GLFSA Annual Welcome Picnic

Thursday, September 12th 5:00 to 8:00

Hawk Island Park (1601 E Cavanaugh Road in Lansing—map below)

Kestrel Shelter (nearest pavilion to playground)

Burgers and hotdogs provided (veggie versions too)

Please bring a dish to pass and your preferred non-alcoholic beverage

Please RSVP to GLFSA@msu.edu so we may plan accordingly

Friends and Families Welcome!
Donate to the PRIDE Scholarship

The Pride Scholarship was founded in 2000 by Bill Beachler (an MSU alumnus) and GLFSA, with the goal of rewarding MSU students for academic excellence and service to the LGBT community. As one of just a handful of such scholarships offered by U.S. universities, the Pride Scholarship has established MSU as a leader in promoting diversity, financially assisting students, and demonstrating that LGBT and allied students are welcomed and supported. The long-term goal of the scholarship founder is to annually award a full-ride scholarship that would cover the cost of attendance at MSU for four years.

We would like to ask your help in achieving this goal. Please consider donating to the Pride Scholarship at Michigan State University.

All donations are tax deductible. Make your check payable to Michigan State University and write “Pride Endowed Scholarship” on the memo line of the check. Mail to:

University Advancement University Development
Michigan State University
300 Spartan Way
East Lansing, MI 48824-1005

You can also donate online at http://www.givingto.msu.edu. Click on the Give Now button in the upper right of your screen. In the search box type ‘Pride’ and the Pride Endowed Scholarship Fund will appear. Add the fund to the cart, and proceed to check out!

Did you know that Faculty and Staff at MSU can donate via payroll deduction? Simply fill out this form using the name Pride Endowed Scholarship Fund and the allocation code of AF173.

Meet Our New Board Members

Brian Doyle has been with MSU since 2005. He graduated from James Madison (BA; International Relations) in 2009 and joined MSU as a staff member immediately after. Having called Mid-Michigan his home for his whole life, Brian is a proud Spartan through and through. Currently with the Department of Advancement, he is looking forward to becoming more involved in the campus community and ensuring that LGBT issues are an important part of the University’s agenda in the years to come. In his spare time, Brian is an amateur vegetarian chef, mixology enthusiast and involved in local environmental sustainability efforts. He intends on continuing his education at Michigan State in the near future, pursuing a MA in Higher, Adult and Lifelong Education.

Daniel Mathis is a Director of Major Market Engagement for the MSU Alumni Association. Since joining the MSUAA in March 2013, Daniel has been responsible for managing alumni outreach efforts throughout Mid-Michigan, West Michigan, and the Midwest. He joined GLFSA in May 2013 and currently serves as the Vice President. Originally from Monroe, MI, Daniel currently resides in Lansing, MI.

Daniel is a 2007 graduate of Eastern Michigan University with a bachelor’s degree in Social Science and a 2009 graduate of Michigan State University with a master’s degree in Higher, Adult and Lifelong Education. While at MSU in graduate school, he served as a Graduate Assistant in the Office of Admissions leading to his first full-time position as an Admissions Counselor at the University of Michigan-Dearborn. In 2010, he joined the staff of the Eastern Michigan University Office for Alumni Relations as an Assistant Director and subsequently led the organization as its interim executive director for two years. Daniel returned to the Lansing area in March for his current position in the MSUAA.
As we contemplate the end of our summer activities and the return of students to campus (not to mention the end of (most) summer road maintenance on campus), GLFSA is gearing up for another busy year. You’ll see elsewhere in the newsletter the invitation to the Fall Welcome picnic on Sept. 12. This annual event is an important opportunity to reconnect with old friends, greet newcomers to campus and to GLFSA, and to have some brief time for relaxation before the crush of fall semester responsibilities.

You’ll also know that we are deep in discussions with the MSU administration about eliminating remaining discrepancies between OEI (Other Eligible Individual) benefits and spousal/family benefits at MSU. We are currently focusing on Course Fee Courtesies and bereavement leave. If you are aware of other inequities—beyond federal tax law, with which we are well acquainted—please bring them to our attention.

On the subject of federal tax law, watch for announcements of a panel discussion in fall semester on the implications for our members of the Supreme Court decision to strike down parts of DOMA. You probably know that some federal benefits are available to legally-married spouses regardless of their state of residence. While the full implications of this are contentious and under discussion, it is likely the case that if you are legally married somewhere, you are eligible for some federally-administered benefits. The panel we are working on will help to clarify those issues for you, and hopefully outline some strategies for moving forward on them.

The DOMA decision combined with the court decision striking down California’s marriage ban has breathed life into efforts to repeal Michigan’s constitutional ban on same-sex marriage “or similar union for any purpose”. We will be monitoring developments closely as Sen. Whitmer and her colleagues at the State Legislature introduce bills to that effect, and as groups like Equality Michigan and Unity Michigan gear up for supportive campaigns. Such a repeal would lay the groundwork for legalization of same-sex marriage in Michigan, and would have enormous (and positive) implications for our members, your partners and children, and the benefits for which you and your families are eligible. GLFSA looks forward to being an active participant in those efforts.

On the issue of taxes and estate planning we are working with Merrill Lynch on a workshop on tax and estate planning for domestic partners and their families. Watch for announcements of that in mid-semester.

In mid-November, we are planning a GLFSA excursion to see the MSU Theatre production of Xanadu. This will be an evening of high camp, featuring the Lansing Vixens roller derby team, and will include a Director’s Talk with GLFSA’s own Rob Roznowski. Details to follow shortly; and plan for an evening of fun and very campy entertainment!

We are planning many opportunities for GLFSA members to gather this semester. Watch for announcements of these events! We’ve revived our Facebook page, so please go it to add your membership (the old FB member’s list didn’t carry over, so you’ll need to re-add yourself to it). Our GLFSA web-page is being revamped, so watch for a brand shiny, new version of it soon.

I look forward to seeing all of you at the picnic on Sept. 12!

--Grant Littke
Gay Rights in the U.S. Possibilities for Change!

Recent legal challenges in the US mean that changes are coming. The exact magnitude and nature of the changes are unclear at this point, but the prospect of change is exciting nonetheless.

Last year, The Guardian published an interactive infographic focusing on gay rights in the U.S., providing a state by state analysis. At the time, a quick look at the main graphic (reproduced below) made clear the tremendous variations in gay rights by state and region, highlighting the challenges that are ahead.

The original interactive graphic and more information can be found at: http://www.theguardian.com/world/interactive/2012/may/08/gay-rights-united-states
Shelby Cieslinski Awarded 2014 MSU Pride Scholarship

Shelby Cieslinski, an MSU freshman who hails from Macomb Township, Michigan is the 2014 recipient of the MSU Pride Scholarship. The MSU Pride Scholarship was established in January of 2000 to aid LGBT students in attending MSU. With continued successful fundraising for this award, the dollar value grows annually. This year’s award is $5000. Candidates must demonstrate involvement with and/or support for the LBGT community. They also must show commitment to academic success.

Shelby will enter Lyman Briggs where she will major in Chemistry with the objective of pursuing a career in forensic chemistry. She enters MSU with a 4.02 GPA and substantial community involvement while in high school, including co-founding her high school’s first GSA. They began meeting just after a gay senior took his life just shortly before graduation. This sad event was the wake-up call needed to bring attention to a serious issue and helped grow the GSA. Members participated in Ally Week and National Day of Silence events to educate their classmates and teachers about LGBT issues.

In her essay for the scholarship, she describes her challenge to her straight classmates in these words, “You don’t have to be a cat or dog to support animal rights. You don’t have to be of a minority group to support racial equality. Why should you have to be gay to support the rights of the LGBT community?”

In light of Shelby’s demonstrated academic excellence and her active support for LGBT issues, GLFSA is honored and pleased to award Shelby the 2014 MSU Pride Scholarship.