Genesis even spoke during the protest; standing in front of peers to explain why these laws mattered. Her counselor called Genesis a “scholar, leader, and changemaker.” Genesis plans to study at a 4-year university and major in political science, followed by law school. She plans to become a lawyer, specializing in legal issues involving civil rights and protections for marginalized communities, including LGBTQ+ individuals.

**Brooklyn
Neddermeyer**

Webster City High School



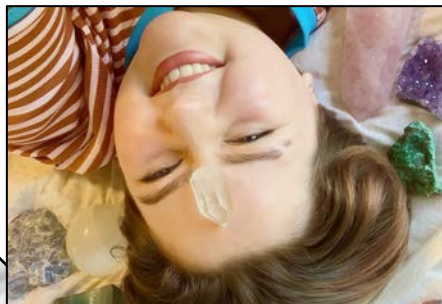
Brooklyn Neddermeyer (she/her) is from [Webster City High School](#).

Growing up in a rural town, Brooklyn often didn’t feel safe in sharing her true self with teachers or students for fear they wouldn’t understand. She identifies as asexual or “ace.” Brooklyn believes that we need to support each other, no matter the identity. She is proud to have helped a questioning friend. Brooklyn was her “safe space” in discussing the LGBTQ+ community. Brooklyn also tried to start a GSA at her school several times, but was not successful. Brooklyn’s math teacher described her as “the complete package” and one of the reasons she looked forward to work every day: “Character is one of her defining traits—she is one of the most caring, sincere, and respectful students I have taught. Brooklyn treats everyone she encounters with genuine kindness and patience.” Brooklyn will attend Iowa State. After college, she would like to open a bookstore that is LGBTQ+ friendly. Brooklyn never had any LGBTQ+ spaces in her own childhood, so she wants to make one for others.

2026 First Friday Breakfast Club Scholarship Winners

June Piepel

Des Moines Roosevelt High School



June Piepel (he/they) comes from Des Moines Roosevelt High School. As a transgender individual with autism, June finds fighting for their community to be important. They watch as friends have issues getting hormone therapy. Despite this, these issues inspire June to persevere and fight for justice. June says, "Queer and Trans joy is very important, and the community connection we surround ourselves with is contagiously empowering." Torment and abuse by classmates led to a long path of depression and self harm recovery, but June continued to use their voice against bigoted classmates. They took part in student-led rallies that put a large target on their back, but June continued to resist. June's younger classmates confided that they felt understood and supported by this. One of June's teachers said that they were "one of the most caring and helpful students I know." June will attend Iowa State and plans to major in fine arts. They want to help others find their way of expression and bring more creativity to help raise the future of young queer artists.

Ashton Robinson

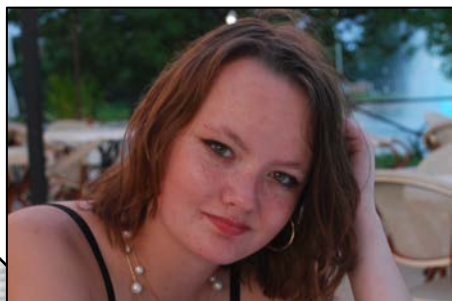
Colfax-Mingo High School



Ashton Robinson (he/him) is from Colfax-Mingo High School. Ashton has been out as transgender since he was twelve. He has been a part of his school's GSA club since being a freshman and became president of the club and tried to educate younger members about queer history. Ashton has always been very open about his transition to those he knows personally and to those who ask kindly. Ashton would much rather give away personal details and allow someone to learn than have someone be uninformed. One teacher told us how much he was impressed by Ashton's leadership skills ensuring every voice is heard and valued in their GSA Club. One of Ashton's teachers said, "Ashton is an incredible student, who I believe will go on and change the world for the better." Ashton will attend Grinnell College and major in English, leading to a career to use creativity to write through the eyes of differing characters, especially highlighting life in the LGBTQ+ community. Ashton said, "We need people to be a voice for the voiceless and tell their stories."

Georgia Steeple

Bondurant-Farrar High School



Georgia Steeples (she/they) is from Bondurant-Farrar High School. The removal of gender identity in Iowa schools directly affected Georgia as a member of the queer community. Not being able to express herself or be open about who she is and who she loves diminishes her life. Georgia is part of the Des Moines Teen Council which educates teens and the community on different topics: queer history, sex ed, government, and gender identities. She went to lobby day at the capitol with Planned Parenthood to fight against bills that would harm the LGBTQ+ community. They spoke directly with representatives about why students deserve access to comprehensive sex education and even spoke in front of nearly 100 Planned Parenthood supporters. Georgia was Vice President for their GSA club and educated younger students about rights and discrimination. Georgia will attend Kirkwood Community College to work with birds of prey for education, conservation, and abatement as well as doing other wildlife management.



Brynn Almond



Annabelle Baggett



Claire Coffey



Gabriel Conzemius



Benjamin Emmart



Serenity Frantz



Rylan Grebin



Greta Gromacki



Remy Holladay



Ferdinand Hyatt



Zackary Jones



Kenneth Kane



Kolbie Kriegel



Morley Lytle



Alex McClure



Genesis Morelos



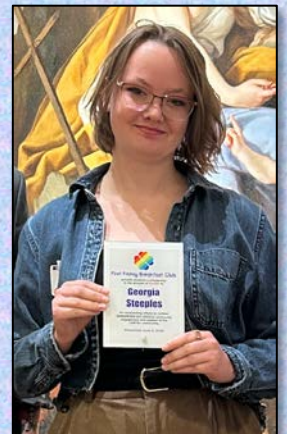
Brooklyn Neddermeyer



June Piepel



Ashton Robinson



Georgia Steeples



Not pictured: Cian Collins of Pekin High School
(attended via Zoom from Florida).

The Summer Day

Who made the world?
 Who made the swan, and the black bear?
 Who made the grasshopper?
 This grasshopper, I mean—
 the one who has flung herself out of the grass,
 the one who is eating sugar out of my hand,
 who is moving her jaws back and forth instead of up and down—
 who is gazing around with her enormous and complicated eyes.
 Now she lifts her pale forearms and thoroughly washes her face.
 Now she snaps her wings open, and floats away.
 I don't know exactly what a prayer is.
 I do know how to pay attention, how to fall down
 into the grass, how to kneel down in the grass,
 how to be idle and blessed, how to stroll through the fields,
 which is what I have been doing all day.
 Tell me, what else should I have done?
 Doesn't everything die at last, and too soon?
**Tell me, what is it you plan to do
 with your one wild and precious life?**

- Mary Oliver

**Most Americans still prefer
 candidates who support LGBTQ+
 rights. Only 1 percent of likely
 voters name LGBTQ+ issues as
 their top concern, but most
 still prefer candidates who
 support LGBTQ+ rights over
 those who oppose them, a new
 Data for Progress poll finds.**

www.advocate.com/politics/national/voters-prefer-pro-lgbtq-candidates



30 Years of Scholars

**1997**

Kit Murray, Des Moines

1998

Jane Bowman, Bettendorf
Kyoko Layng Nakamaru, Bettendorf

1999

Brad Hess, Persia
Julia McGinley, Ames
Andrea Thede, Boone

2000

Anna Blaedel, Ames
Emily Pullen, Des Moines
Elizabeth Gina Russell, Ames
Whitney Smith, Des Moines

2001

Erin Lynn Casper, Macedonia
Krista Goetz, Cedar Falls
Kathryn Karrett, Altoona
Sara Lynn Sloat, Davenport

2002

Nathaniel Matta, West Des Moines
Emily Norveisas, Bettendorf
Hannah Schroder, Davenport

2003

Meagan Anthony, Ankeny
Michelle Heinz, Dubuque
Jennifer Korner, Council Bluffs
Lauren Scott, Des Moines
Michael Trotter, Pella

2004

Joshua Anderson, Des Moines
Ilse Bendorf, Iowa City
Jenaleigh Dague, Asbury
Shelby Strommer, Iowa City

2005

Matthew R Hill, Muscatine
Nicholas Alt, Iowa City
Ryan Bobst, Eldridge
Justin Briggs, Bettendorf
Jaclyn M Duncan, Asbury
Haley Metcalf, West Burlington
Alison Mollman, Solon
Amanda Richardson, Dubuque
Patrick Schrodt, Altoona
Kelli Sutterman, Bettendorf
Christopher Williams,
West Des Moines

2006

Amanda Bailey, Davenport
Jeanette Beebe, Clive
Rita Clark, Marshalltown
Leah Francis Cole, Clive
Deborah Estin, Iowa City
Molly Finn, Dubuque
Amber Johnson, Council Bluffs
Lauren Link, Pleasant Hill
Andrew Minard, Waterloo
Joshua Sheridan, Des Moines
Miranda Welch, Stratford

2007

Lisa Hansen, Clinton
Rachel Jensen, Cedar Falls
Shawn Kasperbauer, Carroll
Adam Lange, Carroll
Zachary Parker, Newton
Jessica Vetter, Wilton
Douglas Warner-Fink, Fort Madison

2008

Kaitlyn Walker, Adel
Corey Cox, Burlington
Briana McGeough, Cedar Falls
Natalie Roush, Robins
Mersad Arapovic, Urbandale

2009

Ryan Mickey, Council Bluffs
Ellyn Nitchais, Winterset
Thao Pham, Urbandale
Steven Swim, West Des Moines

2010

Dane Buchholz, Waverly
Jessica Garraway, Sioux City
Stormy O'Brink, Waterloo
David Pope, Clear Lake
Molly Richardson, Norwalk
Taylor Smith, Marshalltown

2011

Benjamin Kelton Alley
Sean Hernandez
Sara Mowitz, Des Moines
Nicholas Eli Muntz
Sara Puffer, North Liberty
Nolan Reisen
Zach Wahls, Iowa City

2012

Claire Boeke, Ames
Alexander Brown, Council Bluffs
Logun Buckley, Alden
Arianna Dahlin, Ainsworth
Chanse Dunn, Sioux City
Sarah Henderson, Wilton
Ruth Riedl, Iowa City
Derek Steinauer, Cedar Rapids
Vidal Fabio Alejandro, Des Moines

2013

Rebecca Barrett, Iowa City
Lily Clark, Norwalk
Gabriella Daft, Colfax
Christopher Krebill, Donnellson
Nadia Loeppke, Dubuque
Charlotte Mann, Ames
Tanner Jon Mote, Mount Vernon
Josie Mumm, Davenport
Christopher Reising, LeMars
Jade Riley, Sioux City

2014

Taylor Amey, Davenport
Samantha Bailey, Newton
Allison Cole, Cedar Rapids
Asa Crowe, Donnellson
Sean Finn, Marshalltown
Hunter Gillaspie, Marion
Emily Malcolm, Hampton
Carlin Ring, Harlan
Adelisa Turnadzie, Urbandale

2015

Alex Bare, Walcott
Brody Hall, Victor
Zachary Hall, Des Moines
Ryan Hansen, Iowa City
Cecelia Martinez, Marshalltown
Lukas Monico, Logan
Jacob Stallman, Tipton
Anson Tonelli, Des Moines
Sydney Winkel, Centerville

2016

Benjamin Christianson, Cedar Falls
Liam Jameson, Des Moines
Kaden Jones, Edgewood
Ryan McDaniel, Marshalltown
Parker Miles, Fort Dodge
Philip Runia, Humboldt
Elliot Smith, West Des Moines

2017

Jacob Cash, Centerville
Greyson Davis, Eagle Grove
Julia DiGiacomo, Cedar Rapids
Connor Johnson, West Des Moines
Christine Nguyen, Cedar Rapids
Krystal O'Morrow, Des Moines
Dakota Trenkamp, Marion
Elijah Willig, Grinnell

2018

Dorothy Anderson, Dubuque
Marcella Anderson, Dubuque
Mercedee Doty, Fort Madison
Abbie Eastman, Ames
Logan Eaton, Mount Ayr
Lane Kunzie, Corydon
Hannah Mitchell, Johnston
Bailey VandKamp, Knoxville

2019

Emmet Cummings, Center Point
Jaden Deal, Norwalk
Kevin Drahos, Linn Mar
Tyler Juffernbruch, Indianola
Hayden Lightle, Eldridge
Madison Mason, Perry
Cade Pahl, Des Moines
Miguel Solis, West Liberty

2020

Lili Duncan, Iowa City
Isabelle Hase, West Burlington
Skylar Manna, West Des Moines
Payson Rea, Lansing
Benton Renaud, Ankeny
Eli Steenhoek, Colfax
Isis Walle, Knoxville

2021

Moiria Buie, Fort Dodge
Allissa Cox, Muscatine
Leah Kaminsky, Mount Vernon
Keon Kruse, West Des Moines
Maverick Meimann, Boone
Emmaline Mitchell, East Union
Greyson Pullen, Sac City
Michael Rosenberg, Hampton
Lennon Schriever, Ogden

2022

Jackson Bloodsworth, Davenport
Elizabeth Boese, Treynor
Gretchen Ellerbrock, Waverly
Hannah King, Moulten
Iris Mackenzie, Grinnell
Taylor Mayhue, Eldridge
Abby McLeod, Nevada
Matthew Monsivais, Ankeny
Ellis (Natalie) Montgomery, Grinnell
Molly Moorhead, Perry
Alaynah Rieck, Center Point
Estella Ruhner-Johnson, Sioux City

2023

Max Cline, Cedar Rapids
Levi Cooper, Carlisle
Kendall Duit, Iowa Falls
Kenzie Fick, Story City
Leo Friedman, Newton
Lilly Beth Froehlich, Waukee
Beatrice Goldberry, West Liberty
Jackson Kaune, Grimes
Beau Kell, Cedar Rapids
Olivia Moody, Polk City
Dallas Olberding, Mount Vernon
Ava Rossow, Des Moines
Dakota Walling, Manly
Noah Wasek, Marion

2024

Tyler Pittman, Waukee
Elliot Martin, Cedar Falls
Brody Petig, Grinnell
Rebekah Schurz, Carlisle
Claire Opdahl, Sioux Center
Owen Schriever, Ogden
Lauren Wessling, Johnston
Luke Mueggenberg, Linn-Mar
Trinity Gillis, Spencer
AJ Keeler, Bondurant
Jasper Wirth, Algona
Faith Miller, Lisbon
Remi Shaffer, Algona
Delany Clark, Des Moines
Miyah Morgan, Dewitt
Meredith Sherer, Woodbine

2025

Hailey Ankrum, Madrid
Perseus Batista-Pedro, Waterloo
Nohle Cooley, Waterloo
Noelle Craver, Centerville
Isabelle Edge, Bondurant-Farrar
Baylyn Herring, Panorama
Olivia Hilby, Dubuque
Evan Huegel, Ankeny
Katerina Laubengayer, Springville
Liam Madison, North Polk
Pez Owens, Cedar Rapids
Tobi Pinegar, Lynnville-Sully
Gyasilyn Purdy, English Valleys
Cassie Schebel, West Des Moines
Grayson Shonka, Bondurant-Farrar
Kylee Shoop, North Linn
Cameron Smith, Des Moines
Eidann Squires, Graettinger-Terril
Landon Stanley, Marshalltown
Zachary Struth, Interstate 35



As of June 2026:
244 Scholarships
\$ 618,000





Did you know we are OPEN every Sunday?

Check out books, view archival materials of our community's history, and enjoy a welcoming, inclusive space for the LGBTQIA+ community

Every Sunday
from 2:00-5:00PM!

- **July 12**
- **July 19**
- **July 26**

find us at 1620 Pleasant ST
Des Moines, IA 50314

GAMES! FOOD! PRIDE!

LGBTQ BBQ

Meats will be provided,
feel free to share a side
or dessert to add to our
community potluck, and
bring your own chair!

SAT, JULY 4 | 5PM-8PM | LOOKOUT PARK
PARK RD & MANDALAY DR,
CEDAR FALLS

RSVP here:

<https://tinyurl.com/47vkerm3>



**"Every Pride season reminds me that one
accepting parent, one conversation, one
act of love can change a life."**

Sara Cunningham
Founder Free Mom Hugs



The Des Moines Pride Center houses the Rick Miller LGBTQ Library. The Pride Center is fighting to maintain a vibrant Queer future by connecting people to LGBTQ+ literature, information, and creativity.

Book of the Month

American Teenager by Nico LANG

American Teenager by Nico Lang: Media coverage tends to sensationalize the fight over how trans kids should be allowed to live, but what is incredibly rare are the voices of the people at the heart of this transgender and gender nonconforming kids themselves. For their groundbreaking new book, journalist Nico Lang spent a year traveling the country to document the lives of transgender, nonbinary, and genderfluid teens and their families. Drawing on hundreds of hours of on-the-ground interviews with them and the people in their communities, *American Teenager* paints a vivid portrait of what it's actually like to grow up trans today.



**1620 Pleasant Street, Des Moines
(515) 518-0530
www.desmoinespridecenter.org**

**Full Searchable Catalog:
www.librarycat.org/lib/DSMPC**





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Parade Time



PRIDEFEST

Happy
Pride
2026





Backrooms

A Movie Review by Mark Turnage

Psychological horror lives in the “uncanny valley”: the people, places, and things that should feel safe and natural, but are neither. Where fright is the tool of jumpscare, and revulsion and dread are psychological horror’s most effective mechanisms. The monsters in psychological horror are also frequently hidden, not immediately obvious, or extensions of the protagonist’s shadow self—manifestations of their most destructive traits and worst fears taking form. Director Kane Parsons’ debut film “Backrooms” expertly navigates its psychological horror using an infused 1990s aesthetic that merges millennial angst and nostalgia with the “uncanny valley” effect. Despite a minimalistic script and a mixed quality of performances, “Backrooms” strong atmosphere, firm grasp of pacing, and accentual use of “found footage” amplify its genuinely unsettling (and smart) scares.

Desperate to keep his head (and his failing furniture business) above water following the collapse of his marriage, Clark (Chiwetel Ejiofor) attempts to cope by seeing his therapist Mary (Renate Reinsve); in his spare time, he lives (and drinks) at his store, reminisces over a misfired architect career, and films humiliating commercials hawking furniture dressed in a cheap pirate costume. Despite appearing more well-adjusted and modestly successful than Clark, Mary carries memories of a controlling, severely agoraphobic mother and a recently-demolished traumatic childhood home. When Clark discovers a strange glowing light in the basement of his store, he enters and becomes obsessed with mapping an endless expanse of rooms, seemingly devoid of people, yet full of architecturally

distorted spaces and warped, nonsensical furniture from his store. When Clark convinces two of his employees and eventually Mary to help him explore the space, they learn that inside the maze of the “Backrooms,” there is something far worse than getting lost.

The tension in “Backrooms” is propelled by short “found footage” segments akin to “The Blair Witch Project”: an unknown camera-holder being terribly afraid of something, and the viewer having no expectation of it, which escalates the film’s dramatic irony (the audience knowing something its characters do not). The cinematography of “Backrooms,” given aural presence by a haunting soundtrack Parsons partially composed himself, mirrors 1990s middle-class home and office decor: echoes of both Clark’s furniture store and his lost architect ambitions, but warped to grotesque, Dali-esque dimensions. Parsons prefers subjectivity in his approach, which may frustrate some wanting concrete explanations or more direct connections to the online “lore” Parsons built prior to directing the stand-alone film. Yet his maze’s version of the Minotaur—and its distorted habitat—might be the creepiest cinematic metaphors for alcoholism and isolation since “The Shining’s” Overlook Hotel. While its main characters could afford to be more fleshed out beyond the demons that haunt them, and occasionally Reinsve’s emotiveness falls flat, it’s theme—starkly relevant to a generation with memories of COVID and how it warped reality—is the isolation and desensitization that comes from consistently choosing selfishness instead of confronting it and enacting difficult, meaningful change.



At age 20, director Kane Parsons has reached a goal many filmmakers twice his age never have: his debut feature film has become one of the top ten grossing movies of 2026, making more money than “Scream 7” and drawing comparable crowds to the latest Star Wars film, “The Mandalorian and Grogu.” Parsons is one example of how young filmmakers—self-trained from YouTube and research of classic film, and using horror as their genre of choice—have heralded a creative renaissance for the film industry. Curry Barker’s “Obsession” and Mark Markiplier’s Fischbach’s “Iron Lung” are two other strong directorial examples of this trend: all featuring original, one-shot storytelling unconnected with franchises, and a body of work promoted independently from a previously cultivated (and devoted) online fanbase. Here’s hoping Hollywood and production studios learn the right lesson from a great trend, and have the guts to take more creative risk on fresh blood and the next generation of scary stories. *See “Backrooms” in theaters now, and on streaming and home media in early August 2026.*



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COMPOSITION COMPETITION



**Seeking Scores
from LGBTQ+
Composers**

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World Premiere Performance Opportunity
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**Submissions due
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Capital City Pride is about
to open new opportunities
to serve as a Board of
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events page](#) after July 1 to
read about the open roles
and apply for the one that
best fits your skill set!

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

**Applications are being accepted from July 6-31.
These roles will all begin on September 1.**

