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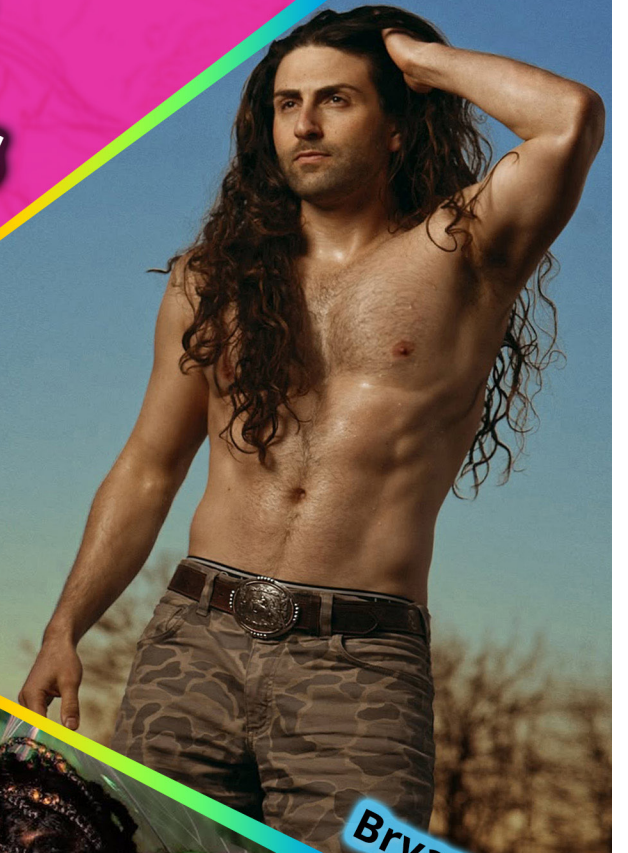
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Mission:

The focus of *Qnotes* is to serve the LGBTQ and straight ally communities of the Charlotte region, North Carolina and beyond, by featuring arts, entertainment, news and views content in print and online that directly enlightens, informs and engages the readers about LGBTQ life and social justice issues.

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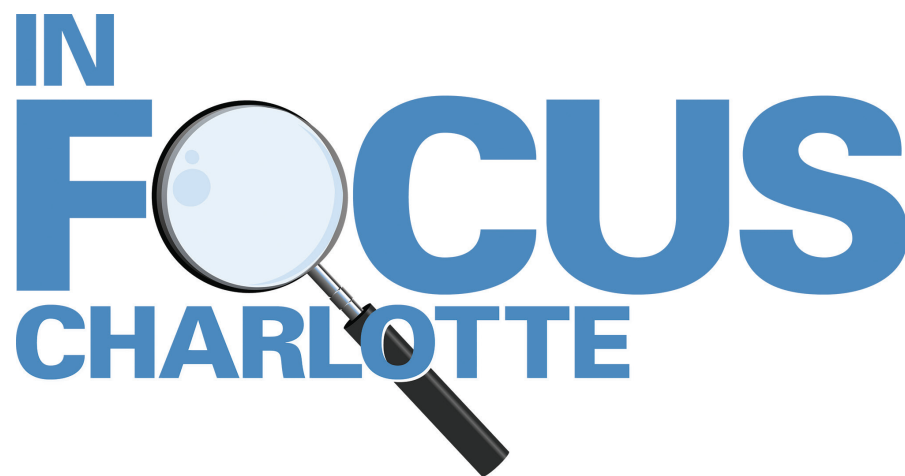
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The Q by QnotesCarolinas

Introducing The Q by QnotesCarolinas!
Learn about the new monthly YouTube
show / podcast, premiering Aug. 5th.
We kick things off with a segment
about Charlotte Pride including an
interview with Board President Will
Martin. Also featuring a discussion of
current news and more.

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Annual LGBTQ+ Newcomer & Community Resource Guide

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CHARLOTTE
PRIDE



This issue is focused on Charlotte Pride
and facts about the Queen City. Find a list of
organizations, elected officials, night life and
places to go and see in the Charlotte Area.

See pages 8 - 23.

Places to go after the festivities

While Charlotte Pride is clearly the
focus of the weekend, there's plenty of
other things to enjoy while you're here.

From outdoor activities to multiple
museums and theaters with live stage
shows, our guide gives you the best.

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The SAVE Act isn't about election security – it's about who gets to vote

Proposed legislation only makes voting difficult and complicated



by Taylor Heeden Larkins
Qnotes Staff Writer

Since the United States' inception, the right to vote has been described as the foundation of American democracy – a promise that every citizen has a voice to choose the leaders who shape their lives. But for many Americans, that very promise has always come with an asterisk.

Women, Black Americans, immigrants, disabled voters and LGBTQ+ communities have repeatedly had to fight for equal access to make their voices known at the ballot box. Now, critics warn the latest push for restrictive voting requirements could create new barriers for millions of eligible voters, with transgender Americans and women among those most likely to be affected.

The Safeguard American Voter Eligibility (SAVE) Act is being marketed as a simple solution to a supposed crisis: the idea non-citizens are improperly voting in American elections. But beneath the language of "election integrity" is a policy making voting more difficult for citizens whose identities, names or personal histories do not neatly align with government records.

And for transgender Americans, whose lives are already subjected to intense political scrutiny, the consequences could be significant.

The SAVE Act would require voters registering for federal elections to provide documentary proof of citizenship, such as a passport, birth certificate, or other approved government documentation. Supporters argue these requirements are necessary to protect elections, but opponents point out voting by non-citizens in federal elections is already illegal, with documented cases extremely rare. The Bipartisan Policy Center has noted existing laws already require voter registration applicants to affirm their citizenship, arguing the new requirements would create unnecessary burdens for eligible voters.

The question is not whether election security matters. It does.

The question is whether the best way to protect democracy is to create new

obstacles for the people who are already legally entitled to participate.

For transgender voters, those obstacles are not theoretical. They are rooted in the reality of navigating a government system that has historically struggled to recognize their identities.

Many transgender people have identification documents that do not all match. A person may have updated their driver's license but not their birth certificate. Someone else may have changed their name legally but still have older records reflecting a previous name. Others may not have updated their documents because of financial costs, complicated legal processes, safety concerns or living in a state where those changes are difficult or impossible to obtain.

These discrepancies do not mean someone is committing fraud. They mean someone has lived a life.

Yet under stricter documentation requirements, those ordinary realities could become reasons for additional scrutiny, delays or challenges when registering to vote.

A transgender person should not have to reveal personal, medical or legal history simply to exercise a constitutional right.

their effects are not distributed equally. The people most likely to face barriers are often those who already encounter obstacles when accessing government services, health care, employment and other essential parts of civic life.

For LGBTQ+ Americans, especially transgender people, this fits into a broader pattern.

Across the country, transgender people have faced a wave of legislation targeting their identities, their access to health care, their ability to participate in public life and their basic recognition under the law. A voting system that requires additional proof from people whose documents do not align risks becoming yet another mechanism through which transgender Americans are questioned, challenged and excluded.

That is why LGBTQ+ advocates view the SAVE Act with alarm.

The history of voting restrictions in the United States offers a warning. Measures once framed as administrative protections – including literacy tests, poll taxes and other requirements – were used to suppress the political power of marginalized communities. The language may change, but the impact of creating unnecessary barriers to voting remains deeply connected to questions of power and representation.

A democracy cannot be strengthened by making participation harder.

Supporters of the SAVE Act argue requiring proof of citizenship is a reasonable safeguard. But protecting elections does not require creating a system where millions of eligible voters must overcome additional hurdles before being allowed to participate.

The legislation also raises serious privacy concerns. Critics have warned expanding documentation requirements could require states to collect and process more sensitive personal information about voters. For transgender Americans, privacy is not simply a matter of convenience – it can be a matter of safety. Personal information about someone's identity, legal history or previous name can expose people to



harassment, discrimination or even threats. A person's right to vote should not depend on how much private information they are forced to surrender.

The promise of democracy has never been dependent on the fact every voter's life story will fit perfectly into a government database. Real people are complicated – they get married. They divorce. They change names. They update documents. They transition. They rebuild their lives.

Government systems should adapt to people – not force people to fit outdated systems.

When lawmakers create additional barriers to voting, they are not simply adding another administrative step. They are deciding whose voices are easier to silence.

For LGBTQ+ Americans, particularly transgender people, it's an all too familiar message: before you are recognized, before you are respected, before you are allowed to fully participate, prove yourself.

But democracy does not belong only to people whose identities are simple enough for a form.

It belongs to all eligible voters.

That includes transgender Americans. It includes women. It includes every citizen whose documents do not perfectly reflect the complexity of their lives.

The right to vote should never depend on whether a government database understands you.

Democracy does not become stronger when fewer people can access it. It becomes weaker. ::



They should not have to explain their identity to a government worker before casting a ballot. And they should not have to fear a mismatch between documents could prevent their voice from being heard.

Voting should not become another arena where transgender Americans are forced to prove they exist.

Women could also face disproportionate impacts from strict documentation requirements. Millions of women change their surnames after marriage or divorce, creating situations where their birth certificates, government IDs and other records may not perfectly match. A person whose documents reflect different chapters of their life is not suspicious – they are normal.

But bureaucratic systems often fail to account for normal human experiences.

That is the danger of laws like the SAVE Act. They present themselves as neutral, but



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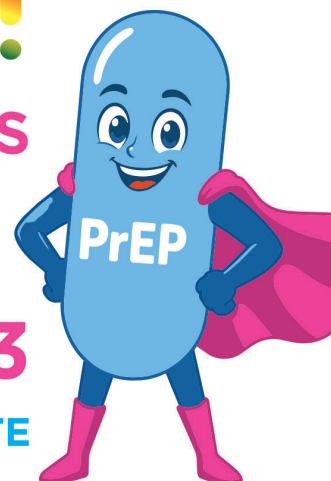


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Cameron Pruette elected first vice chair of NC Democratic Party

Cameron Pruette has been elected first vice chair of the North Carolina Democratic Party following a decisive victory during the party's 2026 State Convention this past weekend.

According to Pruette, he received at least 64 percent of the vote. Official vote totals are expected to be released later this week.

Delegates gathered at Fayetteville State University on Saturday, June 27 for the party's annual convention, which included both in-person and virtual participation. The meeting brought together Democratic leaders, elected officials and delegates from across North Carolina to conduct party business, including the election to fill the vacant first vice chair position.

Pruette announced his candidacy in May, campaigning on a platform centered on coalition building, grassroots engage-

ment and strengthening Democratic leadership. Throughout the campaign, he emphasized the importance of bringing together communities from across North Carolina while expanding opportunities for voices that are too often overlooked.

Following his election, Pruette said those priorities remain unchanged.

"We need a party that's building bridges and standing up for our values," Pruette told Qnotes. "North Carolina has a unique opportunity in the South to lead the way against Trump authoritarianism."

He said he plans to travel throughout the state, listening to communities and supporting Democratic candidates.

"I'm going to spend my time talking to voters too often overlooked," Pruette said. "And uplifting our candidates who are ready to meet the moment and fight for us."

In a message shared after the election, Pruette thanked North Carolina Democratic Party Chair Anderson Clayton for her leadership and said he looks forward to serving



Cameron Pruette (left) poses with his husband, Xzavier Boston-Pruette, whom he thanked for supporting him throughout his campaign.
CREDIT: Cameron Pruette

alongside her. He also thanked fellow candidates Dylan Moore and Nigel Bristow, saying he looks forward to working with them, and expressed appreciation to supporters who helped during his campaign.

Pruette currently serves as executive director of the Freedom Center for Social Justice, where he helps lead efforts focused on LGBTQ+ advocacy, health equity and civic engagement. His previous leadership roles include serving as a delegate to the 2024 Democratic National Convention, a member of the Human Rights Campaign North Carolina Board of Governors and second vice chair of North Carolina's 14th Congressional District Democratic organization.

His election places one of North Carolina's most prominent LGBTQ+ advocates in a statewide Democratic Party leadership position as the party prepares for the 2026 election cycle. Pruette said the campaign may be over, but the work ahead is just beginning, with plans to continue traveling the state and supporting Democratic candidates and local party organizations. ::

— Liz Schob

SC Arts Commission delays grant awards because of LGBTQ+ 'concerns'

Several arts-related organizations in South Carolina will have to wait until Aug. 20 to find out if they will be receiving grant funding from the South Carolina Arts Commission (SCAC).

The reason: Executive Order 14168 issued by President Trump in January 2025. That order, titled "Defending Women from Gender Ideology Extremism and Restoring Biological Truth to the Federal Government," has some folks at the Arts Commission feeling either nervous about or emboldened with opposition to all things LGBTQ+.

The Commission decided to postpone

a vote to approve \$3.7 million in grants because some of the designated organizations have members who are concerned.

The Executive Order forbids federal funds, which SCAC receives, from being used to "promote gender ideology."

Jessica Rourke, a wedding planner in Columbia, South Carolina, and a member of the commission board, apparently understands that to include sexual orientation as well.

"My decision is based on a personal and governance principle that commission funding should not be directed toward

organizations structured around specific sexual orientations, nor should public funds support drag performances," she wrote in an email reported by the Charleston news outlet, The Post and Courier.

The Greenville Gay Men's Chorus, which has received grants for the past three years, is one of those "concerning" organizations. The Chorus has been singled out for attack by some South Carolina politicians on several occasions.

The actions of the board impact not only the Gay Men's Chorus but a number of non-LGBTQ-focused organizations as well, including the world-renowned Spoleto Festival USA held in Charleston and Arts Councils around the state.

The commission board will meet again on Aug. 20. ::

— David R. Gillespie



Arts Commission member Jessica Rourke says she believes funding shouldn't be allowed for 'organizations structured around specific sexual orientations,' or to support drag performances.
CREDIT: Instagram

SC Presbyterian church hires transgender minister in Anderson

A small, struggling Presbyterian church in Anderson, South Carolina, has taken the bold step of hiring an openly transgender woman as its new pastor.



The Rev. Laura Bethany Buchleiter will begin her role as a pastor in Anderson August 2.
CREDIT: Facebook

North Anderson Community Church, Presbyterian (NACCP), a member congregation of the mainline denomination, Presbyterian Church (USA), has hired the Rev. Laura Bethany Buchleiter as its stated supply pastor (a temporary minister appointed to serve a congregation that is not seeking an installed pastor). Buchleiter will begin her ministry on August 2. The North Anderson church, on any given Sunday, has an average of about 20-30 parishioners in attendance.

Whether that decision results in growth or decline of the congregation remains to be seen.

In a 2023 book review published in Christian Century, Buchleiter, in addition to being transgender, also self-identified as intersex.

"My journey in discovering my intersex variations and navigating gender dysphoria," she wrote, "challenged my addiction to answers and pushed me toward what [author of the book being reviewed] calls an 'acceptance of the space around the lines as a necessary part of the image itself.'"



The Presbyterian North Anderson Community Church has a congregation of 20-30 parishioners.
CREDIT: Facebook

Buchleiter would be the first transgender minister to serve in Foothills Presbytery, the regional body of which NACCP is a member, if she meets all requirements. If so, she would be the first such PCUSA minister in South Carolina.

Previously ordained by a member congregation of the Cooperative Baptist Fellowship (CBF), Buchleiter studied at the conservative Moody Bible Institute, earned a bachelor's degree in communications and Christian ministry from equally conservative Dallas Baptist University, and received her Master of Divinity from Christian Theological Seminary in Indianapolis.

Buchleiter is no stranger to being first. According to a story published in Baptist News Global in June 2021, she was "the first known transgender person ordained by a Cooperative Baptist Fellowship-affiliated congregation."

She announced in a Facebook post on July 12 that she would be "moving to Anderson, SC, the first of August — bringing an end to a three-month nomadic season of life." The position at NACCP is part-time, which, in Buchleiter's words, will leave her "time to keep working on other jobs and projects."

There are only a handful of openly transgender ministers in North and South Carolina. A 2022 documentary, "Proper Pronouns," estimated that out of 30 in the United States, six were in North Carolina. An internet search identified three such ministers in South Carolina.

Time will tell how an intersex, transgender activist minister will be received in the small and quite politically red city of Anderson. Buchleiter was quoted in the Baptist News Global article as saying, "I want to answer the call to go places where I can continue to be the question. I don't want to be a disruptive force, but I do want to be a counter-cultural force." ::

— David R. Gillespie

Qnotes launches The Q by QnotesCarolinas

For more than 40 years, *Qnotes* has covered the stories shaping LGBTQ+ communities across Charlotte and the Carolinas. Starting in August, the organization will bring those stories to audiences in a new way. The launch marks *Qnotes*' first regularly produced show, expanding the organization's journalism beyond its website, newsletters and social media to reach audiences through long-form video and podcast storytelling.

The Q by QnotesCarolinas, a new monthly show premiering Aug. 5 on YouTube and as a podcast, will feature interviews with community leaders, discussions of LGBTQ+ news, arts and culture highlights and stories from across the Carolinas.

The show is hosted by Qnotes journalist and Director of Strategic Initiatives Liz Schob, alongside co-hosts Vanna Vanity, an award-winning Charlotte DJ, drag performer and event producer, and Chann Daily, a Charlotte-based lifestyle creator. Together, the three bring distinct perspectives in journalism, entertainment and community engagement, creating conversations that go

beyond the headlines and reflect the many facets of LGBTQ+ life in the Carolinas.

"*The Q by QnotesCarolinas* represents the next step in how we connect with our community," said Jim Yarbrough, Qnotes publisher and show producer. "We're building on more than four decades of trusted, independent LGBTQ+ journalism while creating a new space for conversation, storytelling and celebration. We don't just want to tell people what happened. We want to explore why it matters, celebrate the people and organizations making a difference, and help our community feel more connected to one another."

The inaugural episode focuses on Charlotte Pride and features an in-depth interview with Charlotte Pride Board President Will Martin. The conversation explores what attendees can expect during this year's festival and parade, the organization's work throughout the year and the continuing importance of Pride.

Beyond the featured interview, the premiere episode highlights Charlotte Pride Week events, explores several

LGBTQ+ stories making headlines locally and nationally, and concludes with a Good News Corner spotlight on Transcending Adolescence, a western North Carolina summer camp for transgender and gender-diverse youth.

Future episodes will follow a similar format, combining in-depth interviews with discussions of local and national LGBTQ+ news, arts and culture recommendations, and Good News Corner, a recurring segment celebrating uplifting stories from across the Carolinas and beyond. Together, these segments are designed to go beyond the headlines, providing context on the issues affecting LGBTQ+ communities while spotlighting the people, organizations and events making a difference throughout the region.



Hosts Chann Daily, Liz Schob and Vanna Vanity on the set of *The Q by QnotesCarolinas*, Qnotes' new monthly YouTube show and podcast. CREDIT: Bobby Kerns

New episodes of *The Q by QnotesCarolinas* will premiere monthly on YouTube and major podcast platforms. Reporting and coverage of LGBTQ+ news, events and community issues can also be found on our website at QnotesCarolinas.com and social media. ::

— Liz Schob

Charlotte attorney to receive Leading Family Law Practitioner Award

It's just after Pride season. A time of reflection, celebration and recommitment to fighting battles for equality. Those fights take place in many forms, and the venues range from marches held on city streets to arbitration in court rooms. Often in the courtrooms are the attorneys fighting for the civil rights of all who are the drum majors for the justice we seek.

Attorney at Law, Connie J. Vetter has served the community from her office in Charlotte, North Carolina since 1994, meeting the legal needs of lesbian, gay, bisexual, queer, transgender and non-binary/gender-diverse individuals and couples. Vetter has been one of our DEI champions in Charlotte for longer than some who have benefited from her services and expertise have been alive. That said, it's quite fitting she would be an honored recipient of the 2026

Leading Family Law Practitioner Award.

The award is given by The National LGBTQ+ Bar Association who recognizes lawyers whose work supports LGBTQ+ families, in all of their configurations. The ceremony will be held at the Annual Lavender Law Conference (July 13–15, 2026) in Chicago.

The official press release states: Family law involves more than family creation and relationship dissolution. LGBTQ+ family law may also include allied practices in immigration, tax, military, benefits, children's rights and welfare, disability rights, employment, bankruptcy, landlord-tenant, health care, decision-making and managing costs.

The recognition is awarded each year to one individual who is in the private practice of law and has improved the lives of members of LGBTQ+ families, parents

or children through outstanding legal work, demonstrated by a longstanding commitment to providing legal services of a high quality to the LGBTQ+ community; by commitment to significant pro bono work for LGBTQ+ families, parents or children; or by leadership in significant impact litigation or advocacy affecting or in support of LGBTQ+ families, parents or children while engaged in the private practice of law.

Qnotes spoke with Vetter about the award and why the work she does is so important.

"It is important because as rights are being threatened and some are being taken away, I can still help make a difference in people's lives. [A]lthough North Carolina is no longer providing gender affirming care for people under 19, I help by affirming those individuals through name changes and, depending on the state, correcting the gender marker on their birth certificates. It's a step I hope makes people feel affirmed. Confirmation adoptions are another way of assisting LGBTQ community members [when one parent is giving birth and the



Attorney at Law, Connie J. Vetter and friend. CREDIT: Courtesy image

other parent is adopting], so there's no question about legal parenthood. On paper it's a stepparent adoption, but my colleagues and I call it confirmation adoption because those people are already parents, they're just confirming it legally." ::

— L'Monique King

New research reveals trends in sexual orientation

A new study from researchers at Binghamton University's Human Sexualities Lab found that young women are increasingly identifying beyond exclusive heterosexuality, while young men's sexual identities have remained largely unchanged over the past 15 years. But researchers say the real story isn't simply that more women identify as queer – it's what the gap reveals about gender expectations.

Analyzing surveys of college students from 2011 to 2026, researchers found women were significantly more likely over time to report same-sex attraction, behavior or identities beyond "straight." Young men, however, showed little change.

"Our findings don't just tell the story of young people becoming less heterosexual

or young women becoming more queer," the researchers wrote in *The Conversation*. "We believe they support the idea that heterosexuality may no longer organize gender in quite the same way for women and men. For young women, its boundaries appear more permeable. For young men, heterosexuality remains bound to masculinity, status and social recognition."

Those findings echo Gallup's 2025 survey showing LGBTQ+ identification continues to rise, particularly among younger generations and women, with bisexual identity driving much of the increase.

The Binghamton researchers argue that women have gained greater freedom to express identities that don't fit traditional expectations, while many men still face



Researchers at New York's Binghamton University found women were significantly more likely to experience same-sex attraction

cultural pressure to prove their masculinity through compulsory heterosexuality. Decades of public health and gender research support that broader context. Studies published in *The Lancet Public Health*

and by organizations such as Equimundo have linked rigid masculine norms to poorer mental health, greater acceptance of violence, intimate partner violence and reduced willingness to seek help.

Rather than asking why more young women are identifying beyond heterosexuality, the study leaves readers with a broader question: What would our communities look like if masculinity was not defined by men's relationships to dominance, control and compulsory heterosexuality?

The researchers suggest the growing divide between young women and men may persist unless society expands the ways men are allowed to define themselves. Just as women have gained greater freedom to move beyond rigid gender expectations, creating more room for men to embrace a full range of human emotions and authentic self-expression could benefit not only women and LGBTQ+ people, but men, communities and the country as a whole. ::

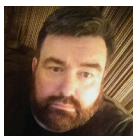
— LM Dudzik



This issue is focused on Charlotte Pride and facts about the Queen City. Find a list of organizations, elected officials, night life and places to go and see in the Charlotte Area.

Charlotte Pride creates huge boost to city's economy

Region's largest festival partners with CRVA



by David Aaron Moore
Qnotes Staff Writer

Charlotte's annual Pride festival and parade has evolved into one of the Queen City's largest tourism events, generating major bank in economic activity while filling hotels, restaurants and businesses across Uptown.

The event, which takes place August 15-16, has grown from meager beginnings into a two-day celebration that attracts tens of thousands of visitors from across the Carolinas and neighboring states. Pride has reportedly become the largest annual gathering in the center city Charlotte area, building on years of steady attendance and growth.

This year's presentation features multiple entertainment stages, a street festival, cultural programming and what has become Charlotte's largest annual parade, even outpacing the city's annual Thanksgiving parade.

The financial benefits extend well beyond the festival grounds. Visitors spend money on hotel rooms, restaurants, bars, retail shopping, parking and transportation, providing a late-summer boost for businesses throughout the center city and the surrounding inner city region.

Charlotte Pride's own finances reflect the scale of the profitability of the event. Nonprofit records from the website Propublica indicate the organization operated with an annual budget of roughly \$1.2 million in 2024, funding entertainment, security, logistics, accessibility services and year-round programming.

Public funding has become a larger part of that equation. In 2025, as reported by the Mecklenburg County Public Information Department, commissioners approved \$125,000 in support for Charlotte Pride 2026, after organizers faced declining corporate sponsorships amid a changing political climate.

Business leaders have long viewed Pride as more than a cultural celebration. The event showcases Charlotte as an inclusive

destination, encouraging repeat tourism and strengthening the city's reputation among conventions, young professionals and major employers. Hotels report strong demand during Pride weekend, while restaurants and entertainment venues benefit from increased foot traffic before and after festival activities.

With attendance expected to remain among the region's largest annual gatherings, Charlotte Pride continues to deliver both cultural and economic value.

As thousands of visitors return for the celebration in August 2026, the festival is expected once again to provide a meaningful boost to Charlotte's hospitality and tourism economy.

A look at the Charlotte Regional Visitors Authority website confirms the organization sees the income and cultural potential of the event and recognizes the significance of our community. In short, our Pride event, which is the largest gathering in the inner city and features the largest parade the city has, is beneficial to the city.

How much money has Charlotte Pride generated for the city and businesses?

The Charlotte Pride Festival and Parade generates an estimated **\$15.8 million to \$16 million** in total annual economic impact for the city of Charlotte and its local businesses. Data provided by organizers and the Charlotte Regional Visitors Authority (CRVA) breaks down the financial benefits:

- **Direct Business Revenue:** \$9.46 million generated in direct visitor spending. More than 16,500 hotel room nights booked, heavily impacting the local hospitality industry. Over \$460 spent by individual out-of-town visitors on lodging, food, beverages and retail; and City and Government Revenue is reported as \$580,000, generated annually in Mecklenburg County tax revenue.

- **Attendance Scale:** The financial influx is driven by over 250,000 to 260,000 weekend attendees, including roughly 30,000 out-of-town visitors who travel more than 50 miles to attend the festival in Uptown Charlotte.

How does the Charlotte Regional Visitors Authority (CRVA) connect with the local

LGBTQ+ community?

At first glance, the explanation sounds like a lot of word salad, but it's an accurate assessment. The CRVA connects with the LGBTQ+ community through strategic partnerships, destination marketing and co-branded regional events. Key initiatives include co-promoting local queer-owned businesses and partnering directly with Charlotte Pride on programs like the Official Charlotte Pride Passport.

Here are some specific examples:

Strategic Partnerships & Promotions

- **Charlotte Pride Collaboration:** The CRVA partners with Charlotte Pride to co-promote Pride Week events through Charlotte's Got A Lot, providing regional visibility for community celebrations.

- **Interactive Community Passports:** They co-sponsor interactive engagement tools like the digital Charlotte Pride Passport, encouraging residents and visitors to check in at local LGBTQ-friendly venues, spaces and events.

- **Local Business Spotlights:** Through its marketing channels, the CRVA features queer-owned local establishments (such as the NoDa Company Store) on visitor

itineraries to highlight the cultural diversity defining the Queen City's neighborhoods.

- **Inclusivity Campaigns:** The CRVA actively markets Charlotte nationally as a welcoming destination for LGBTQ+ leisure travelers and convention attendees, highlighting the area's local nightlife, dining and inclusive community atmosphere.

If you're an LGBTQ+ business owner and you want to connect with the CRVA

The CRVA actively encourages diverse business owners, including those in the LGBTQ+ community, to connect and partner with them. Their outreach focuses on inclusive tourism marketing and equitable vendor procurement. It's important to note that the CRVA collaborates alongside the Carolinas LGBT+ Chamber of Commerce, helping to connect LGBTQ+ business with broader economic development and across the Charlotte region. Keep in mind that you can register directly using the CRVA MWBE Vendor Application Form here: <https://www.crva.com/who-we-are/procurement-opportunities/mwbe-vendor-application-form>. You can also reach out directly to the contract and vendor diversity manager (Jeff Doerr at jeff.doerr@crva.com) to connect with public bidding and contracting opportunities. ::



The CRVA wants you: if you're an LGBTQ+ business owner, Charlotte's Regional Visitors Authority is welcoming.



The logo of the European Society for Human Genetics (ESHG) is a white hexagon with a black border. Inside the hexagon is a stylized bar chart with 12 vertical bars of varying heights, colored from left to right: pink, orange, yellow, green, blue, and purple. A multi-colored arc (pink, orange, yellow, green, blue, purple) is positioned below the bars. A small 'TM' trademark symbol is located at the bottom right of the hexagon. The logo is centered on a dark blue background with a lighter blue chevron shape at the bottom.

Charlotte Pride looks toward community for 2026

Annual LGBTQ festival goes back to its roots with more local sponsors for this year's event



by Jaylen Jones
Qnotes Staff Writer

The Queen City's largest event – Charlotte Pride – is only two weeks away. Like other Pride parades, the annual celebration is looking beyond corporate sponsorship for aid.

"Our focus for 2026 is intentional optimization and community-centric value," explains John Walton-Tate, the Charlotte Pride director of operations and finance. "The layout and energy this year are deeply rooted in celebrating local ownership, elevating small businesses, and providing direct, meaningful service to the Charlotte LGBTQ+ community."

Instead of leaning on larger and national corporations, Charlotte Pride is focusing its attention on the City of Charlotte.

"While national corporate landscapes and shifting DEI trends have changed how some larger brands approach external marketing," said Walton-Tate. "The story of Charlotte Pride in 2026 is one of incredible local resilience and growth."

For some, this shift could seem like a step in the wrong direction. On the surface, having large corporate sponsors means more money and higher visibility, but Charlotte Pride thinks differently.

"Instead of relying on abstract national boardrooms," Walton-Tate continues "we are building localized partnerships with people whose daily work coincides perfectly with our mission."

Now, Charlotte Pride can lean on its community to help queer residents.

"These partners are providing strategic support and direct programming," says Walton-Tate. "For example, a prominent local fitness studio is partnering with us to deliver expert-led programming throughout our Wellness Way sessions."

"Community partners are covering some safety features and certain staging activity directly, which successfully offsets our operational costs," he continues. "This allows us to redirect our primary resources straight into vital festival infrastructure, community programming, and enhanced on-site safety measures."

These partnerships lead to a stronger bond within LGBTQ+ Charlotte. With more local organizations, Charlotteans can support businesses that look like them, rather than spending money on organizations that plaster rainbows one or two times a year.

"By elevating regional providers and homegrown businesses, we ensure our attendees connect with doctors, therapists and business owners they can actually visit the very next day right here in Charlotte." Walton-Tate explains "It creates a sustainable, year-round network of support."

Let's look back to move forward

If we look back in time, we see that Charlotte Pride started with nothing. Queer culture in Charlotte was hidden from the rest

of the city. If someone wished to find a community, they had to call a number to figure out where the event was held. Being gay was a crime, but queer Charlotteans realized that many states no longer hid who they were.

Of course, cities up north protested for LGBTQ+ rights, but cities like Atlanta grew vocal as well. If southern cities could do it, why not Charlotte? Queer Charlotte community members asked that question and began working toward what would later become the largest Pride the Queen City would witness.

Charlotte Pride wasn't the first Pride-related event held in North Carolina, but Charlotte activists laid the groundwork for that going forward. Don King and other active residents created the city's first LGBTQ+ organizations like Acceptance and Queen City Coordinators (QCQ).

In June 1981, QCQ funded and hosted North Carolina's first Gay/Lesbian Pride Week. According to Charlotte Pride's Website, the week-long event had workshops, night-life parties, an afternoon outdoor disco, a concert, softball tournament and the rally featuring Boston activist Brian McNaught; Philadelphia's Barbara Gittings, founder of the New York chapter of the Daughters of Bilitis and an early co-organizer with Frank Kameny of some of the first gay rights pickets of the United States Government.

The only issue with Gay/Lesbian Pride Week was that it was hidden. Organizers produced a successful Pride Week in The Scorpio's parking lot (then located on Freedom Drive in west Charlotte). According to participants, however, not many people knew Gay and Lesbian Pride Week actually occurred. So, QCQ changed directions and made the event public.

While there was a bit of backlash and fear of the queer community getting harassed, QCQ hosted its first public Gay Pride at Park Road Park in 1984.

"At first glance, it was a typical Sunday afternoon picnic at Charlotte's Park Road Park," reads a Charlotte Observer article from June 25, 1984. "After four years of organized celebrations of National Gay Pride Week in Charlotte, mostly in borrowed or rented facilities, Sunday's picnic was the first really public event."

Charlotte Gay Pride picnics, hosted by QCQ and Qnotes, would continue from 1986 through 1993.

Durham was the first city in North Carolina to host a Pride march back in 1981. They went on to host the first officially recognized North Carolina Pride March and Festival in 1988.

Durham became the longtime host of North Carolina Pride and eventually started taking bids for other cities to host the annual North Carolina Parade and Festival every other year, including Asheville, Greensboro and lastly Charlotte in 1994.

Charlotte-based organizers petitioned to host North Carolina Pride and would make the biggest Pride event North Carolina had seen since the first one in Durham. The Charlotte Pride website states that "nearly 4,000 [people] participated in the march, nearly 2,000 danced the night away



Charlotte Pride continues to attract substantial local crowds to the inner city and visitors from the surrounding southeast.
CREDIT: Charlotte Pride

at Founders Hall, and hundreds more attended events throughout the weekend."

But Charlotte wasn't done yet. In 2001, the event officially became known as "Charlotte Pride." The organizers of Charlotte Pride wanted more for their city; more visibility and empowerment for the LGBTQ+ community, so the event was held at Marshall Park in Uptown Charlotte.

As Charlotte Pride grew, so did the anti-LGBTQ+ groups. Michael Brown with ICN Ministries and Flip Benham, the leader of Operation Save America were infamous for their loud anti-LGBTQ+ protesting. Benham, along with his two sons, negatively impacted Charlotte Pride by harassing queer people and asking city officials to deny Charlotte Pride every permit that they ask for. Others called the event pornographic and lewd, adding that if Pride continued, it would impact the children of Charlotte.

Thankfully, the city never listened to the Benhams, but they didn't give up. Benham and other anti-LGBTQ+ protestors gathered to blare offensive and anti-gay rhetoric at participants attending the festival. Their hate didn't stop Charlotte Pride's growth. However, the last year Pride took place in Marshall Park was 2005.

The following year, the Festival was rebranded as "Pride Charlotte" and became a project of the Charlotte LGBT Community Center. It was hosted by the Gateway Center on West Trade St., but outgrew that space in 2009.

In 2010, it moved for one year to the Music Factory, and then to Tryon St. in Uptown in 2011. Attendance continued to rise as people participated in the Queen City's Pride. Then around 45,000 in 2012. In 2017, Charlotte Pride's attendance rose above the Thanksgiving Parade and became the largest parade in Charlotte. Around 150,000 people celebrated that year. In 2025, more than 200,000 people attended Charlotte Pride.

Looking back at its history, anyone can tell that Charlotte's LGBTQ+ community fought for visibility with little help but their own.

Pride in Charlotte started because queer people wanted to celebrate who they were and were unwilling to let their city forget them. No big corporation names were featured on banners.

It was the people of Charlotte who came together to create something they loved. Forty-five years later, Charlotte Pride turns towards its community once again.

Charlotte Pride 2026 represents the people, not the corporations

"When the festival footprint is shaped by local voices and faces, the event naturally reflects the authentic culture of Charlotte," says Walton-Tate. "This local collaboration creates an empowering sanctuary where queer individuals see themselves directly reflected in the festival's success, elevating the impact of every community member and partner involved."

With anti-DEI sentiment creeping into every conversation surrounding LGBTQ+ and other marginalized communities, it's important to take a look back at where we came from. By looking into the past, we realize that Charlotte Pride didn't come to life with corporate money, but through the hard work and commitment of the Charlotte LGBTQ+ community.

"Charlotte Pride enters the 2026 season fiscally resilient, though carefully managing the realities of a shifting corporate market," Walton-Tate explains. "Our operational strategy is a proactive response to broader [anti-DEI], national shifts in corporate marketing." He adds, "By intentionally diversifying our funding streams and leaning into community-supported models, we are working hard to ensure that core pieces of our event – including the Parade and main festival footprint – remain vibrant and accessible." ::

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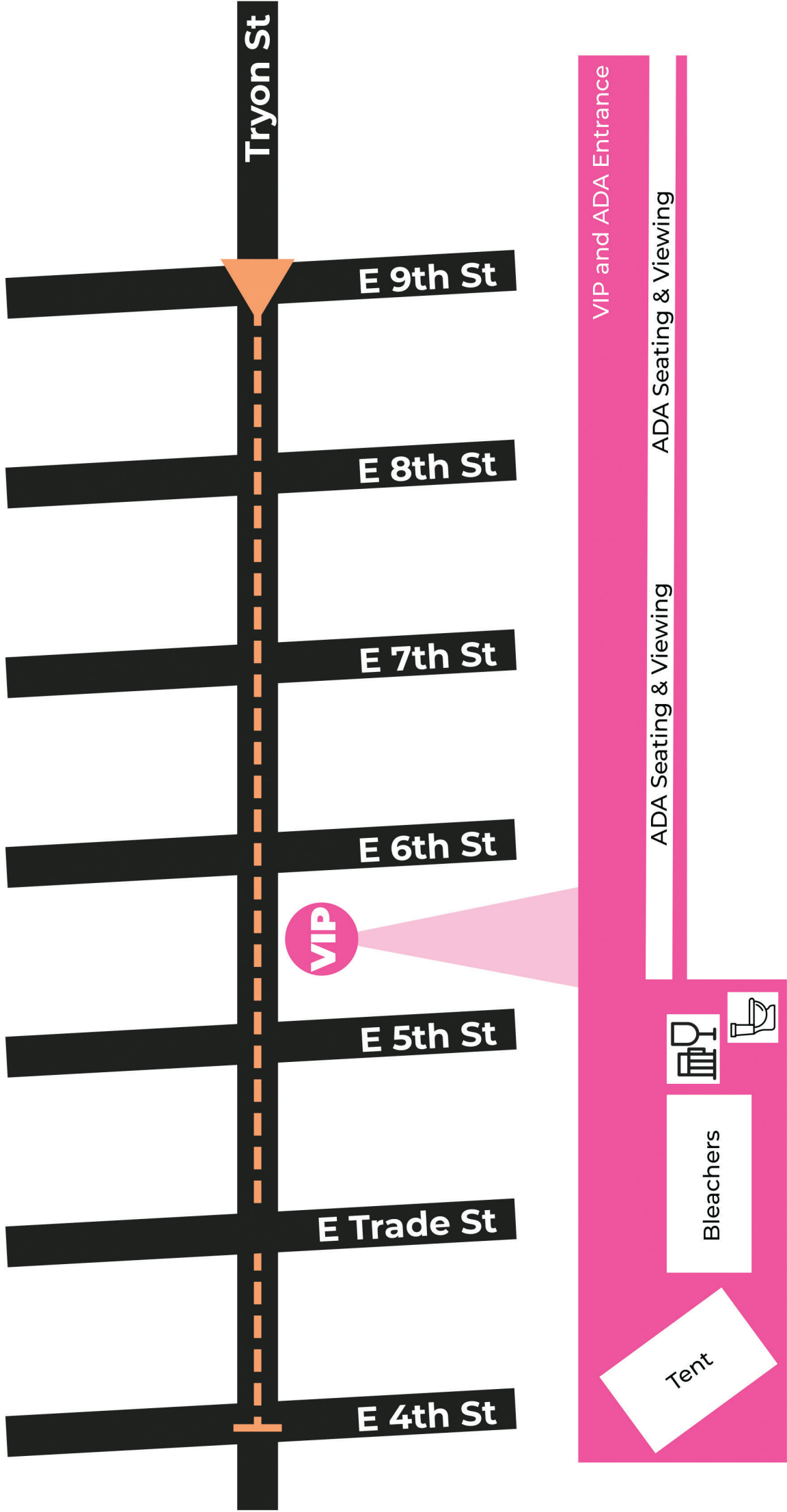
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—Rob L., A Community Resident

CHARLOTTE PRIDE 2026 PARADE MAP



The Charlotte Pride Parade route will begin at the intersection of **E 9th Street & Tryon Street** and end at the intersection of **E 4th Street & Tryon Street**.

Interested in securing the best spot to watch the Charlotte Pride Parade, complete with a bar, bathroom, bleacher seating, and emcee entertainment? Scan the QR code to the right or visit charlottepride.org to purchase your **VIP Experience** tickets today.

Charlotte Pride also provides ADA accessible areas. A sign language interpreter will be stationed at the VIP stage area for the duration of the Charlotte Pride Parade. To gain more information, please email info@charlottepride.org or **find an Event Staff** member in a blue shirt on the day of the event.



*Learn more about
the **VIP Experience** here!*

Taking the stage at Charlotte Pride 2026

Get to know the star-studded lineup of musical talent



by Bailey Sides
Qnotes Staff Writer

August is fast approaching, and you know what that means for the Queen City: Charlotte Pride 2026. This year's celebration will be host to four unique and inspiring musical talents who are sure to get you up on your feet. Over the weekend of Aug. 15-16 these fantastic performers will make Pride an event to remember.

Flyana Boss — Aug. 15

Flyana Boss, the high-octane hip hop duo composed of Bobbi LaNea Tyler and Folayan Omi Kunerede, are certain to electrify Charlotte Pride 2026. Hailing from Los Angeles and meeting while at the Musicians Institute, the pair identify as a part of the queer community and have rapidly ascended from creative collaborators to industry heavyweights. Their rise to national prominence was fueled by the breakout success of their 2023 hit "You Wish," which captured the internet's attention through their inventive and fast-paced TikTok content, featuring the duo running through iconic locations nationwide.

Their journey is a testament to the power of persistence and creative ingenuity. After signing with Atlantic Records in 2021, the duo released several acclaimed EPs, including "Boffum" and "Make It a Double," showcasing their sharp lyrical flow and undeniable stage presence. Their magnetic

energy has not gone unnoticed; beyond their own headlining "Bosstanical Garden Tour," they have supported heavy hitters like Janelle Monáe and Kesha, solidifying their status as formidable performers in the modern music landscape.

Despite their rapid ascent, the duo has faced the typical scrutiny that comes with viral fame. When critics questioned their repetitive content style, hip hop icon Missy Elliott famously stepped in to defend them, remarking that their approach was an "old school tactic" and that changing things up often "confuses" people. This endorsement cemented their place in the hip hop canon and highlighted the industry respect they have cultivated.

Now making their highly anticipated debut at Charlotte Pride, Flyana Boss will bring a fresh, vibrant and unapologetic sound to the festival. Their performance promises to be a centerpiece of the weekend, celebrating the spirit of community and artistic freedom. Whether you're a longtime fan of their viral hits or discovering their unique sound for the first time, Flyana Boss is ready to turn up the volume and make Charlotte Pride 2026 unforgettable.

Isabella Lovestory — Aug. 15

Isabella Lovestory, the stage persona of Honduran-born, Montreal-based artist Isabella Rodríguez Rivera, is a trailblazing force in the world of "perreo-pop." Blending the infectious, high-energy rhythms of reggaeton with the adventurous spirit of experimental pop, her music creates a sonic landscape that is as provocative as it is empowering. Since beginning her career in 2018, Lovestory has carved out a unique lane, evolving from early SoundCloud mix-tapes like "Juguete" to critically acclaimed studio albums such as "Amor Hardcore" (2022) and her 2025 sophomore release, "Vanity."

Her ascent in the industry is marked by her distinct ability to reshape genres and defy expectations. Whether she is contributing to global hits like LE SSERAFIM's "ANTIFRAGILE," performing at Coachella alongside Mura Masa, or earning a Juno Award nomination for Latin Music Recording of the Year in 2026, Lovestory consistently pushes boundaries. Her



Isabella Lovestory

music is frequently celebrated for its bold themes of women's empowerment and self-expression, inviting listeners to embrace their desires without apology and challenge conventional societal standards.

A fixture in inclusive music spaces, Lovestory is a celebrated figure at events that champion queer-inclusive lineups, such as her high-profile appearance at the LadyLand festival. She views her artistic identity as a creative persona designed for self-discovery, often using her platform to explore the complexities of beauty and fragility. Describing the philosophy behind her latest album, "Vanity," she shared: "Thematically, this album explores fragility, how easily a mirror shatters, but it also explores the indestructible and eternal essence of beauty. I don't mind when things break, I like to collect the pieces and create something new." With her boundary-pushing sound and unapologetic artistry, Isabella Lovestory will bring a vibrant, high-octane energy to the Charlotte Pride 2026 stage, offering a performance that is sure to resonate deeply with the Queen City.

Lauren Sanderson — Aug. 15

Lauren Sanderson is an American singer-songwriter currently based in Los Angeles, whose music defies easy categorization by blending influences from pop,

R&B, hip hop and rock. Originally from Fort Wayne, Indiana, Sanderson's journey to the stage began with an online presence as a YouTube personality during her high school years. She gained early recognition for her motivational TEDx talk, "For God's Sake, Just Love Them," which focused on her experience coming out as a lesbian and fostering healthy parent-child relationships — a clear indicator of her identity as an active member of the LGBTQ community.

Her musical career took off after she began channeling her experiences into songwriting, influenced by artists like Mac Miller, Logic and Tyler, the Creator. Following the success of early EPs like "Center of Expression" and "Spaces," Sanderson



Flyana Boss



Lauren Sanderson



Bryan Ruby

signed with Epic Records, gaining significant industry attention. Over the years, she has proven her staying power with a prolific discography, including albums like "Midwest Kids Can Make It Big," "Death of a Fantasy" and her 2026 self-titled release, "Lauren."

Sanderson is not only a dedicated artist but also a frequent performer at Pride events, previously taking to the stage at LA Pride and Pride Night for the LA Sparks. Her work often serves as a powerful voice for her listeners; as she has stated, she aims to be "the voice for people who may not be able to speak." With a career marked by independence and artistic evolution, Sanderson continues to create music that resonates deeply with her queer audience. She is sure to bring a unique blend of seductive energy and introspective lyrics to the stage at Charlotte Pride 2026.

Bryan Ruby — Aug. 16

Bryan Ruby is a rising star in country music, distinguished not only by his expressive baritone voice and authentic storytelling but also by his trailblazing journey as an LGBTQ+ activist. Named a 2026 Nashville Scene "Artist to Watch" and the winner of the seventh season of "Nashville Rising Song" with his performance of "Any Day Now," Ruby brings a rare depth to the genre, born from his unique history as a professional baseball player. After spending years living on the road while grinding through independent-league baseball, Ruby channeled that grit into his

music, establishing himself as a compelling voice for resilience and authenticity.

His musical identity is rooted in the narrative traditions of country music, with projects like his 2025 EP "Growing Season" and the 2026 release "Playing With Fire" garnering critical acclaim from outlets like The Tennessean, MusicRow and The Nash News. His work has earned rotation on SiriusXM Country and placement on major playlists such as Spotify's "All New Country" and "Fresh Finds: Country." Beyond his artistic achievements, Ruby made history in September 2021 by becoming the first active professional baseball player in the United States to publicly come out as gay, using his platform to advocate for inclusion and support for young players from underrepresented communities.

Reflecting on his path and the intersection of his passions, Ruby emphasizes the power of persistence. As he has stated: "Baseball and country music are part of the fabric of our great country. If there's one message I hope people hear in my songs, it's that hard work and heart can carry you through even what the world tells you are insurmountable obstacles. You can earn your place by following your passion, no matter who you are."

With his honey-bourbon vocals and a powerful, honest perspective, Bryan Ruby is poised to make a memorable impact as he takes the stage at Charlotte Pride 2026. ::

Photo credits: Wikimedia Commons, Facebook

CHARLOTTE AREA LGBTQ+ NIGHT LIFE



Bar Argon

VJ & DJ/Dance. Video Lounge.
4544-H South Blvd. • 704.525.7787
barargon.com



Chasers

Drag. Pool. DJ/Dance. Dancers.
3217 The Plaza • 704.339.0500
chaserscharlotte.club



Petra's

Art. DJ/Dance. Live Music.
1919 Commonwealth Ave.
https://petrasbar.com



Hattie's Tap & Tavern

DJ/Dance. Pool. Games.
2918 The Plaza • 980.938.6228
hattiescharlotte.com



Hide-A-Way

Drag. Pool. DJ/Dance.
405 E. Baskins Rd., Rock Hill, SC
803.328.6630 • thehideawaysc.com



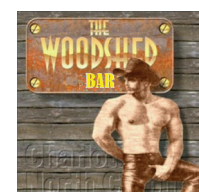
The Scorpio

Drag. DJ/Dance.
225 Fairwood Ave. • 704.373.9124
thescorpio.com



Sidelines

Pool. Games. Sports.
4544-C South Blvd. • 704.525.2608
thesidelinesbar.com



The Woodshed

Drag. Pool. DJ/Dance.
3935 Queen City Dr. • 704.394.1712
woodshedlounge.com



Beyond the Charlotte Pride Festival

Your guide to exploring the Queen City before, between and after the festivities



by LM Dudzik
Qnotes Staff Writer

Charlotte Pride brings thousands of visitors to the Queen City every August. While the festival and parade are reason enough to visit, they're only part of what makes Charlotte worth exploring. Whether you're extending your stay, looking for a morning adventure before the festivities begin, or escaping the afternoon heat for a few hours, Charlotte offers everything from world-class museums and outdoor recreation to independent cinemas and family-friendly attractions.

Outside Adventures

If you're craving adventure, few places compare to the **U.S. National Whitewater Center**. Located about 20 minutes northwest of Uptown, the 1,300-acre outdoor recreation facility is far more than a whitewater rafting destination. Visitors can kayak, paddleboard, zipline, tackle aerial rope courses, mountain bike, rock climb or simply relax with live music and a drink overlooking the river. Even if you never step into the water, the walking trails and riverside atmosphere make it one of Charlotte's signature destinations.



U.S. National Whitewater Center

Nature lovers may also enjoy the **Carolina Raptor Center**, where more than 30 species of birds of prey — including bald eagles, hawks, falcons and owls — can be viewed along shaded forest trails. It's a peaceful change of pace from the energy of Pride weekend.

For visitors seeking bigger thrills, **Carowinds** sits just south of Charlotte on the North Carolina-South Carolina state line. Home to some of the Southeast's tallest roller coasters, a sprawling water park and family attractions, it's easy to spend an entire day there before returning to Uptown for evening celebrations.

Beat the Heat

Charlotte's museum scene has a lot to offer. Racing fans shouldn't miss the **NASCAR Hall of Fame**, an interactive museum celebrating one of North Carolina's most iconic sports. Even visitors who don't

follow racing often find themselves enjoying the hands-on exhibits, racing simulators and behind-the-scenes look at NASCAR history.

Families traveling with children should consider **Discovery Place Science**, one of the region's premier science museums. Interactive exhibits, live demonstrations and an IMAX theater make it a fun stop for curious minds of every age.

Art lovers have several excellent options within walking distance of each other in Uptown. **The Mint Museum Uptown** showcases American, contemporary and international art alongside striking craft and design collections. **The Bechtler Museum of Modern Art** houses an impressive collection of mid-20th century modern works by artists including Picasso, Miró, Warhol and Calder. Across the street, the **Harvey B. Gantt Center for African-American Arts + Culture** celebrates the contributions of African American artists, writers and community leaders through rotating exhibitions, performances and cultural programming. It's one of Charlotte's most important cultural institutions and well worth adding to any itinerary.

If your plans take you beyond Uptown, the original **Mint Museum Randolph**, housed in the former U.S. Mint building, offers decorative arts, historic collections and a quieter museum experience surrounded by beautiful grounds.



Harvey B. Gantt Center

Catch a Show

Charlotte's performing arts scene is thriving, making Pride weekend a great time to enjoy live entertainment after the festival winds down. For Broadway tours, concerts, comedy and dance, **Blumenthal Arts** is the city's premier performing arts organization. Its Uptown venues — including **Belk Theater**, **Booth Playhouse** and **Knight Theater** — host everything from Tony Award-winning musicals and touring productions to stand-up comedy, concerts and special events throughout the year. Check the schedule before your visit — you may find a Broadway hit or nationally touring comedian performing during Pride weekend.



Carolina Theatre

Just around the corner, the beautifully restored **Carolina Theatre** has become one of Charlotte's newest cultural landmarks. Originally opened in 1927, the historic venue now hosts concerts, classic films, comedy performances and special events in an intimate setting that blends historic architecture with modern programming.

For live music, head to **The Fillmore Charlotte** or neighboring venues at **AvidXchange Music Factory**, one of the city's largest entertainment districts. The complex hosts concerts spanning rock, pop, hip-hop, country and electronic music, along with restaurants and nightlife, making it a popular destination after the Pride festivities conclude.

Experience Something Different

Looking for something a little unexpected? **The Museum of Illusions Charlotte** offers interactive exhibits designed to challenge your perception through optical illusions, perspective tricks and immersive installations. It's fun, playful and practically built for social media photos with friends.



NASCAR Hall of Fame



Museum of Illusions

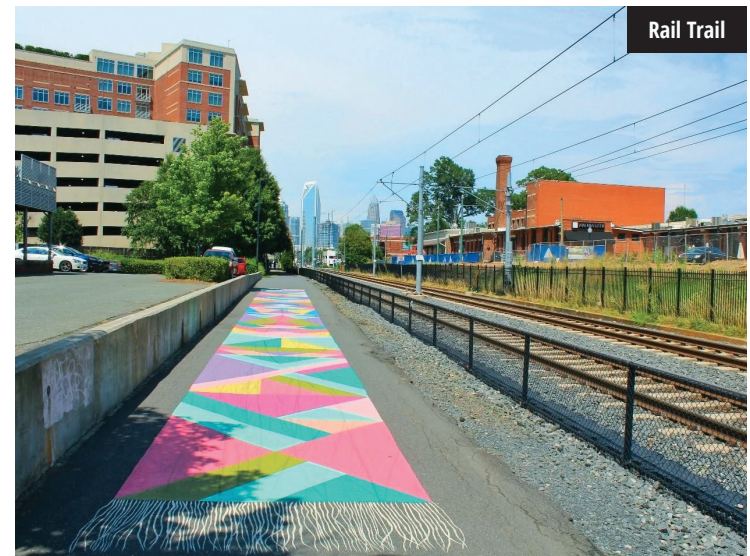
Movie lovers should seek out two of Charlotte's independent film organizations. **VisArt** has evolved far beyond its roots as a neighborhood video store. Today, it serves as a nonprofit film center hosting screenings, filmmaker discussions, repertory programming and community events throughout the year. If your Pride weekend overlaps with one of its special screenings, it's an excellent way to experience Charlotte's local arts community.

The Independent Picture House has quickly become one of the city's cultural gems. Operated by the **Charlotte Film Society**, the theater specializes in independent, international, documentary and classic films that are rarely shown in commercial multiplexes. Check the schedule — you may discover your new favorite film while you're in town.

Explore the Queen City
Charlotte continues to evolve, and Pride weekend provides the perfect excuse to experience neighborhoods beyond the festival grounds. Uptown's walkable streets

connect many of the city's major museums, restaurants and sports venues, making it easy to explore without moving your car. The nearby **Rail Trail in South End** offers breweries, public art, coffee shops and local boutiques, while NoDa — the city's historic arts district — features colorful murals, galleries, music venues and eclectic shopping.

Whether your interests lean toward outdoor adventure, contemporary art, family attractions or independent film, Charlotte offers something for everyone. Between festival events, take the opportunity to discover everything else the Queen City has to offer — you may find yourself planning your next visit before this one is over. ::



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CHARLOTTE LGBTQ+ RESOURCES

Advocacy

ALCU of North Carolina
P.O. Box 28004
Raleigh, NC 27611
919-834-3466
acluofnorthcarolina.org

Campaign for Southern Equality
P.O. Box 364
Asheville, NC 28802
828-242-1559
southernequality.org

Charlotte LGBTQ+ Chamber of Commerce
2838 Queen City Dr., Suite A
Charlotte, NC 28208
704-837-4050
clgbtcc.org

Equality North Carolina
P.O. Box 12581
Durham, NC 27709
919-829-0343
equalitync.org

Freedom Center for Social Justice
2838 Queen City Dr., Suite A
Charlotte, NC 28208
980-729-8454
fcsj.org

Human Rights Campaign
North Carolina
northcarolina.hrc.org
facebook.com/HRCNorthCarolina/

LGBTQ+ Democrats of
Mecklenburg County
933 Louise Ave., Suite 101-18
Charlotte, NC 28204
980-334-3316
lgbtqdemocrats.org

North Carolina AIDS Action Network
112 Broadway St., Suite B
Durham, NC 27701
704-550-1900
ncaan.org

Arts

Arts & Science Council of Charlotte
220 N. Tryon St.
Charlotte, NC 28202
704-333-2272
artandscience.org

Charlotte Pride Band
P.O. Box 11566
Charlotte, NC 28220
charlotteprideband.org

Gay Men's Chorus of Charlotte
P.O. Box 560661
Charlotte, NC 28256
704-549-9202
gmccharlotte.org

One Voice Chorus
P.O. Box 9241
Charlotte NC 28299
980-220-2435
onevoicechorus.com

Women's Chorus of Charlotte
P.O. Box 560661
Charlotte, NC 28256
704-549-9202
gmccharlotte.org

Faith

Beloved Community Charlotte
2326 Arty Ave.
Charlotte, NC 28208
704-654-7429
belovedcommunityclt.com

Caldwell Presbyterian Church
1609 E. Fifth St.
Charlotte, NC 28204
704-334-0825
caldwellpresby.org

Charlotte Atheists and Agnostics
charlotteatheists.org

Charlotte Buddhist Vihara
3423 Stonehaven Dr.
Charlotte, NC 28215
704-299-8309
charlottebuddhistvihara.org

Dilworth United Methodist Church
605 East Blvd.
Charlotte, NC 28203
704-333-4173
dilworthchurch.org

First Christian Church
1200 East Blvd.
Charlotte, NC 28203
704-334-3771
fcc-charlotte.org

First United Methodist Church
501 N. Tryon St.
Charlotte, NC 28202
704-333-9081
charlottefirst.org

Havurat Tikvah
P.O. Box 1714
Matthew, NC 28106
980-225-5330
havurattikvah.org

Holy Covenant United Church of Christ
3501 W. WT Harris Blvd.
Charlotte, NC 28269
704-599-9810
holycovenantucc.org

Holy Trinity Lutheran Church
1900 The Plaza
Charlotte, NC 28205
704-377-5439
htlccharlotte.org

Inclusion Community
21209 Catawba Ave.
Cornelius, NC 28031
inclusioncommunity.org

MeckMin
3900 A- Park Rd.
Charlotte, NC 28209
704-565-5455
meckmin.org

Mission Gathering Charlotte
420 E. 15th St.
Charlotte, NC 28206
704-412-4028
missiongathering.com

Myers Park Baptist Church
1900 Queens Rd.
Charlotte, NC 28207
704-334-7232
myersparkbaptist.org

New Life Metropolitan
Community Church
1201 S. New Hope Rd.
Gastonia, NC 28054
704-334-0350
newlifemccgastonia.org

Park Road Baptist Church
3900 Park Rd.
Charlotte, NC 28209
704-523-5717
parkroadbaptist.org

Piedmont Unitarian
Universalist Church
9704 Mallard Creek Rd.
Charlotte, NC 28262
704-510-0008
puuc.org

Sacred Souls Community Church
2127 Eastway Dr.
Charlotte, NC 28205
980-237-0260
facebook.com/SacredsSouls
CommunityChurchUcc

South Park Christian Church
6650 Park South Dr.
Charlotte, NC 28210
704-554-1066
southparkchristian.org

St. John's Baptist Church
300 Hawthorne Ln.
Charlotte, NC 28204
704-333-5428
stjohnsbaptistchurch.org

St. Luke Missionary Baptist Church
1600 Norris Ave.
Charlotte, NC 28206
704-375-9650
stlukeclt.org

St. Martin's Episcopal Church
1510 E. 7th St.
Charlotte, NC 28204
704-376-8441
stmclt.org

St. Peter's Catholic Church
507 S. Tryon St.
Charlotte, NC 28202
704-332-2901
stpeterscatholic.org

Temple Beth El
5101 Providence Rd.
Charlotte, NC 28226
704-366-1948
templebethel.org

The Unitarians of Lake Norman
625 South St.
Davidson, NC 28036
980-689-0630
uulakenorman.org
Unitarian Universalist Church
of Charlotte
234 N. Sharon Amity Rd.
Charlotte, NC 28211
704-366-8623
uuccharlotte.org

Unitarian Universalist
Fellowship of Lake Norman
625 South St
Davidson, NC 28036
980-429-4726
httuulakenorman.org

Unity Fellowship Church
P.O. Box 44154
Charlotte, NC 28215
980-263-9093
unityfellowshipchurchcharlotte.org

Watershed Charlotte
2101 Shenandoah Ave., Studio 115
Charlotte, NC 28205
704-644-0919
watershedcharlotte.com

Wedgewood Community Church
P.O. Box 18912
Charlotte, NC 28218
704-641-0454
wedgewoodcharlotte.org

Health & HIV

Affinity Health Center
Locations in Rock Hill, Clover and York
803-909-6363
affinityhealthcenter.org
Four locations:

Rock Hill – Main Site
455 Lakeshore Pkwy.
Rock Hill, SC 29730

Rock Hill – Belleview School
1243 Sullivan Street,
Rock Hill, SC 29730

Clover
300 Clinton Ave.
Clover, SC 29710

York Middle School
1010 Devinney Rd.,
York, SC 29745

Amity Medical Group
Locations in East and South Charlotte
704-208-4134
amitymed.org
Six locations (see next page):

CHARLOTTE LGBTQ+ RESOURCES

Monroe Road
9835 Monroe Rd – Suite B
Charlotte, NC 28270
704-322-4065
Dallas Highway
824 Lower Dallas Hwy.
Dallas, NC 28034
704-874-0200

Harris Boulevard
6010 E. W.T. Harris Blvd.
Charlotte, NC 28215
704-208-4134

Charlotte Park
4651 Charlotte Park Dr., Suite 100
Charlotte, NC 28217
704-461-0006

Tryon Street
7945 N. Tryon St. #112
Charlotte NC 28262
704-503-6336

Randolph Road
2300 Randolph Rd., Suite A
Charlotte, NC 28207
704-372-9393

Anuvia Prevention & Recovery Center
100 Billingsley Rd.
Charlotte, NC 28211
704-376-7447
anuvia.org

Carolinas CARE Partnership
1263 Arrow Pine Dr., Suite D100
Charlotte, NC 28273
704-531-2467
carolinascare.org

Charlotte Trans Health
charlottetranshealth.org

Dudley's Place
107 Commerce Centre Dr. Suit 202
Huntersville, NC 28078
704-977-2972
myrosedalehealth.com/dudley

House of Mercy
100 McAuley Cir.
Belmont, NC 28012
704-825-4711
thehouseofmercy.org

Mecklenburg County Health Department
Northwest Campus
2845 Beatties Ford Rd.
Charlotte, NC 28216
704-336-6500
health.mecknc.gov/facility/northwest-public-health-department
Southeast Campus
249 Billingsley Rd.
Charlotte, NC 28211
704-336-6500
health.mecknc.gov/facility/southeast-public-health-department

Planned Parenthood
Charlotte Health Center
700 S. Torrence St.
Charlotte, NC 28204
704-536-7233
plannedparenthood.org/health-center/north-carolina/charlotte/28204/charlotte-health-center-2703-90860

PowerHouse 2.0
1401 Beatties Ford Rd.
Charlotte, NC 28216
704-461-0489
powerhousecharlotte.org

Quality Comprehensive
Health Center Medical Clinic
3607 Beatties Ford Rd.
Charlotte, NC 28216
704-394-8968
qchealth.org

RAIN
601 E. 5th St., Suite 470
Charlotte, NC 28202
704-372-7246
carolinarain.org

RAO Community Health
321 W. 11th St.
Charlotte, NC 28202
704-237-8793
raoassist.org

Rosedale Health and Wellness
103 Commerce Centre Dr., Suite 103
Huntersville, NC 28078
704-948-8582
myrosedalehealth.com

Philanthropy

Hearts United for Good
1124 Central Ave.
Charlotte, NC 28204
704-870-4901
hugclt.org

The Plus Collective
220 N. Tryon St.
Charlotte, NC 28202
704-973-4500
thepluscollective.org

Social Groups and Events

Carolina Bear Lodge
carolinabearlodge2020.wildapricot.org/

Charlotte Black Pride
5009 Beatties Ford Rd.
Charlotte, NC 28216
charlotteblackpride.org

Charlotte Gaymers Network
charlottegaymersnetwork.com

Charlotte Lesbian Kindred Spirits
meetup.com/lesbian-kindred-spirits

Charlotte Pride
charlottepride.org

Charlotte Prof. Gay Men's Social Group
meetup.com/gay-group

Girls Room CLT
girlsroomclt.com

Lesbian Friends of Charlotte
facebook.com/groups/lesbianfriendsofcharlottenc

LGBTQ+ Mixers of Charlotte
instagram.com/lgbtqmixers

Makers & Mics
instagram.com/makersandmics

Prime Timers of Charlotte
624 Tyvola Rd., Suite 103 - 323
Charlotte, NC 28217
404-314-3863
chapters.theprimetimerswww.com/charlotte/

Queer CLT Book Club
meetup.com/charlotte-book-arts-meetup-group

Sapphic Book Club
instagram.com/sapphicbookclubclt

Southern Country Charlotte
130 W Summit Ave.
Charlotte, NC 28203
980-277-0330
southerncountrycharlotte.com/scc-home

The Gaming Lounge
Charlotte, NC
<https://linktr.ee/thegaminglounge>

Ultraviolet Sapphic Dance Party
instagram.com/ultraviolet_clt

Social Support

Alpha Psi Kappa Fraternity
alphapsikappa.org

Carolinas LGBTQ+ Chamber of Commerce
2838 Queen City Dr., Suite A
Charlotte, NC 28208
704-837-4050
clgbtcc.org

Charlotte Uprising
facebook.com/charlotteuprising/

Crisis Assistance Ministry
500-A Spratt St.
Charlotte, NC 28206
704-371-3001
crisisassistance.org

Feed The Movement
instagram.com/feedthemovementclt/

Hearts for the Invisible CLT Coalition
8640 University City Blvd., Suite A3-113
Charlotte, NC 28213
hfticc.org

Hearts United for Good
1124 Central Ave St.
Charlotte, NC 28204
704-870-4901
hugclt.org

Pauli Murray LGBTQ+ Bar Association
lgbtqbarn.com

PFLAG Charlotte
P.O. Box 472532
Charlotte, NC 28247-2532
704-942-6857
pflagcharlotte.org

Poor No More
980-309-1318
facebook.com/PoorNoMoreCharlotte

Queen City Connects
facebook.com/QueenCityConnects

Rainbow Foster Network
facebook.com/RainbowFosterNetwork

Roof Above
roofabove.org

T4T
t4tclt.com

There's Still Hope
theresstillhope.org

Carolinas CARE Partnership
1263 Arrow Pine Dr., Suite D100
Charlotte, NC 28273
704-531-2467
carolinascare.org

Twirl to the World Foundation
twirltotheworld.org

Youth

Center for Diversity & Inclusion
at Davidson College
209 Ridge Rd., Box 5000
Davidson, NC 28035
704-894-3103
davidson.edu/offices-and-services/center-student-diversity-and-inclusion

Gender Education Network
P.O. Box 1111
Indian Trail, NC 28079
gendereducationnetwork.org

GLoBAL at Winthrop University
269 DiGiorgio Center
Rock Hill, SC 29733
803-323-2248
winthrop.edu/studentorgs/global.aspx

Pride Alliance Club Central Piedmont
Community College
Charlotte, NC
cpcc.edu/student-experience/student-life/student-clubs-and-organizations

Queers & Allies at Davidson College
Davidson, NC
instagram.com/davidsonqanda

Time Out Youth Center
3800 Monroe Rd.
Charlotte, NC 28205
704-344-8335
timeoutyouth.org

Charlotte-Mecklenburg Elected Officials

Reach out and make a change

compiled by Danny A. Mannanov | Qnotes Graphic Designer

City Council Government



Rob Harrington - 60th Mayor of Charlotte
704.336.2241
Mayor@charlottenc.gov

Dimple Ajmera - At-large Rep.
Safety Committee | Budget, Governance &
Intergovernmental Relations Committee
704.336.2777
Dimple.Ajmera@charlottenc.gov

LaWana Mayfield - At-large Rep.
Housing Committee (Chair) | Economic
Development & Workforce Committee |
Transportation, Planning & Development
Committee
704.336.3433
LaWana.Mayfield@charlottenc.gov

**James "Smuggie" Mitchell Jr. - Mayor Pro
Tem, at-large Rep.**
Economic Development & Workforce
Committee (Chair) | Budget, Governance &
Intergovernmental Relations Committee |
Safety Committee
704.336-3430
James.Mitchell@charlottenc.gov

Dr. Victoria Watlington- At-large Rep.
Economic Development & Workforce
Committee | Transportation, Planning &
Development Committee
704.336.3435
victoria.watlington@charlottenc.gov

Danté Anderson - District 1 Rep.
Safety Committee (Chair) | Economic
Development & Workforce Committee
704.336.4099
Dante.Anderson@charlottenc.gov

Malcolm Graham - District 2 Rep.
Safety Committee | Budget, Governance &
Intergovernmental Relations Committee |
Transportation, Planning & Development
Committee
704.336.6105
Malcolm.Graham@ci.charlotte.nc.us

Joi Mayo - District 3 Rep.
Housing Committee | Budget, Governance &
Intergovernmental Relations Committee
704.336.3431
Joi.Mayo@charlottenc.gov

Reneé Perkins Johnson - District 4 Rep.
Housing Committee | Transportation,
Planning & Development Committee
704.336.3436
renee.johnson@charlottenc.gov

JD Mazuera Arias - District 5 Rep.
Housing Committee | Economic
Development & Workforce Committee
704-336-3185
JD.MazueraArias@charlottenc.gov

Kimberly Owens - District 6 Rep.
Housing Committee | Budget, Governance &
Intergovernmental Relations Committee
704-336-3432
Kimberly.Owens@charlottenc.gov

Ed Driggs - District 7 Rep.
Transportation, Planning & Development
Committee (Chair) | Safety Committee
704.432.7077
ed.driggs@charlottenc.gov

Board of County Commissioners



Mark Jerrell - Chair, District 4 Comm.
Equity Investments Committee
980-314-2872
Mark.Jerrell@MeckNC.gov

Leigh Altman - Vice Chair, At-large Comm.
Economic Development Committee | Health
& Human Services | Performance Review
Committee, Seniors Ad Hoc Committee |
Environmental Stewardship Committee
980-314-2871
Leigh.Altman@MeckNC.gov

Arthur Griffin - At-large Comm.
Audit Review Committee | Economic
Development Committee | Health
& Human Services Committee |
Performance Review Committee
980-314-2879
Arthur.Griffin@MeckNC.gov

Yvette Townsend-Ingram - At-large Comm.
Audit Review Committee | Intergovt Relations
Committee | Seniors Ad Hoc Committee
980-314-2874
Yvette.TownsendIngram@MeckNC.gov

Elaine Powell - District 1 Comm.
Environmental Stewardship Committee | Health
& Human Services Committee | Performance
Review Committee | Seniors Ad Hoc Committee
980-314-2876
Elaine.Powell@MeckNC.gov

Vilma D. Leake - District 2 Comm.
Audit Review Committee | Health & Human
Services Committee | Seniors Ad Hoc Committee
980-314-2875
Vilma.Leake@MeckNC.gov

George Dunlap - District 3 Comm.
Economic Development Committee | Equity
Investments Committee | Intergovt Relations
Committee
980-314-2873
George.Dunlap@MeckNC.gov

Laura Meier - District 5 Comm.
Audit Review Committee | Environmental
Stewardship Committee | Equity Investments
Committee | Intergovt Relations Committee
980-314-2877
Laura.Meier@MeckNC.gov

**Susan Rodriguez-McDowell - District 6
Comm.**
Economic Development Committee |
Environmental Stewardship Committee |
Equity Investments Committee | Intergovt
Relations Committee
980-771-9385
Susan.Rodriguez-Mcdowell@MeckNC.gov

Lenora Shipp - At-large Representative
l1.sanders-shipp@cms.k12.nc.us

**Liz Monterrey Duvall - At-large
Representative**
elizabethd.monterrey@cms.k12.nc.us

**Monty Witherspoon - At-large
Representative**
m1.witherspoon-brown@cms.k12.nc.us



The Charlotte-Mecklenburg Government Center (the Pink Triangle building) at 600 E. 4th St. Charlotte, North Carolina, 28202 is the mailing address for all of the listed elected officials.

Charlitta Hatch - District 1 Rep.
charlittac.hatch@cms.k12.nc.us

Shamaiye Haynes- District 2 Rep.
shamaiyek.haynes@cms.k12.nc.us

Cynthia Stone - District 5 Rep.
cynthiab.stone@cms.k12.nc.us

Anna London - District 6 Rep.
annae.london@cms.k12.nc.us

Inchara Gopinath- Student Advisor
No info provided (high school student)

Board of Education

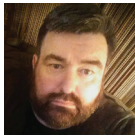


Stephanie Sneed - Chair, District 4 Rep.
stephaniem.sneed@cms.k12.nc.us

**Gregory 'Dee' Rankin - Vice Chair, District
3 Rep.**
gregoryd.rankin@cms.k12.nc.us

Our People: Will Martin

Charlotte Pride's board president is a cinephile and collects LEGOs



by David Aaron Moore
Qnotes Staff Writer

Will Martin is a busy man. He's likely most well-known as the board president of Charlotte Pride. But there are many other things in the Queen City he's involved with. He's a board member of the Charlotte Film Society, an Eagle Scout and he has served as a volunteer for Charlotte's Reel Out Film festival for several years. A native North Carolinian, he loves his home state and is committed to helping Charlotte be the best and most inclusive place for everyone who calls it home.

We talked with him recently and he

DAM: What area of Charlotte and/or the Metro region do you call home, and what about it makes you enjoy it the most?

WM: I live on the Union County side of Matthews. When we first moved to the Charlotte region, we landed at a church here in Matthews, and I've been in love with the area ever since. I'm a small town type of guy that wants big city conveniences.

DAM: What is your line of work or career focus?

WM: I'm a freelance video technician in the corporate field. But over the years, I've done a little bit of everything - from working as a grip on corporate videos and movies to driving trucks as a teamster on productions filming here in the Charlotte region.

DAM: When did you first volunteer with Charlotte Pride, and how long have you been involved?

WM: August 17, 2014, was my first time volunteering during the festival and parade, and I've been hooked ever since. But, I first worked with the organization earlier that year when I brought and operated equipment that the Charlotte Film Society loaned to the Gay Film Festival [now Reel Out Charlotte].

DAM: Both with Charlotte Pride and life in general, what keeps you motivated?

WM: Family and friends are what keep me going. I treasure the time I get to spend with them. I've always been a servant at heart, and there's something incredibly rewarding about helping others, even in the smallest ways. Knowing that I've made a difference for someone is what motivates me to keep showing up and doing the work.

DAM: Are you strong and single or partnered and proud?

WM: Strong and single, but looking [laughs].

DAM: What are some specific hobbies or interests you have?

WM: I'm a collector and a big ol' nerd. I have well over 1000 movies on disc. I still collect some comic books, LEGOs and love to go antiquing and spending time on day hikes in

the woods, but really only in the fall and early spring when the bugs are at bay! Also I enjoy reading, but I am slow at it and my to-be-read pile keeps getting bigger and bigger.

DAM: What makes you laugh?

WM: Everything, my friends, my nieces and nephews [15 and counting], my family; I love to laugh!

DAM: How do you think your friends would describe you?

WM: Loyal and passionate.

DAM: Any thoughts you'd like to share with LGBTQ+ community members who would like to get involved with Pride?

WM: It takes hundreds of volunteers, thousands of hours to put on the festival and parade weekend, along with all the programming that we do throughout the year like the Job and Career Fair & Reel Out Charlotte, the only LGBTQ+ film festival in Charlotte. We are always looking for people to come and help, no time is too little! Even if you can't help with your time, maybe consider becoming a Friend of Pride and donating monetarily! We have a small but mighty staff and board, and along with the passion of all of our volunteers, we strive to make Charlotte a more inclusive place to live for all! ::



An avid reader and motion picture fan, Will Martin describes himself as 'a big ol' nerd.'
CREDIT: Courtesy W. Martin

shared his thoughts about the city, his involvement with Pride and more.

David Aaron Moore: Tell us a little bit about yourself. Where are you from?

Will Martin: I was born on the coast of North Carolina, but my family moved all over the Carolinas until we arrived in Charlotte in 1988, so I'm NC born and bred!

DAM: What do you like most about Charlotte?

WM: Charlotte is a large [city], but a small town. I've traveled all over the country, and I haven't met a town that I would rather live in. I tease and say that the only way to make it any better is if we could move Charlotte to the mountains, but being only two-and-a-half hours away from god's country and three hours from the beach is not a bad place to live.



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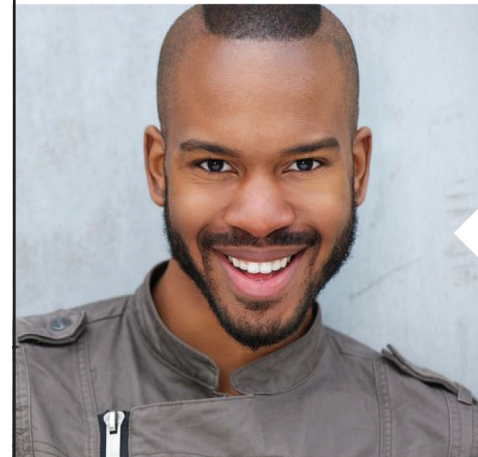


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HIV Specialty Care
PrEP and PEP

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877.647.6363
455 LAKESHORE PKWY.
ROCK HILL, SC 29730



affinityhealthcenter.org/get-tested

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