



HUNGERFORD

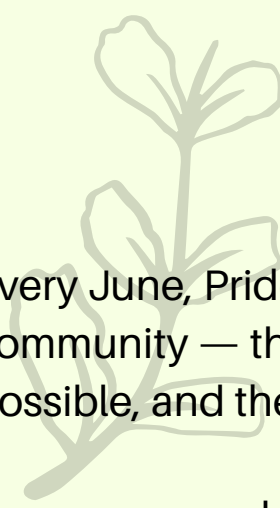
CPAs • ADVISORS • TECHNOLOGY • WEALTH

DEI NEWSLETTER

May 2026

Pride, Progress, and Why Visibility Still Matters
by Brett Karhoff

2026 West Michigan DEI Events Calendar
by Amina Vila-Kevro



Pride, Progress, and Why Visibility Still Matters

by Brett Karhoff

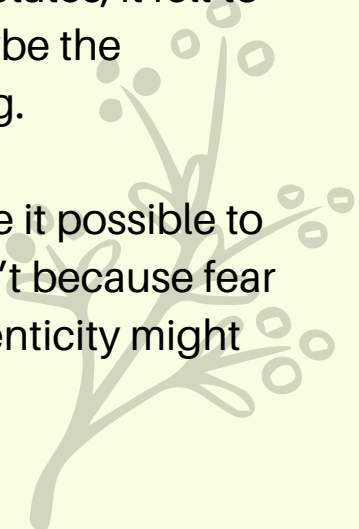
Every June, Pride Month gives us an opportunity to celebrate the LGBTQ+ community — the progress that has been made, the people who made it possible, and the reminder that visibility and inclusion still matter.

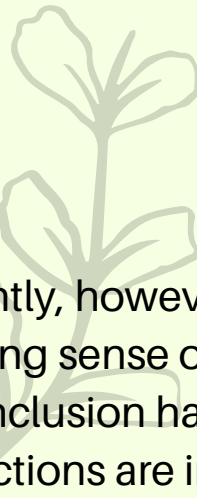
For many people of my generation who grew up in the 70's/80's/90's, being gay was rarely portrayed positively. In movies and television, LGBTQ+ characters were often the punchline, the stereotype, or the "issue of the week." In schools and communities, "gay" was commonly used as an insult long before most of us even understood what it meant. There weren't many examples of openly LGBTQ+ professionals, leaders, or role models. The unspoken message was pretty clear: this was something you were supposed to hide.

As a result, many people spent years carefully editing themselves — monitoring what they said, how they acted, or who they trusted. I definitely did this and still do to some extent.

Over time, things began to change. Representation improved. More people felt comfortable living openly. Companies and organizations started talking more intentionally about diversity, equity, and inclusion. In 2015, when same-sex marriage became legal nationwide in the United States, it felt to many like a major cultural turning point — a signal that maybe the environment really was becoming safer and more accepting.

For me personally, that changing environment helped make it possible to finally come out in 2015 after decades of hesitation. It wasn't because fear completely disappeared but because it finally felt like authenticity might outweigh the risk.





Pride, Progress, and Why Visibility Still Matters

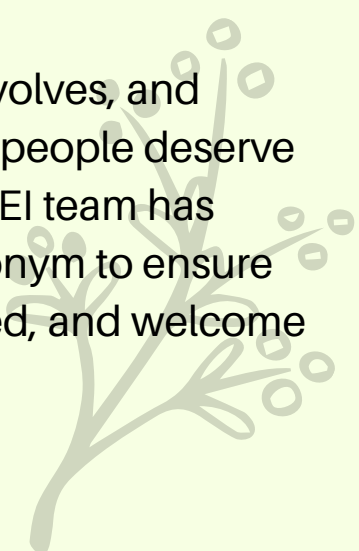
by Brett Karhoff

Recently, however, many in the LGBTQ+ community have experienced a growing sense of uncertainty again. Public conversations around diversity and inclusion have become more polarized. LGBTQ+ representation and protections are increasingly being debated in ways that make it feel as though the progress and momentum achieved is not as permanent as many had hoped. Unfortunately, when visibility decreases, fear tends to fill the space.

This is one of many reasons DEI efforts continue to matter. At their best, they are not about politics or checking boxes. They are about creating environments where people can contribute fully, collaborate openly, and feel respected for who they are. Visibility helps people feel less isolated. Representation helps younger generations realize they are not alone. And inclusive workplaces and communities tend to be stronger because people spend less energy hiding and more energy connecting, creating, and contributing.

Pride Month is often associated with celebrations — parades, rainbow logos, and enough glitter to permanently damage a vacuum cleaner. But at its core, Pride has always been about visibility, dignity, and belonging.

Progress is rarely linear. The culture shifts, public opinion evolves, and history tends to move in cycles. But one thing remains true: people deserve to feel safe being themselves. This is why the Hungerford DEI team has focused most heavily on the “Inclusion” part of the DEI acronym to ensure employees, clients, and visitors know they are seen, respected, and welcome exactly as they are.



2026 WEST MICHIGAN DEI EVENTS CALENDAR

Celebrating Diversity. Building Community. Strengthening West Michigan.



JUNE 2026



Grand Rapids Pride Festival
June 20–21, 2026
Calder Plaza
grpride.org



Asian-Pacific Festival (APFEST)
June 12–13, 2026
Rosa Parks Circle
apfest.org



Juneteenth Freedom Festival
June 20, 2026
Kollen Park, Holland
cityofholland.com



Muskegon Pride Festival
June 6, 2026
Hackley Park, Muskegon
visitmuskegon.org



Holland Pride Festival
June 27, 2026
Centennial Park, Holland
hollandpride.org



Taste of Muskegon
June 12–13, 2026
Hackley Park, Muskegon
tasteofmuskegon.com



Holland Waterfront Celtic Festival & Highland Games
June 26–27, 2026
Ottawa County Fairgrounds, Holland
hollandcelticfestival.org



JULY 2026



National Minority Mental Health Awareness Month
July 1–31, 2026
Events and resources all month long.



Nelson Mandela International Day
July 18, 2026
Celebrate his legacy of justice, equality & human rights.



World Refugee & Immigrant Awareness Programs
Throughout July
Various community organizations across West Michigan.



Inclusive Leadership & Cultural Competency Workshops
Throughout July
Hosted by local chambers, nonprofits & professional organizations.



AUGUST 2026



Grand Rapids Hispanic Festival
Aug. 7–8, 2026
Calder Plaza
grhfestival.org



A Glimpse of Africa Festival
Aug. 15–16, 2026
Calder Plaza
aglimpseofafrica.org



Dozynki Polish Festival
Aug. 28–30, 2026
Calder Plaza
polishfestivalgr.com



Greenville Danish Festival
Aug. 21–23, 2026
Greenville
danishfestival.com



SEPTEMBER 2026



Michigan Irish Music Festival
Sept. 18–20, 2026
Heritage Landing, Muskegon
michiganirish.org



CULTURAL HERITAGE & AWARENESS MONTHS



JUNE Pride Month



JUNE 19 Juneteenth



JULY National Minority Mental Health Awareness Month



SEPT 15 – OCT 15 Hispanic Heritage Month



OCTOBER National Disability Employment Awareness Month



NOVEMBER Native American Heritage Month



YEAR-ROUND PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT



Inclusive Leadership Workshops
Various dates & locations
Check with local chambers & organizations



Michigan Diversity Council Events & Training
Ongoing throughout 2026
michigandiversitycouncil.org



OutCenter Southwest Michigan Programs & Events
Ongoing throughout 2026
outcenter.org



EVENT INFORMATION SOURCES

► Grand Rapids Pride
► APA West Michigan
► A Glimpse of Africa Festival
► Michigan Irish Music Festival

► Holland Pride
► Holland Juneteenth Freedom Festival
► OutCenter Southwest Michigan
► Partners for a Racism-Free Community

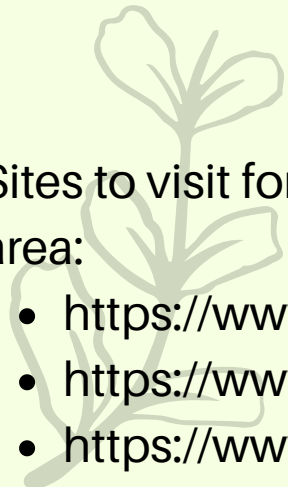
► Experience Grand Rapids
► Visit Muskegon
► City of Holland
► Greenville Area Chamber



Event dates are subject to change. Please visit each organization's website for the latest details.



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Sites to visit for information related to events happening in your area:

- <https://www.experiencegr.com/events>
- <https://www.holland.org/events>
- <https://www.stjoetoday.com/events>
- <https://www.visitmuskegon.org/events/>
- <https://www.greenvillechamber.net/current-events#!event-list>

