Celebrating inclusivity

Our workforce and the patients we serve include people from all backgrounds and identities. We celebrate those differences and are committed to be an inclusive place for all to work and be cared for.

As a leader in healthcare, we are proud to partner with local organizations like OPEN to build an equitable and diverse community.
Happy Pride everyone and welcome to OPEN’s 14th Annual Dinner! We are so happy you are here! Our 2022 theme, “Redefine Professional - Come As You Are” is focused on embracing individuality and empowering individuals from all career paths. Whether someone is working in hospitality, healthcare, arts, trades, retail, administrative, education or beyond, they are professionals and we welcome them at OPEN.

My name is Heidi Duss, I use she/they pronouns, and I am the board president of OPEN, OUT Professional Engagement Network. I wanted to take a moment on behalf of the Board of Directors, and thank all of those individuals who continue to support our organization through sponsorship, donations, volunteering and membership. We see you and we appreciate you!

At OPEN, we are honored and proud to serve LGBTQIA2S+ individuals in Dane County for over 14 years. This year we have set forth ambitious goals. With your support, OPEN can continue to empower our members and community by providing low/no-cost opportunities for career development and networking for the entire year. Through our pillars of Community, Connection, and Career, OPEN plans to:

- Increase membership and empower a community-centered approach in our new platform. This includes providing member scholarship opportunities.
- Build awareness through targeted social media outreach, growing awareness, network, and creating active action.
- Create professional career development opportunities with renowned speakers & leaders while being accessible to a diverse group of members.
- Partner with college campus centers, student organizations, and LGBTQIA2S+ Employee Resource Groups to expand career networks and workplace equity education.
- Amplify messages from our partner agencies, to create equity in our community and workplaces including; increased representation, better workplace policies, and growing LGBTQIA2S+ leadership.

There are several ways to be involved, support and donate to OPEN from mentorship, volunteering, joining our committees and Board, and sponsorship to help make our work possible and accessible.

We can not do this work alone and need companies like yours to be co-conspirators, advocates and allies to the LGBTQIA2S+ community. Thank you to all of our sponsors who support our work and empower their employees to live their truth everyday!

Happy Pride today and everyday!

Heidi Duss [she/they], OPEN Board President
Madison Gas and Electric is proud to support OPEN’s Annual Dinner.
Mercury Stardust is a Professional Home Maintenance Technician, burlesque performer, and award-winning activist. Known widely as the Trans Handy Ma’am, her unique brand of compassionate education in the Home Repair space has earned her internet fame. With over 1.7 million followers on TikTok, Mercury spreads DIY knowledge with love.

Tempestt Ballenger, or DJ Femme Noir, is Wisconsin DJ originally from Poplar Grove, Illinois. From college until now she has resided in Wisconsin for the past 12 years. Although she has been actively DJing for only three years her love of music began at a young age due to her family’s influence.

DJ Femme Noir’s sets are intertwined with an eclectic array of music styles from various genres of mainstream and underground music. From popular classics that will have your whole family on their feet, to current singles that dominate the charts, she will have you dancing the whole night away.

nibiiwakamigkwe (they/them/awi) is an Onyota’a:ka, Anishinaabe, Michif, and waabishkiwed Two-Spirit artist and organizer working in traditional Indigenous craftwork and contemporary Woodlands style to foster awareness of land protection, Indigenous cultural landscapes and complexity of identity. Their multidisciplinary practice incorporates song, textile, dance, storytelling and visual symbol, relying on their cultural teachings and experience. They currently co-own and operate giige, an Indigenous and Queer art and tattoo space, in Teejop//Madison, Wisconsin and serve as the inaugural Community Leader in Residence at the University of Wisconsin School of Human Ecology.

Jo Nachtigal (any/all pronouns) is a performer, educator, lightworker, emerging activist living in Madison, WI. Hailing from rural Southwest Wisconsin, Jo began their career in music education and quickly recognized the outcry from the LGBTQIA+ community. Fae now works as a consult, clinician, speaker, and resource bank for all Gender and Sexuality alliances in the state, as GSAFE’s new Leadership and Advocacy coordinator. Jo sees first hand the effects of homophobia and transphobia in schools, and fiercely advocates for action, acceptance, and growth at district levels for youth and staff alike. Jo joins OPEN’s annual dinner with their partner, Braden, who grounds them daily.
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Margot, ABOC
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events

June 29 | Concert on the Square
July 14 | Porch Pontoon Thursday,
July 21 | Pride Paddle
July 26 | Forward Madison
August 15 | Concert at McKee Park
August 21 | Outreach Pride Event
September | Jacy Imilkowski:
The Brilliance of Resilience
September | Mix & Mingle
October | Jacy Imilkowski:
Mental Fitness for Leaders
October | GSAFE Trick or Trot 5K
Walk/Run OPEN Team and Volunteer
Opportunities October
November | Coffee Mix & Mingle
November | Fitchburg Chamber/
LGBTQ Chamber/Black Chamber/
Latino Chamber Joint Networking
November | Volunteer Opportunity
December | Holiday Party
December 25 | Pop-Up at Delta
Beer Lab

OPEN AND SHUT
THE POWER OF PROSECUTORS

A new podcast from Wisconsin Watch
and Wisconsin Public Radio.

Find it at wpr.org/openandshut or wherever you get your podcasts.
The values we share.

COMMON VALUE #6: Community Involved
When we join our community to further the causes for which we share a common concern we are better together.

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- EQUITABLE & INCLUSIVE
- QUALITY-DRIVEN
- INNOVATIVE
- COMMUNITY INVOLVED
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Master Works Design Group
Shamrock Bar and Grille
Outreach LGBT Center
Midwest Beauty House
Ymassage Bodywork & Natural Fitness
Willy Street Co-op
Mala Yoga
The Joint Chiropractic GHC
Empire Nutrition - Monona
Meta Acupuncture
IT CAN BE CHALLENGING to find LGBTQ2S+ professionals in the Madison area. OPEN, or Out Professional Engagement Network, is a welcoming space for our community to connect and build relationships.

“OPEN is the first public space where I came out as transgender,” said Jacy Imilkowski (she/they). “I didn’t realize that I was transgender until 2021, and I was reserved about being more public, especially in professional spaces. When I engaged with OPEN as a newly out trans person, I felt completely safe and welcome. The president, Heidi Duss, was one of the first non-family members that I came out to about being trans. The support and acceptance I felt was so valuable to me.”

In order to be our whole, authentic selves, we need acceptance in our personal and professional lives. A 2019 Human Rights Campaign Foundation study found that nearly two thirds (59%) of non-LGBTQ employees think it’s “unprofessional” to discuss sexual orientation or gender identity in the workplace. There can be a double standard when straight employees talk about their families at work. Something as simple as having pictures of your family on your desk could threaten your career. One-fifth (20%) of LGBTQ Americans have experienced discrimination based on sexual orientation or gender identity when applying for jobs, and that number increases to 32% for people of color, according to a 2017 NPR study, Discrimination in America: Experiences and views of LGBTQ Americans.

Challenges face our community at every turn, and even in marginalized spaces, hierarchies can unfortunately still appear. OPEN knows that cis, white men tend to be the most visible in spaces, especially “professional” ones. We’re striving to include all queer folk and center the perspectives of BIPOC and trans people, women, disabled folk, and other marginalized identities within our community.

“It’s important that we are engaging with all individuals and voices in the LGBTQIA2S+ community,” said Heidi Duss (she/they), OPEN board president. “We want members to not only feel included, but a sense of belonging—a place where, no matter how you identify or where you are at in your journey, you can show up authentically.”

OPEN started as a grassroots effort by Madison-area LGBT leaders 14 years ago. Originally named “Out Professional Executive Network,” the group repositioned itself to “Out Professional Engagement Network” to intentionally include everyone in the workforce.

OPEN members are redefining what it means to be a professional. Oftentimes, trying to be...
professional affects our appearance, behavior, educational background, and job title. OPEN rejects this concept of professionalism as it relates to systems of patriarchy, racism, and elitism. Instead, we see everyone who shows up and engages in a career as a professional. Whether you are working in hospitality, healthcare, arts, trades, retail, administrative, education, or beyond, you are a professional, and we welcome you at OPEN.

OPEN’s work toward a diverse, inclusive community continues. It will grow with the help of professionals like you.

In 2021, OPEN launched our online community, a space to share resources, network, and build friendships. “The online community is a more private and safe space to share experiences, give relevant referrals, open up discussions, and be social. It’s user-friendly, organized, and serves more like a headquarters for a community.”

Mosquito Joe of Madison is honored to support OPEN in their commitment to building rich, meaningful and inclusive opportunities for the LGBTQIA2S+ community within the Madison area.
for OPEN. I appreciate that OPEN is creating a virtual space accessible for everyone,” said OPEN Member KB Bjerk (they/them).

Building this space takes community. We welcome diverse perspectives, experiences, and identities to join the effort. We need your input to deliver programming and services that will help engage, empower, and advance LGBTQIA2S+ voices in the workplace. Additionally, students looking to find a network to help them land an internship or career following graduation, as well as retirees who want to help mentor and share their career insights are welcome! Become a member at openmadison.org today for just $10 a month.

LGBTQIA2S+ organizations and allied workplaces can use their resources and influence to help further OPEN’s mission of inclusivity and advance LGBTQIA2S+ equity in the workplace. Email us at info@openmadison.org to discuss sponsorship opportunities.
Congratulations to OPEN on their 14th annual celebration of dedicated work to further build connections, support and advocacy for the LGBTQIA2S+ community!

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