

The RaYnbow Review



Waiting for Spring...

Happy April, and happy (almost) end of the school year! This last month has been busy for the Collective, as we participated in Rainbow Day festivities, hosted a virtual OUTspoken training event in collaboration with the National LGBT Cancer Network, and worked to prepare for our next big events. Keep an eye out in the coming months for more information about our upcoming events, and check out the Save the Date section at the bottom of this newsletter for other incredible community activities happening during April. Also, enjoy a special new installment about some of our favorite queer media!



We're so grateful to have you as part of our community. Follow us on Instagram (@raynbow.collective) to stay in touch.



March in Review



Every year, March marks an important event for the RaYnbow Collective- Rainbow Day! This year, we celebrated by dressing in our best rainbow outfits and handing out stickers, pins, and more. We hope this day brings more awareness to the queer community in this area, and especially at BYU.

In addition to Rainbow Day on campus, Cosmo's Camp and Couture drag queens performed not one, not two, but three back-to-back drag shows that evening! The show featured queens April Flowers, Sheri Don't, Colette Coins, Chris Tall, Appa Rattus, Plexi Glass, and Strawberry Pie. Most of these performers also double as BYU students, and they showed their pride waving trans, pride, and asexual flags during their numbers. If you missed last month's shows, follow them on Instagram @cougarcampandcouture to stay up to date with future events.

RESOURCE SPOTLIGHT: COUGAR PRIDE CENTER

Cougar Pride Center is an unofficial, student-run LGBTQ+ resource center for BYU students.

Services include: Safe Housing Project, Gender Affirming Closet, Volunteer Opportunities (Pride in Progress March April 29th!)

Learn more at: <https://www.instagram.com/cougarpridecenter/?hl=en>

<https://cougarpridecenter.org/>



A Message for You This April:

What can students do to support their own wellbeing in environments that are not affirming?

This is one of the main questions that the RaYnbow Collective has asked since its inception. As Maddison Tenney, the founder and current executive director, began this non-profit in June of 2021, queer wellbeing in un-affirming environments in her local community was life or death. Unfortunately, but not surprisingly, queer people have a lot of experience in existing in environments that are not affirming. That has been the case for the queer community at Brigham Young University, a damaging and wholly un-affirming space for its queer students, faculty, and staff. That's why since its start, the RaYnbow Collective has passionately worked to identify and create safe spaces for LGBTQ+ students at BYU. That is our mission and why our organization's actions focus on connecting students to affirming community resources, other queer peers, and allies.

In an attempt to further answer this question, and provide a spotlight for some of the RaYnbow Collective's activities, here are a number of things that students can do to support their own wellbeing in un-affirming environments.

Find connection. You are not alone; there are other queer people and allies that want affirming spaces just as much as you do. Trust us: if we as BYU students can find each other at a private Christian university in the western US, there will be people near you that need you just as much as you need them. Look to already established organizations that seek to make affirming environments. Get involved with them. We have a number of past and current members that have worked from beyond the physical boundaries of the community we serve. Creativity when finding connection is often rewarded, especially for those who are doing it with the right motives.

Create spaces. To loosely borrow the often quoted words of "choosing to be the change you want to see in the world," choose to make the spaces you want to see in the world or in your community. That's what Maddi Tenney did when she started the RaYnbow Collective, with the hope she could share stories and art with other queer students at BYU while connecting them to local resources. She desired to create spaces and find like-minded people to find and give comfort. Almost two years later, we are seeing that desire to create comfortable spaces becoming more of a reality each day. It may sound cliché, but I've seen it.

Get organized. There is a lot of power in organization. Look at any movement for change or progress in the history of the world, organization has taken well meaning ideas and propelled them into functional reconstruction of established norms. That is what happened for Maddi: as time went on, she realized that while Utah provided a plethora of organizations, many remained inaccessible for queer students at BYU simply because they did not know about them. That's why she worked to organize the people she had found in her newly found affirming spaces. Since then, the RaYnbow Collective has worked with hundreds of other community organizers to create events like Back to School Pride, the LGBTQ+ Utah Summit, DEI training for BYU faculty and staff, and much more.

Set boundaries. This has been something at the core of the RaYnbow Collective since it started. One person, or even one organization, cannot take on the whole world and its problems. It is common to feel a bit (or a lot) overwhelmed at many points along the journey to supporting one's wellbeing in an un-affirming environment. This is where boundaries become really important. These types of boundaries can include within spaces you have helped to create or with yourself. What are you capable of doing, and what is out of reach? It is important to have frank conversations with yourself and those you have organized with, so that expectations are not breached and progress can be made.

These are just a few of the things queer students and people in general can do to help support their own wellbeing in un-affirming environments. There is a lot that we are capable of doing. Know that you are valid in finding it and creating it for yourself and others. Hopefully this has provided some insights into the RaYnbow Collective, but most importantly into what we all can do to support and affirm in spaces where we might struggle to believe queer joy cannot exist. It can and it will.

-Anonymous RaYnbow Council Member

Queer Media Recs

As a collective, and as young queer people, we love queer media! From books to movies to albums, we have searched far and wide for some examples of our favorite queer media. We hope you'll enjoy these monthly recommendations, consisting of music, film, literature, and more, and featuring queer artists and stories, from us to you!

Album: Harmonicraft by Torche

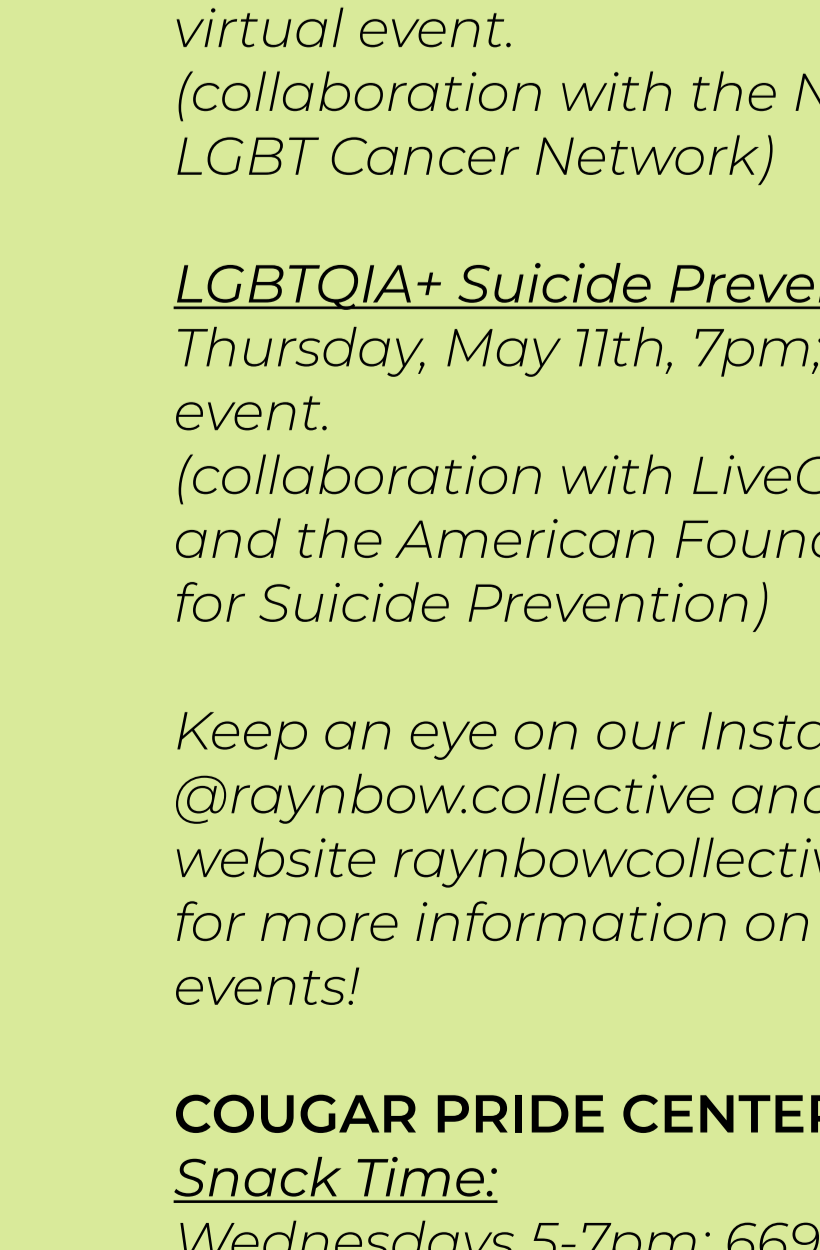
The heavy metal band Torche hails from Miami, Florida and formed in 2004. According to Wikipedia, the band's singer/guitarist Stephen Brooks is "one of the few openly gay musicians in the metal scene." Brooks and the rest of the band work together to subvert traditional heavy metal standards, defining themselves by their upbeat tempos, their infectious major-key riffs, and their charming tendency to keep things short and sweet.



"Every song on Harmonicraft is an absolute banger, as much as any heavy, guitar-oriented music can be. It's a head banger. And you can sing along to it. There you go. Definitely for fans of early Foo Fighters."

-Anonymous RaYnbow Council Member

Meet Reese.



Reese Rugg (she/her) is from Dallas, Texas, and is tired of the snow! She loves reading, baking, pretty much any type of music, and writing. Reese has been a part of the council since fall 2022 and is the current head of the design and website team. She is currently studying English and editing at BYU. We are so lucky to have her as part of our RaYnbow family!

Save the Date

RAYNBOW COLLECTIVE
LGBTQ Writing Workshop:
Wednesday, May 10th, 6pm;
virtual event.
(collaboration with the National LGBT Cancer Network)

FLOURISH
Young Adult Group Therapy:
Tuesdays at 4:30 -5:30pm held at Orem office
Thursdays at 3:30 - 4:30 pm via Zoom

LGBTQIA+ Suicide Prevention:
Thursday, May 11th, 7pm; virtual event.
(collaboration with LiveOn Utah and the American Foundation for Suicide Prevention)

USGA
Weekly activity:
Thursdays 7pm; Provo Library (room 201) 550 N University Ave, Provo
Lavender Graduation:
Saturday, April 15; 4:00pm; 1459 E 300 N, Provo, UT; register using the link found at @usgabyy on Instagram!

Keep an eye on our Instagram @raynbow.collective and website raynbowcollective.org for more information on these events!

THE DIVINE SISTER SHOWS
Promenade Drag Show:
Friday, April 7th, 9pm; Rugged Grounds Coffee, 156 W 500 S, Provo, UT; text (385)-312-0704 to RSVP; \$10 entry fee

COUGAR PRIDE CENTER
Snack Time:
Wednesdays 5-7pm; 669 E 800 N Provo
Pride in Progress Pride March and Benefit Concert:
Saturday, April 29; see @cougarpridecenter on instagram for more information!

ENCIRCLE
Encircle hosts many amazing weekly groups and events. Check them out at encircletogether.org

