



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Historic LGBT Virtual Pride Event Takes Shape in June Pride Festival Broken Up Into Series of Virtual Events Throughout month of June

6/1/20-UPDATED
White Plains, NY

In an historic first, The LOFT LGBT Community Center will be hosting Westchester Pride *virtually* for 2020 with the theme "Pride Inside."

The cancellation of physical events across Westchester due to the COVID-19 Pandemic has forced Westchester's largest LGBT organization to re-imagine what a Pride Celebration would look like. Last year's pride brought together its largest crowd, an estimated five thousand attendees, held for the first time in Downtown White Plains.

In a normal year, Westchester Pride is a day long festival. The atmosphere is one of pure jubilation: celebrity drag queens in attendance quipping one liners, Broadway singers belting show tunes, vendors selling arts and crafts, while community service providers pass along helpful information for a variety of essential services.

Today, in the midst of the COVID-19 Pandemic, the necessity for a virtual Pride has never been greater. So many in the LGBTQ community are straining under the pressures brought on by the COVID-19 Crisis. At least a dozen LOFT members have died from the pandemic. Many have lost their jobs and have no safety net from their biological families. There are many LGBTQ seniors who are suffering from isolation, and members of color who have experienced a disparity in access to healthcare during the pandemic.



By hosting Pride events throughout June, the LOFT is providing a continuous opportunity for vital social connections designed to foster bonding, community healing, and even moments of celebration and levity. While Pride cannot solve every problem in the LGBTQ Community, it can be a bridge that helps many get through the mental toll quarantine and the pandemic has had on so many.

THE FOLLOWING IS A LINE UP OF VIRTUAL EVENTS (Subject to change):

- **JUNE 7, 2020| on ZOOM (simulcasted on Facebook Live)| 11:30 am-12:30pm**

Kick-Off Event with pre-recorded messages from:

- United States **Senators Chuck Schumer and Kirsten Gillibrand**
- Lt. New York Governor **Kathy Hochul**
- New York State Majority Senate Leader **Andrea Stewart-Cousins**
- LIVE message from Westchester County Executive **George Latimer** who will also be participating in a live Question and Answer Session moderated by event hosts, The Honorable **Selwyn Walters** (Board Director of the The LOFT) **Judy Trolio** (Executive Director of The LOFT) and

Broadway Sings For Pride will be performing songs throughout the event. The Performers include:

- **Tamar Greene** is playing the role of George Washington in the Broadway company of HAMILTON. In 2018, he was on tour with the First National Tour and North American premiere of LOVE NEVER DIES, Andrew Lloyd Webber's spellbinding sequel to PHANTOM OF THE OPERA. He has also performed as Crab Man in PORGY AND BESS at Spoleto Festival USA. Before that, Tamar played the Quartet Leader in the inaugural cast of AFTER MIDNIGHT on the Norwegian Escape. He has performed as Charlie in the NY Philharmonic Orchestra's production of SHOW BOAT at Lincoln Center, which was broadcast on PBS. He also performed the role



of Fisherman with The Broadway First National Tour of THE GERSHWINS' PORGY AND BESS. Tamar has graced stages worldwide having led several wedding bands and performed at venues in Italy, Germany, England, and the Caribbean.

- **Karmine Alers** (Broadway credits include On Your Feet (u/s Gloria Fajardo, Consuelo) and Rent (Mimi). She has also appeared in the national tours of On Your Feet (Ensemble, Gloria Fajardo) and Rent (Mimi, Ensemble). Regionally credits: In the Heights (Seattle Rep/Milwaukee Rep/Cincinnati Playhouse), Miss You Like Hell (Olney Theatre Center), TV/Film: Unbreakable Kimmy Schmidt (Netflix), The Following (Fox Television), Bull (CBS TV), Naked As We Came (Netflix) and Blood Bound (Indie))
- **Adam B. Shapiro** Credits include 18 month run in FIDDLER ON THE ROOF-in Yiddish, where he played the Rabbi and understudied Tevye and Lazer Wolf. Other NYC credits include Bastard Jones, The Golden Bride, The Mikado (re-imagined), and Gimpel The Fool. He has been performing with LOFT Pride since 2016 and is thrilled to return, even digitally to help the community celebrate their well-earned Pride.

The Kick off Event will conclude with a virtual flag raising ceremony at half-mast and moment of silence to honor those who have passed.

OTHER ANCHOR EVENTS IN JUNE INCLUDE:



- **Pride Advocacy Panel** *Wednesday, June 17th, 6:30pm* The LOFT is bringing together statewide advocacy groups, such as Rise Out and Equality NY, to discuss lobbying, how you can get involved in local and statewide advocacy, and more!
- **DRAG QUEEN STORY HOUR: Saturday, June 20th, 11:00am** Drag Queen Story Hour (DQSH) is just what it sounds like—drag queens reading stories to children in libraries, schools, and bookstores. DQSH captures the imagination and play of the gender fluidity of childhood and gives kids glamorous, positive, and unabashedly queer role models. In spaces like this, kids are able to see people who defy rigid gender restrictions and imagine a world where people can present as they wish, where dress up is real. Open to families with children! No adults without children will be permitted.

There will also be many other events that will be posted on our social media platforms and website (Landing Page/Header/ "Westchester Pride 2020)

The LOFT LGBT Community Center would also like to acknowledge special thanks to:

- **Westchestergov.com**
- **Pepsico**
- **PCSB Bank**
- **TD Bank**
- **And our other sponsors**

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