



DIVERSITY in DUBUQUE



June 2025

A newsletter from the City of Dubuque's Office of Equity & Human Rights

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LGBTQ+ Pride Month

Every June, cities across the globe erupt in color, music, and celebration as people gather to honor Pride Month. What began as a protest against police brutality and discrimination has evolved into a global observance that celebrates the diversity, resilience, and rights of the LGBTQ+ community. Yet, beyond the rainbow flags and vibrant parades lies a powerful story of struggle, resistance, and transformation that continues to shape lives today.

Pride Month traces its roots to a pivotal moment in LGBTQ+ history: the Stonewall Riots of June 1969. At the time, being openly gay was criminalized in most parts of the United States, and LGBTQ+ people faced routine harassment, police raids, and social ostracism. The Stonewall Inn, a gay bar in New York City's Greenwich Village, served as a rare refuge. On the night of June 28, 1969, a police raid sparked spontaneous resistance from patrons, led by trans women of color like Marsha P. Johnson and Sylvia Rivera.

The protests lasted several days, marking a shift from passive endurance to active resistance. The courage shown during the Stonewall Riots ignited a national movement. One year later, on June 28, 1970, activists organized the first Christopher Street Liberation Day March, now considered the first Pride parade.

In the decades since Stonewall, Pride has grown in both scope and scale. Initially rooted in protest, Pride parades have become celebratory events



Marsha P. Johnson



Sylvia Rivera

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LGBTQ+ Pride Month

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that spotlight LGBTQ+ culture, rights, and community. However, the celebratory tone does not erase the event's political foundations. Many Pride events still highlight ongoing challenges, such as anti-LGBTQ+ laws, and healthcare disparities.

Throughout the 1980s and 1990s, amid the HIV/AIDS crisis, Pride also became a platform for activism. Groups like ACT UP and Queer Nation used it to demand visibility, healthcare, and compassion. The global expansion of Pride followed soon after, with cities across Europe, Latin America, and Asia adapting it to reflect local struggles and victories.

While legal and social acceptance has progressed significantly in many countries—marked by milestones like marriage equality, anti-discrimination laws, and gender recognition policies—Pride remains critically relevant.

For many LGBTQ+ individuals, especially those in hostile environments, Pride represents visibility. It affirms their right to exist and thrive without fear. Pride events can be life-changing, offering a rare sense of community and belonging.

Moreover, Pride fosters awareness and education. In a world where misinformation and prejudice still exist, Pride provides a platform to share stories, promote understanding, and challenge stereotypes. It engages

allies, educators, and families in meaningful conversations about inclusion, equality, and dignity.

Although Pride has become a fixture in many liberal democracies, the picture is far more complex globally. In over 60 countries, same-sex relationships remain criminalized, and in some, they are punishable by death. In these places, Pride is often banned or heavily policed and participating in a parade can be an act of immense bravery.

Nevertheless, activists in countries such as Uganda, Russia, and Saudi Arabia continue to push for visibility and rights—sometimes organizing underground Pride events. Their courage highlights the global nature of the fight for LGBTQ+ equality and reminds us that Pride is still a radical act in many parts of the world.

While Pride Month is an important time for visibility, it should not be the only time LGBTQ+ issues receive attention. True allyship requires sustained effort: advocating for inclusive education, supporting mental health resources, donating to LGBTQ+ organizations, and challenging discrimination when it arises.

Parents, educators, employers, and public officials all have roles to play in fostering safe, affirming environments for LGBTQ+ people. And for LGBTQ+ individuals, Pride is an opportunity not only to celebrate who they are but also to empower the next generation to continue the fight for justice.

Pride Month is more than just a series of parades and parties. It is a tribute to the defiant spirit of those who fought back at Stonewall, a celebration of progress, and a reminder of the work still left to do.

As we raise our flags and our voices, let us remember that Pride began as an act of resistance. And while the world has changed in many ways since 1969, the need for Pride, and the hope it brings, remains as strong as ever.

This article was written with the assistance of artificial intelligence.

A Note from the Office of Equity & Human Rights

On January 1, 1863, President Abraham Lincoln issued the Emancipation Proclamation. The proclamation declared all slaves held in confederate states were to be set free. This was a turning point in the Civil War because it now confirmed that the war was about freedom and slavery. However, the proclamation was far from perfect.

First, the proclamation only freed slaves in confederate states; it didn't free slaves held in Union states. Second, there was no way to enforce the proclamation in Confederate states, so, it was a declaration of freedom, but not necessarily a guarantee. In fact, freedom for slaves depended on Union military success. The real freedom for slaves wasn't secured until Union forces gained military control of an area. This is also partially why we celebrate the emancipation of slaves in June instead of January.

News of the Emancipation Proclamation didn't reach all parts of the country at the same time, or possibly, news of the proclamation just wasn't heeded in all parts of the country at the same time. It wasn't until June 19, 1865, a full two years later, that Union troops arrived in Galveston, Texas, to enforce the Emancipation Proclamation. This is why we celebrate the end of slavery every June.

Juneteenth is a time to remember the history of slavery and the fight for freedom, while also celebrating African American culture and community. Join Dubuque in celebrating Juneteenth on June 13-15 at the Multicultural Center and Jackson Park (see page 4).



Cultural Events Happening in the Tri-States

[First Friday](#) is a free downtown monthly community arts event with open galleries, artists' studios, and live entertainment. Events are held on June 6.

Rachel Wilson – The Good Witches Cottage @ 2 – 6 PM
Jenni Brant – Outside the Lines Art Gallery @ 4:30 – 7:30 PM

Carnegie-Stout Library Virtual Author Talks

Each month, a selection of authors discusses their books and expert topics. These events are virtual and live; however, recordings of the talks will be archived for later viewing. [Registration on the library website is required.](#)

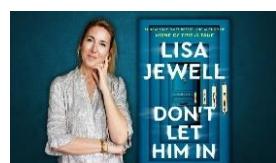
Extinctopia—A Discovery of What We Have Lost, What is at Risk, and What to Do About it with Smithsonian Scientists

June 4 @ 1 PM



Explore Unexpected Twists and Turns with Lisa Jewell

June 10 @ 1 PM



Living the Otter Life with Katherine Applegate

June 24 @ 3 PM



Volunteer Opportunity of the Month

The Juneteenth Celebration is looking for volunteers on Saturday, June 14 and Sunday, June 15, to help with setting up the events, games and activities, food service, and other ways that help make this event a success! Visit [volunteerdbg.com](#) to sign up.

Cultural Events Happening in the Tri-States

[Ballet Des Moines Summer STEM Tour](#)

June 1 @ 5 – 7:45 PM

Alliant Energy Amphitheater

STEM + Arts community activities at 5 p.m. followed by Ballet Des Moines performance at 6:30 p.m. This event features mini-science demonstrations, spoken word poetry and live music performances, and the dancers of Ballet Des Moines performing. This free event includes accessible, hands-on activities that will spark understanding, curiosity, and creativity in the midst of an immersive live performance.

[Dubuque Pride Festival](#)

June 7 @ Noon – 5 PM

Town Clock Plaza

This year's event features live music, a DJ, drag performances, and more, with a large selection of vendor and resource booths, on-site DBQ Pride T-shirt printing, kids' activities, and food vendors. Gather in support and celebration of the vibrancy that LGBTQ+ individuals bring to Dubuque. This is a free, family friendly event.

[Movie Screening: Nickel Boys](#)

June 12 @ 6 – 8:30 PM

Carnegie-Stout Public Library

Based on the Pulitzer-Prize winning novel by Colson Whitehead, and nominated for an Academy Award for Best Picture, the historical drama *Nickel Boys* (2024) follows the friendship between two Black teens as they struggle to survive at a brutal reform school in the Jim Crow South.



[2nd Annual Dubuque Pride Rally](#)

Sunday, June 29 @ 4–6 PM

Jackson Park

Celebrate the end of Pride month. Hear from local affirming faith and community leaders and be inspired for the future.

[Juneteenth](#)

June 13–15 @ times vary

Multicultural Family Center & Jackson Park

Come together to honor history, celebrate freedom, and uplift our community with three unforgettable days of events. Friday is History Retold at MFC with art, performers, fashion and food. Saturday is a Picnic in Jackson Park with a talent show, raffles, games, food and more at noon–4 p.m. Sunday is Prayer and Praise at Jackson Park at 11 a.m.–1 p.m. mfcdbq.org.



[Galena Pride Picnic](#)

Saturday, June 14 @ Noon – 5 PM

Grant Park (Galena, IL)

Celebrate diversity, love, and unity at Galena's annual Pride Picnic, organized by the Galena Public Library. This family-friendly event offers an array of activities, performances, and vendors for all ages. Enjoy live music, engaging performances, and a variety of food and drink options.

[Prairie School Legacy in Iowa Symposium](#)

June 27 – 28 @ times vary

Hotel Julien Dubuque and Other Locations

The symposium includes presentations from leading experts on the enduring influence of the Prairie School movement in Iowa, evening social hour, lunch on Saturday, and guided tours of significant historic sites designed by Prairie School luminaries Frank Lloyd Wright and Alfred Caldwell. (cost varies)

[Black History and Reading Challenge](#)

Sunday, June 29 @ 3 PM

Carnegie-Stout Public Library

Democracy Awakening: Notes on the State of America by Heather Cox Richardson

