

DIVERSITY in DUBUQUE

July 2025

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

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Disability Pride Month

Every July, Disability Pride Month provides an opportunity to honor the history, achievements, and diverse experiences of people with disabilities. It is a time for celebration, visibility, and advocacy—a chance to challenge long-standing stigmas and to affirm disability as an essential part of the human experience. Rather than viewing disability solely through a lens of pity or limitation, Disability Pride Month reframes it as a source of identity, resilience, and community.

Disability Pride is about embracing disability as a natural and valuable part of human diversity, not as something shameful or needing to be “fixed.” Just as LGBTQ+ Pride celebrates identity and visibility, Disability Pride affirms that people with disabilities deserve to be seen, heard, and respected in all aspects of life.

Disability Pride Month traces its roots to July 26, 1990, the day the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) was signed into law. This landmark legislation marked a significant victory in the fight for civil rights, protecting disabled individuals against discrimination in employment, education, transportation, and public accommodations. The ADA was the result of decades of activism by the disability rights movement, which demanded equal treatment, dignity, and independence.

At its core, Disability Pride rejects the medical model of disability, which focuses on diagnosing and treating impairments. Instead, it promotes

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The struggle for equal rights goes back several decades.



Justin Dart is considered the “Father of ADA.”



President George H.W. Bush signs the American with Disabilities Act.

Disability Pride Month

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the social model of disability, which recognizes that people are disabled not by their bodies, but by physical, attitudinal, and systemic barriers in society. For example, a person using a wheelchair isn't disabled by their mobility device, but by buildings without ramps or elevators.

Disability Pride also challenges internalized ableism—the belief, often unconsciously held by disabled people themselves, that their lives are worth less because of their disability. Pride counters this narrative by promoting self-acceptance, cultural identity, and empowerment.

Visibility is a crucial component of Disability Pride Month. People with disabilities have historically been underrepresented—or misrepresented—in media, politics, education, and the workplace. When they are depicted, it is often through stereotypes: the helpless victim, the inspirational "supercrip," or the villain. These portrayals reduce complex individuals to one-dimensional tropes and reinforce harmful assumptions.

Disability Pride Month pushes back against these narratives by highlighting real stories and achievements. From artists and athletes to scientists and activists, disabled people contribute to every facet of society. Celebrating these accomplishments helps reshape public perception.

While Disability Pride Month is a time for celebration, it also serves as a reminder of the challenges that remain. People with disabilities still face significant barriers in education, employment, housing, healthcare, and public life. Many buildings remain inaccessible, and ableist attitudes continue to shape policies and practices. In many countries, legal protections for disabled individuals are weak or nonexistent.

In the United States, the ADA was a monumental step forward, but enforcement remains inconsistent, and gaps persist. For example, employers may still hesitate to hire disabled candidates due to bias or assumptions about accommodations. Public transportation systems in many cities remain only partially accessible, limiting independence and mobility.

To truly honor Disability Pride, society must commit to removing barriers, promoting accessibility, and listening to disabled voices. This involves not only policy changes but also shifts in mindset. Disability should not be seen as a burden or a tragedy, but as an essential part of our communities.

Anyone can take part in Disability Pride Month. Here are a few ways to get involved:

- **Educate Yourself:** Read books, watch documentaries, and follow disabled creators and advocates.
- **Support Accessibility:** Advocate for accessible spaces, websites, and services in your community.
- **Listen and Amplify:** Share the stories and perspectives of people with disabilities.
- **Celebrate:** Attend local Disability Pride events, or create your own ways to recognize the month, whether in your workplace, school, or neighborhood.

Disability Pride Month is more than a celebration—it is a movement rooted in justice, dignity, and self-expression. It is a time to honor the past, recognize the present, and fight for a better future. By embracing disability as a source of pride rather than shame, we challenge outdated narratives and build a society where everyone—regardless of ability—can thrive.

This article was written with the assistance of artificial intelligence.

A Note from the Office of Equity & Human Rights

What would it look like if you were to forgive those who have wronged you? Better yet, what would it feel like? Numerous studies suggest it could be a healthy step towards both our physical and mental wellbeing. This year, Global Forgiveness Day is on July 7. This day is an opportunity to reflect back on those who have hurt you and to make the conscious choice to forgive them.

Perhaps your coworker gossips about you behind your back souring your relationship with your supervisor. Your sibling can do no wrong in the eyes of your parents while you are constantly being criticized. Your spouse cheats on you and the divorce gets ugly. Your neighbor keeps parking in your spot. Your friend flirts with your partner, and your partner flirts back. Unfortunately, the ways that people have the capacity to hurt us seems to be never ending.

Forgiveness is not about excusing bad behavior or actions, and it's not about accepting the harm caused by others. It's a process that can take time and involves emotional and psychological healing. However, doing the work that leads to forgiveness can be a freeing and effective way to take back the power that the other person has over you. It takes you out of victim mode and breaks those bonds that are tying you down. It can also break that cycle of revenge and bitterness we often feel when hurt by others.

Forgiveness allows us to release negative emotions like anger, resentment, and bitterness. A build-up of these emotions bog us down and burden us with unnecessary heaviness. Forgiving the harm that others have caused us can help alleviate some of that.

Forgiving others is a choice we make even if the other person doesn't ask for it or doesn't seem to deserve it. Forgiveness is a powerful tool that can help us move forward in life, heal from past hurts and create a more fulfilling and meaningful life. You don't have to forgive for their sake, do it for yourself; you're worth it.

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 July 4.

Oracle Poets – The Stu, 5 – 8 PM

Double Vision – Voices Studios, 5:30 PM

Multiple Artists – Widdershins Artisan Gallery, 12 – 8 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.](#)

Discerning the Truth

With Marie Lu

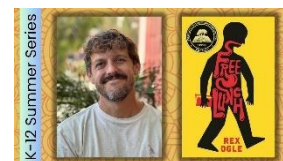
July 17 @ 3 PM



Illuminating Hope and Grace in the Face of Hardship

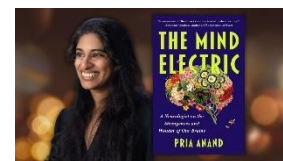
with Rex Ogle

July 23 @ 3 PM



On the Strangeness and Wonder of Our Brains with Priya Anand

July 31 @ 1 PM



Volunteer Opportunity of the Month

The Serve Dubuque Teen Civic Engagement Initiative is seeking volunteers to support the summer teen service leadership initiative. This program strengthens teens' experience in community engagement and service opportunities through civic and health literacy. The focus is to add teen contributions to a vibrant and connected community while gaining employability skills. Visit volunteerdubq.com to sign up.

Cultural Events Happening in the Tri-States

Celebrate American Independence Day

July 4 is a day to celebrate all things American. There are many different events happening around the tri-states that offer you just such an opportunity.



July 3

- 39th Radio Dubuque/Dubuque Jaycees Fireworks and Airshow over the River at A.Y. McDonald Park
- Shullsburg 4th of July Celebration: Carnival, Parade, Pie Auction, and Fireworks at Water Street and Badger Park (Shullsburg, WI)
- Dyersville 3rd of July Celebration & Fireworks at Commercial Club Park (Dyersville, IA)
- A Soaring Salute Eagle Ridge Resort & Spa North Golf Course (Galena, IL)

July 4

- Golden Sky on the 4th of July at Cassville High School (Cassville, WI)
- Shullsburg 4th of July Celebration: Carnival, Parade, Pie Auction, and Fireworks at Water Street and Badger Park (Shullsburg, WI)
- Audrey Hammer 4th of July Ice Cream Social at Mathias Ham Historic Site
- Fourth At the Fort at Apple River Fort State Historic Site (Elizabeth, IL)
- Stockton Independence Day Celebration at Stockton Township Memorial Park (Stockton, IL)
- Galena Independence Day Celebration at Green Street Plaza & Grant Park (Galena, IL)
- Platteville Fourth of July Celebration and Heritage Day at City Park & Legion Park (Platteville, WI)
- 63rd Annual Bellevue Heritage Days at Cole Park (Bellevue, IA)

July 5

- Guttenberg Stars & Stripes Celebration at Ingleside Park (Guttenberg, IA)

Poetry Open Mic

July 2 @ 6 – 8 PM

Smokestack

Join The Dubuque Area Arts Collective for an evening of spoken word hosted by Sunshine with music performed by FAYE. Writers and performers of all experience levels are invited to share their work on an inclusive and welcoming stage.

Shalom 3rd Annual Wellness Fair

July 12 @ 10 AM – 2 PM

Shalom Spirituality Center

Visit with local community vendors specializing in all facets of wellness including physical, mental, emotional, spiritual, and environmental factors. Learn about the practices, tools, and resources they offer to promote, improve, and maintain your overall well-being.

Dubuque County Fair

July 22 – 27

Dubuque County Fairgrounds

It's officially fair season in the Midwest! County fairs showcase the culture of Iowa and the Midwest. Rides, fair food, games, 4-H and FFA, concerts, livestock, and tractor pulls are all essential fair-culture fun. Don't miss out on these other nearby fairs too:

- Delaware County Fair July 7 – 13
- Great Jones County Fair July 16 – 20
- Elizabeth Community Fair July 18 – 20
- Jo Daviess County Fair July 31 – August 3



Black History and Reading Challenge

July 27 @ 3 PM

Carnegie-Stout Public Library

From Dubuque to Selma and Beyond: My Journey to Understand Racism in America
by Dave Markward

