

The Milton E. Ford LGBT Resource Center

Hello and welcome. My name is Aruna, and I am a staff member in the Graduate School at Grand Valley State University. At Grand Valley, we do our very best to ensure that our graduate students have as many resources available to them as possible to help them succeed within their program. GVSU encourages the campus to embrace a social justice and intersectional identity approach to diversity, equity, and inclusion work. Therefore, Campus has established four social justice center, Gayle R. Davis Center for Women and Gender Equity Center, Milton E. Ford LGBT Resource Center, Office of Multicultural Affairs, Peter Secchia Military and Veteran Resources Center. Today we will be learning more about, Milton E. Ford LGBT Resource Center.

The Milton E. Ford LGBT Resource Center advocates for institutional equity, promotes community-building, and provides educational opportunities to create an informed, cohesive and diverse community that accepts, supports and foster the discussion on LGBTQIA+ community. This is the center where community members of diverse sexual orientations, gender identities, and gender presentations are supported and welcome. The Milton E. Ford LGBT Resource Center collaborates with campus and community partners to create an inclusive and equitable environment where all are empowered to be their authentic selves.

After many years of advocacy and unwavering dedication by students, faculty, and staff members, the LGBT Resource Center opened its doors in the Kirkhof Center in 2008 under the direction of Dr. Milton E. Ford. The Center was created as a unit in the Division of Student Services. The opening was celebrated with a campus-wide event, "Three Centers: One Vision," acknowledging the partnerships with Gayle R. Davis Center for women and equity and the Office of Multicultural Affairs.

Identity is one of the essential aspects of a human and choice to identify as you want is the biggest form of liberty. Milton E Ford LGBT Resource center provides support to someone who want to change their name with the program called Display Your Chosen Name with My Name. This has some limitation, but you can have your name in GVSU ID and banner which creates a space of equity and justice in campus.

Milton E. Ford LGBT Resource Center have six super active Clubs that host weekly programs for social activities, sharing experiences and building support system here at campus. The six clubs are neuro queers, T2 (Trans Tuesdays), Bi-Furious, First Year Queer Alliance, The General Queer Alliance (GQA), Colors of Pride, Ace of Club. These all clubs are for community and support building among the peers in the group. If you want to visit the center, it is located at 1161 Russel H. Kirkhof Center.

Let's Know about Neuro Queers. NeuroQueers is a club for students who are both LGBTQ+ and neurodivergent. It is a space to make friends, have fun, and be supported. There are social activities, sharing of experiences, and discussion about being queer and neurodiverse. Most importantly, this place is an affirming space for members to be themselves.

T2 (Trans Tuesdays) is a place for Trans and Non-binary students, as well as anyone who is questioning or exploring their gender, to safely and freely express themselves. The weekly meetings include discussions, games, educational sessions and community building. Another one is Bi-Furious is a social group for students who identify as bisexual, pansexual, polysexual, sexually fluid, or otherwise non-monosexual. Meetings will include activities, discussion about community building.

First-year Queer Alliance (FQA) supports LGBTQIA+ and allied students by helping them build community, engage in shared learning on social justice topics, and develop strategies for a successful first year. Another alliance is The General Queer Alliance (GQA) supports LGBTQIA+ and allied students by helping them build community, learn, and have fun alongside peers throughout undergrad.

Colors of Pride is a weekly program for LGBTQIA+ students of color. Meetings include discussions, resource sharing, community building, and peer-to-peer education. Students in Colors of Pride will celebrate the unique experiences of LGBTQIA+ people of color while building community and strengthening connections to each other, the LGBT Resource Center, and the university. The last one is Ace of Clubs. This is a program for all GVSU students who identify on the asexual or aromantic spectrums. Meetings include discussion, activities, and an overall supportive community.

One of the programs the center does is Rainbow Craft Night: Exam Cram Edition which happens on the end of the semester for people to meet for crafts and destress during the last week of the semester. Milton E. Ford LGBTQ Center welcomes everyone for the celebration of individual diversity we have with in and creates a space to express with others. To learn more about the activities, groups and clubs, please visit www.gvsu.edu/lgbtrc/ or email at lgbtcenter@gvsu.edu. Thank you for your time and hope you have enjoyed the podcast.