Background

The last few decades have seen major strides in civil rights for Americans who identify as gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgender, or queer. 50 years ago, the Stonewall Riots in New York highlighted the discrimination facing the LGBTQ community. "Gay Pride" marches drew public attention to queer culture and helped to gradually promote more acceptance. By the mid-1980s, most US states had abolished laws against homosexuality, and the Supreme Court found them to be unconstitutional in 2003. The Court went on to legalize same-sex marriage nationwide in 2015.

Some conservatives have recently pushed for exemptions from civil rights laws for individuals or companies refusing, on religious or moral grounds, to provide services and even health care for LGBTQ people. The HIV/AIDS pandemic has resulted in the deaths of over 650,000 people in the United States, disproportionately affected the LGBTQ community and leading to heightened stigma against those who have been infected. Sexual orientation and gender identity are the motivation for more than one sixth of all hate crimes in the US, and bullying among teens and children is a major contributing cause of increased rates of suicide, self-harm, and homelessness.

Related Films

Call Me by Your Name (2017): It's the summer of 1983 in Italy; Elio and Oliver discover the heady beauty of awakening desire over the course of a summer that will alter their lives forever.

Carol (2015): Two women from very different backgrounds find themselves in an unexpected love affair in 1950s New York.

The Danish Girl (2016): The remarkable love story inspired by the lives of artists Lili Elbe and Gerda Wegener. Lili and Gerda's marriage and work evolve as they navigate Lili's groundbreaking journey as a transgender pioneer.

Love, Simon (2018): 17 year old Simon hasn't told his family or friends that he's gay, and he doesn't know the identity of the anonymous classmate that he's fallen for online. Resolving both issues proves hilarious, terrifying and life changing.

Milk (2008): Based on the life of gay activist and elected San Francisco official Harvey Milk.

Moonlight (2016): A young black man struggles to find his place in the world while growing up in a rough neighborhood of Miami.

Pariah (2012): 17 year old African-American, Alike lives with her family in Brooklyn. She is quietly embracing her identity as a lesbian. How much can she confide in her family?

Related Podcasts

- Nancy (2017)
- Making Gay History (2016)
- Queery (2017)
- LGBTQ+A (2016)
- Never Before (2018)
**READ**

**Some Classics**
Middlesex, by Jeffrey Eugenides
Ruby Fruit Jungle by Rita Mae Brown
Annie on My Mind by Nancy Garden
Boy Meets Boy by David Levithan

**Nonfiction**
Fun Home: A Family Tragicomic - Alison Bechdel
Love Wins: The Lovers & Lawyers Who Fought the Landmark Case for Marriage Equality - Debbie Cenziper & Jim Obergefell
Boy Erased - Garrard Conley
The Gay Revolution: The Story of the Struggle by Lillian Faderman
Brown, White, Black: An American Family at the Intersection of Race, Gender, Sexuality, and Religion - Nishta Mehta
Becoming Nicole: The Transformation of an American Family - Amy Ellis Nutt
Sissy: A Coming-of-Gender Story - Jacob Tobia
Stand By Me: The Forgotten History of Gay Liberation - Jim Downs

**Fiction**
All I Love and Know - Judith Frank
This Is How It Always Is - Laurie Frankel
The Great Believers - Rebecca Makkai
The Song of Achilles - Madeline Miller
My Brother’s Husband, v.1 & v.2 by Gengoroh Tagame
The Paying Guests - Sarah Waters

**ENGAGE**

**Lesléa Newman**
He Continues To Make A Difference: The Story of Matthew Shepard

Ms. Newman will be selling & signing copies of her award winning book October Mourning: A Story of Matthew Shepard

7PM, Monday, May 13 at Chelmsford Public Library

**COME TOGETHER**

**Evening Book Group:**
Becoming Nicole
Monday, May 6 at 7PM

**On Gender Identity & The Story of Deborah Sampson,**
author Alex Myers
Thursday, May 9 at 7PM

**Friday Lecture Series with Keith West - LGBTQ+ Civil Rights,**
Friday, May 10 at 1PM

Hearts Beat Loud, PG-13
Sunday, May 19 at 2PM

Love, Simon, PG-13
Saturday, June 15 at 2PM

Greater Boston PFLAG Safer Schools & Communities
Monday, June 10 at 7PM

Let’s Talk: LGBTQ+ Legal Issues, a REACT Chelmsford conversation with Keith West, June 11, at 7PM - Please register

No Sanctuary, hear how a small group of teachers made schools safer for at-risk LGBTQ+ students, with author Steve Lane, Thursday, June 20 at 7PM