



PERCEPTIONS Newsletter

April 2005

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PO Box 1525, Midland, MI 48641 989-891-1429

HIV in Mid-Michigan

Charles Lisee

Perceptions offers an HIV/AIDS Educational Workshop thru B.A.S.I.S. and Hearth Home on Thursday, April 28th at 7 pm at the Unitarian Universalist Fellowship of Midland. This confidential presentation will focus on HIV/AIDS and how it is affecting our communities. Attendees will gain a local perspective and will have the opportunity to educate themselves, friends, peers, family and loved ones.

Did you know that one of the fastest growing populations for HIV infection is heterosexual women? Why knowing your status is important? If you test positive, what are the implications? What resources are available in this not-so-metropolitan part of Michigan? Are you prepared to help a friend who might test positive? Do you have the information to educate your friends, peers, family and loved ones about HIV and related resources?

America and our community are not talking about the AIDS epidemic anymore but it's certainly not over. In fact, there is a new resurgence, among young people especially, and turning this around begins with discussions across the dinner table, at your place of worship and throughout your

daily contacts. Let's begin to talk about this and create a safe space so those touched by HIV/AIDS can seek necessary resources, be comforted by a strong support system and are aware of the opportunities that exist within our very own community.

Let's Chat About It - Understanding the Transgender Community

Leo Romo

Transphobia is an irrational fear, hatred of, discrimination against, or disapproval of [transsexual](#) and [transgender](#) people. We put a dent in ours in the March 31st Perceptions meeting.

Rachel Crandall, executive director of [TransGender Michigan](#), facilitated forty-two participants in a discussion about transgenderism/gender variant lives.

Rachel and other gender variant people - Julie, Rebecca and Carrie - eloquently and candidly shared slices of their lives: they "have been" female since early years; three had prior heterosexual relationships; one had corrective surgery 30 years ago; suicidal thoughts were common and real in the past and more.

After the discussion Rebecca expressed her life as "like being trapped in a building that is burning. You do what you need to be alive or you'll die." We are glad she is alive.

People just want to "be." Audience members acknowledged this after the meeting.

Read more about Transgender under <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Transgender>



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Find us!

www.PerceptionsSV.org

Event Spotlight

**ATTENTION ALL
COFFEE LOVERS!!**

Looking for a little after dinner pick-me-up and some pleasant conversation?

If so, why not join your fellow Perceptions members Wednesday April 12th at Cafe Milano in Midland for our monthly Meet & Greet.

The Event kicks off at 7 pm on the second Wednesday of every month. It is located within walking distance of the tridge, and with the warmer weather coming, an after coffee walk might be in order.

So, if a little camaraderie is your desire, stop in, grab a cup-o'-joe, and enjoy the company of your community.

Join us if you can!!

-Troy Rhyan

Treasurer's Report

Rob Cummings

The organization's finances are shaping up and the Board is in the final stages of aligning our budget and financial resources to the organization's goals. Our year-to-date financial performance is summarized below:

REVENUE:

Memberships	\$ 1,841
Events & Projects	\$ 2,240
Donations	\$ 372
Total revenues	\$ 4,453

EXPENSES:

Events & Projects	\$ 2,782
General expenses	\$ 1,368
Total expenses	\$ 4,150

Net revenues over expenses \$ 303

The Chocolate Party generated \$482 in revenue, our thanks again to Terry Zajak for the use of his home for this event.

In April, we will receive our designations from United Way. Members whose employers participate in annual United Way fund drives can designate Perceptions as the recipient agency since we are a not-for-profit organization. Thank you to the members who designated Perceptions as the recipient of their 2005 United Way donations.

**Refreshments Past:**

A big thank you to Dean Boivin, Perceptions Member and Apple Mountain Realtor, for providing a wonderful assortment of refreshments at the March Meeting.

Contact Dean using the following:

DeanBoivin@charter.net

Cell: 989.798.2787

Work: 989.791.6010

Perceptions Welcomes “The Community” to Our Community

Paul Hayes

During the successful CMU Pride Week, many people and organizations took advantage of the programs CMU and LGBT affiliates had to offer. Pride Week also marked the birth of a sibling organization to Perceptions. Chad Grandy from The Community had this to say in our forum. He is our feature guest columnist this month.

Hello. My name is Chad Grandy and I am a member of the new LGBT organization, The Community. Our organization is fairly new, but our general purpose is to serve the Mid-Michigan LGBT community. We're focusing most on the Mt. Pleasant, Alma, Clare area. We are very new as I said before, only about 2 weeks old, but found the time to have our first event yesterday, our Exodus Demonstration.

We had about 60 people come out throughout the night. The event started at 6:00 pm with a picnic across the street from the Lutheran church which was hosting the Exodus speaker. Some people had signs, which were all very positive, and we had a lot of cars honk in support. The Exodus event within the church had about 50 members to whom we handed fliers out as they walked out with information such as, “The Truth About Exodus” and “Supportive organizations if you're questioning your sexuality or have been victimized because of it.”

As we stated in our press release, we did not want to protest Exodus, rather offer support to those who may have been forced to go to the event. It's very common for pastors to alert parents of these kinds of events and have their children who are struggling with their sexuality attend, sometimes by force. Our group was simply there to show that it is OK to be gay.

The night was very successful and we thank all of the organizations who participated and helped out in any way they could. It was a great way to start out our organization and we all look forward to having many more in the future.

For any who are interested we meet every Tuesday night at 9:15 pm at the Wesley Foundation, in Mt. Pleasant, near the campus of CMU. Please contact me for directions or any questions you may have. Thanks again for all your support!

Chad Grandy
chadleyboi@hotmail.com

Chad, on behalf of Perceptions, we welcome you to our greater community, and wish your fledgling organization well. Furthermore, we look forward to networking closely with you as we each try to attain our goals. You've made a great start!

Thanks, also, to the Perceptions members who attended the demonstration and the events throughout CMU Pride Week.

(Chad Grandy's article excerpted and edited by permission from the Perceptions Forum at www.PerceptionsSV.org)

Perceptions Sponsored Dinner at Friends North Bike Tour

Paul Hayes

Last year, delegates from Perceptions hosted a good-will networking dinner at the annual [Friends North](#) Bike Tour. Between 7 and 10 members planned, cooked, and hosted a tasty spaghetti dinner with all the trimmings. These delegates got the word out about Perceptions and our purpose.

This year, we'll be passing the hat at the April membership meeting and asking for contributions, the proceeds for which will go entirely to paying for the food. The Board has approved matching funds up to \$100.

This year's delegates humbly ask for your support as they devote their own money, hard work, and heartfelt charm to reach out and strengthen bonds with our sister organizations while promoting Perceptions.

For more information, contact
Paul@PerceptionsSV.org

Adopt-A-Highway

The first adopt-a-highway for 2005 will be held Sunday, April 24th (with Sunday, May 1st as a backup in case of rain).

We'd need approximately 12 volunteers to clean the section of highway assigned to us (I-75 between the M-84/Westside Saginaw Rd./Bay Road exit and 675).

We meet at the rest area on Southbound I-75 (just South of M-84/Westside Saginaw Rd./Bay Road exit) between 11:30 am and Noon. We'll start with clean up at noon and if it turns out as well as last time we should be done in less than 2 hrs.

There is a brief video to watch if you've never watch it before. I'll have water and donuts like last time.

Please let me know if you are interested in helping out. You'll want to wear older blue jeans, work boots, and bring work gloves if you have them.

Future adopt a highway will occur in mid July and Mid September. So mark your calendars.

Contact ctower_48708@yahoo.com
Or info@PerceptionsSV.org

April Membership Meeting Refreshments

During the meet and greet portion of our monthly meeting, refreshments will be sponsored by Debbra Zibble, owner of Advanced Therapeutics Massage and Bodyworks. Debbra is offering to setup a few massage chairs in the wings of the UU and do free introductory 2-3 minute massage to meeting attendees on April 28th.

We hope you can attend and take advantage of her generous offer!

Womyn's Circle Comes Around Again

Vanessa Marr

Back by popular demand, The Womyn's Circle is off to a great (re)start! Thanks to a generous grant from the Arcus Foundation and support from community partners Perceptions, PFLAG and the YWCA of Bay County, the life-affirming program re-emerged after a 15-month hiatus. Since the first meeting on February 1, at least 14 women have braved several bone-chilling winter evenings to participate.

Members have started a book exchange that offers everything from coming-out guides to lesbian-themed comic books and pulp fiction. We are currently working with the YWCA to create a makeshift lending library (read: milk crate) so that these materials can be accessible during regular business hours.

Now that spring has officially begun, visions of outdoor activities dance in many members' heads! Tentative plans include sponsoring a cookout, day trip, or car care workshop (open to all, of course). As the weather continues to improve, we are anticipating further expansion of the Circle. There is plenty of room for more!

Facilitated by licensed therapist Mary Jo Hall, The Womyn's Circle provides a free and confidential support group for lesbians and their families residing throughout the region. Meetings are held at the YWCA, 3405 E. Midland Road, and are scheduled from 7:30 p.m. until 9:00 p.m. every first and third Tuesday of the month. For more information please contact the YWCA at (989) 686-4800.

2005 Membership Drive Update

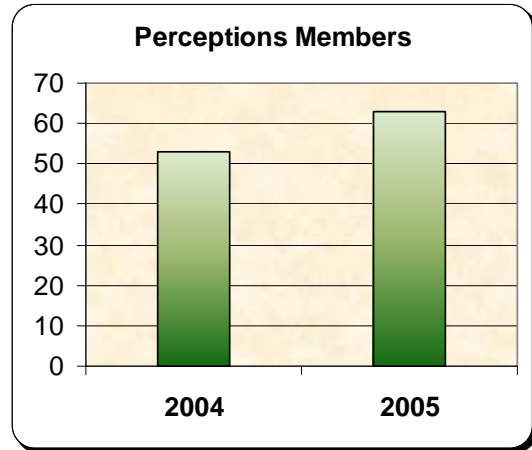
by Kevin Appold

Congratulations Members of Perceptions! Your support for the organization has driven our membership 20% higher to date than last year. That's outstanding considering we have one more month to go for the 2005 Membership Drive.

What's even more outstanding is that the contributions from membership have increased by 83% over last year.

Thank You!!!

These much needed funds help make our organization sustainable and drive the activities that we are able to make possible over the rest of the year.



“...we still have the capacity to grow tremendously... our current members account for only 10% of our contacts.”

Having mentioned the fantastic support we have received so far from our community, keep in mind that we still have the capacity to grow tremendously as an organization. Did you know that our database of contacts has grown to over 800? However, our current members account for only 10% of our contacts. Help us continue to grow our organization. Remind your friends that their membership matters and is vital to our success.

If you yourself have not joined or renewed your 2004 membership, please do so now. Our budget planning is on-going and your contributions determine the scope of our educational programming, networking opportunities, and services. Just look for the purple button on our webpage at www.PerceptionsSV.org and complete your membership registration on-line or by mail.



Calendar of Events

Wednesday, April 13th - National Day of Silence A project of the Gay, Lesbian and Straight Education Network in collaboration with the United States Student Association, the [Day of Silence](#) is a student-led day of action where those who support making anti-GLBT bias unacceptable in schools take a day-long vow of silence to recognize and protest the discrimination and harassment -- in effect, the silencing -- experienced by GLBT students and their allies.

Wednesday, April 13th - Midland Meet & Greet 7:00 pm. Espresso Milano, 137 Ashman, downtown Midland. 989-832-3222. This event will repeat on the second Wednesday of each month.

Friday, April 15th, 22nd - "Friday Night Dinner" 7:00 pm. Sign up for our email list on [Yahoo Groups](#), email info@PerceptionsSV.org or call 989-891-1GAY.

Tuesday, April 19th, May 3rd - Womyn's Circle 7:30 - 9:00 pm. This program provides support to Tri-County lesbian women and facilitates community awareness projects in partnership with Perceptions and PFLAG. It has provided safety and help to many women and their families experiencing hostility, abuse and isolation. The free, confidential support group sessions are facilitated by Mary Jo Hall, MSW, CSW, ACSW. Meets at the YWCA located at 3405 Midland Rd. in Bay City.

Tuesday, April 19th, 26th - Perceptions Indoor Co-Ed Volleyball 6:30 - 8:30 pm. [Delta College](#). Go in P wing to the Fitness Center and you'll be directed to the "hyper" gym on the second level. Perceptions discounted cost is \$3.50 per person and your pass is good all day with access to the entire fitness center. Show up early and take advantage of all that your day pass has to offer. Make sure you let the gym staff know that you are with "Perceptions" to get your discount. Bring a friend and join us for some fun, volleyball excitement. In order to anticipate how many will attend, we are asking each person who plans to attend to RSVP to volleyball@perceptionsSV.org by Monday evening. For additional information or last minute announcements visit the [Perceptions Volleyball Forum](#).

Wednesday, April 20th - Bay City Meet & Greet 7:00 - 9:00 pm. An informal gathering of the Tri-Cities' GLBT community. All are welcome in this smoke-free environment. Located at 810 Saginaw Street (between Center and Fifth Aves.), the Bay City Coffee and Tea offers a variety of delicious drinks, sandwiches and desserts.

Sunday, April 24th - PFLAG Meeting 2:00 - 4:30 pm. Located at the Unitarian Universalist Fellowship, 6220 Jefferson, Midland.

Thursday, April 28th - Monthly Membership Meeting 7:00 pm. Unitarian Universalist Fellowship of Midland, 6220 Jefferson Ave. BASIS and The Hearth Home will present "Light into Darkness," an AIDS/HIV educational workshop. Refreshments for this month's meeting will be sponsored by Debbra Zibble of Advanced Therapeutics. For more information, contact [Perceptions](#).

Wednesday, May 4th - Saginaw Meet & Greet 7-9 pm. An informal gathering for the Tri-Cities' GLBT community. All are welcome. Meet your old friends and make some new ones while eating fantastic baked goods. Enjoys hot and cold drinks in a non-smoking environment! Crumbs Gourmet Cookie Cafe is located at 4882 Gratiot just east of Center Road and behind Edward's Men's Shop. tel: 989-498-4010

Tuesday, May 10th - People of Faith Lobby Day Monthly lobby day for people of faith sponsored by [AFSC](#) and the [Triangle Foundation](#). All are welcome. Please come to the Capitol and speak out as progressive people of faith in support of GLBT rights. Lansing, Capitol Bldg, Room 424, from 9:30-11:00 a.m. (Repeats on the 2nd Tuesday of each month.)