



7 Rivers LGBTQ Connection

The Center Backgrounder

The Center is

- A voice and presence promoting understanding and building connections regarding sexual orientation and gender identity
- A recognized leader regarding sexual orientation and gender identity issues, advocating and collaborating for equity, dignity and full human rights for all
- A safe, alcohol and smoke-free place where the LGBTQ community can connect, share interests and activities
- An information-sharing resource for LGBTQ adults and youth

The Center works to

- Promote understanding between the LGBTQ community and the larger community
- Provide current and accurate information to the larger community
- Reach out to LGBTQ people in the community in need of support through local organizations

Locations

230 Sixth Street South, La Crosse, Wisconsin 54601

77 East 5th Street Winona, Minnesota 55987

Service area

Wisconsin: La Crosse, Jackson, Trempealeau, Vernon, Monroe and Buffalo Counties

Minnesota: Houston, Winona and Fillmore Counties

Iowa: Allamakee and Winneshiek Counties

Programs and initiatives include

- Galaxy Youth: community, support and understanding for LGBTQ youth
- The LGBTQ Elder Network: cultural competency training for caregivers of LGBT elders
- Speaking and Panel Discussions: diversity training, policy discussion and education for community organizations, employers and educational institutions
- Gay Friendly Professional Network (GFPN): monthly social and networking for LGBTQ professionals and allies
- Transgender/Gender Queer Gathering: a welcoming group for all gender nonconforming persons
- Community Outreach: presentations and collaboration with schools, mental health providers, businesses



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Together. The Center's community outreach

As part of its mission, the Center reaches out to community organizations, employers and educational institutions to foster understanding, educate and create connections. It conducts diversity training, participates in policy discussion and educates the general public on LGBTQ issues.

Allies are essential partners in what we do. They are organizations and people who celebrate diversity and offer their hand in friendship.

The Center has partnered with many local organizations such as the La Crosse County Aging Unit, La Crosse Public Library and the Greater La Crosse Diversity Council.

The Center's leadership

Executive Director

Jackson Jantzen

Board of Directors

Allan Beatty

Robert Lindner

Blythe Newburg

Chelsea Ophime

Jay Palmer

Jim Parker

Niki Pohnl

Alesha Schandelmeier

Will Van Roosenbeek

Wesley White

Galaxy representative member

Sylvia Vandenberg-Daves



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The Center's Milestones

- 2003: An Advisory Board began exploring the needs of the community
- 2004: The LGBTQ Resource Center for the Seven Rivers Region was incorporated and granted nonprofit status
- 2006: A blog and e-newsletters are created
- 2006: A move to Pearl Street
- 2007: The Center holds weekly meetings including Galaxy and the Coulee Region LGBT group for adults
- 2007: Cultural Advocacy Committee for all nationalities
- 2007: Inaugural La Crosse Pride Motorcycle Poker Run and Bicycle Pride Run
- 2008: Rosanne St. Sauver joins the center as its first executive director
- 2008: The Center, with other LGBT Centers, receives a grant to address health issues among LGBT individuals
- 2008: The Center hosts new AA meetings
- 2008: New program to train volunteers to become Resource Advocates
- 2008: National Coming Out Day Gala dinner and dance at the Radisson
- 2008: Silent Rally for Equality on the Cass Street Bridge
- 2008: Unitarian Universalist Fellowship of La Crosse creates Welcoming Congregation Program to become more inclusive for LGBT individuals
- 2008: New group: Out and About
- 2008: Members speak in a panel at Western Technical College
- 2008: The Center holds a Rally for Equality as part of the national movement Join the Impact
- 2009: Transgender Health Care Conference
- 2009: GALAXY weekend trip to Young Women's Empowerment Conference hosted by Project Q
- 2009: Donation drive for ARCW- La Crosse
- 2010: Meet and greet with Jennifer Shilling, Kathleen Vinehout, Dan Kapanke, John Medinger, Herb Kohl
- 2013: Elder Network and Training
- 2013: EEOC Discussion regarding LGBTQ in the Workplace
- 2013: Pride Along the Mississippi moves into the community
- 2013: The Center opens office in Winona at the Winona Women's Resource Center
- 2014: The Center marks its 10th anniversary
- 2014: The Center moves to new facilities at the corner of Sixth and Cass Streets, adopts new name and logo