

# EQUALITY

## TYLER EQUALITY NEWS

September 2020 // Volume 1, Issue 2 // [www.tylerareagays.com](http://www.tylerareagays.com)

### 2020 LUAU BALL RESCHEDULED FOR 2021



### Street Cleanup

Organizer: Jayden Chapman

Tyler Area Gays held their 3<sup>rd</sup> quarter street cleanup on Saturday, August 15, 2020 at 9 a.m. with one person who attended. Regardless of the turnout, every piece of trash picked up is one less piece of trash that will not end up in our lakes, rivers, or potentially consumed by animals.

The date and time for the 4<sup>th</sup> Quarter cleanup will be announced in a future issue and on TAG social media. ■



### 2020 Luau Ball

Organizer: TAG Social Committee

Due to the uncertainty of the novel coronavirus COVID-19, Tyler Area Gays Board of Directors voted to cancel the 2020 Luau Ball and reschedule it in October 2021.

Planning for the 2021 Luau Ball will continue by TAG's Social Committee directed by Social Committee Chair Jay Hilburn. If you have purchased Ball tickets or you are a sponsor your tickets and sponsorship will transfer to the 2021 date. If you would rather a refund please send an e-mail to TAG with the subject line "Ball Refund" to [info@TylerAreaGays.com](mailto:info@TylerAreaGays.com) and the Board will see to your refund.

TAG has exciting news concerning the Luau Ball in 2021 which will be announced on a later date. ■

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Newsletter of Tyler Area Gays  
September 2020  
Volume 1 – Number 2

#### Tyler Area Gays Founded 2008

Tyler Area Gays promotes wellness and celebrates our diversity through support, education, outreach, and advocacy in Tyler and the East Texas Region.

#### 2020 Board of Directors

Summer Adams, Chair  
Jimmy Ramsey, Vice Chair  
Leilani Groves, Secretary  
Jay Hilburn, Treasurer  
Jayden Chapman, Transgender Liaison  
Jennifer Gower  
Shannon Rose  
Vacant  
Vacant

#### 2020 Committees

Finance Committee – Jay Hilburn, Chair  
Social Committee – Jay Hilburn, Chair  
Scholarship Committee – Vacant, Chair  
Volunteer Committee – Tara Gower, Coordinator

#### Social Media

Facebook – Tyler Area Gays  
Instagram – tylerareagays  
Snapchat - TylerAreaGays  
Twitter – @TylerAreaGays

#### Tyler Area Gays

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(903) 617-8556  
[info@tylerareagays.com](mailto:info@tylerareagays.com)  
[www.tylerareagays.com](http://www.tylerareagays.com)

Tyler Area Gays is a 501(c)3 non-profit organization.

# 2020 PRIDE in the Park

Organizer: TAG Social Committee

Tyler Area Gays is working to determine if PRIDE will continue this year. The board has received the forms that are required to be completed to request approval from the mayor to hold outdoor events for more than 10 individuals. As soon as a decision is made it will be announced on Social Media and in the next issue of Tyler Equality News.

**Sunday, October 11, 2020**

**10 a.m. – 4 p.m.**

**Lindsey Park**

**12557 TX-364 Spur W.**

**Tyler, TX 75709**



## July TAG Dinner

Organizer: Jay Hilburn



TAG had a good turnout for the July dinner which was held at Daniel Boone's Grill & Tavern.

Concerns have been expressed concerning the COVID-19 pandemic. TAG strongly encourages anyone with symptoms of any illness or may have pre-existing health conditions to remain home. Those who feel comfortable to attend the dinners and other TAG functions are invited to do so. ■

## Next Dinner Save the Date

**Wednesday, September 16, 2020**

**7 p.m.**

**Location TBA**

## Are you interested in submitting content to TYLER EQUALITY NEWS?

Publisher: Tyler Area Gays

TYLER EQUALITY NEWS is published digitally monthly by Tyler Area Gays (TAG). We serve the East Texas LGBTQIA+ and allied communities.

TAG has published a newsletter for many years. In 2020 that newsletter was given identity with a name and it is our hope and excitement that this is the first step to bring Tyler Area Gays into a new generation.

If you have content you wish to contribute, or would like to become a regular columnist, please contact Tyler Area Gays (TAG) at [info@tylerareagays.com](mailto:info@tylerareagays.com) with your submission. Your content will be reviewed by the Board of Directors for consideration in a future newsletter. TYLER EQUALITY NEWS does not guarantee all submissions will be published. Your e-mail submission will serve as your consent for TYLER EQUALITY NEWS and TAG to publish your material in the newsletter and on TAG social media.

All material must be of your own creation. Copyrighted material and photographs from third party sources will not be accepted. ■



# The Gaily Grind

By Colin Lee



**Colin Lee** is a 33 year old actor born and raised in Longview, Texas. He currently resides in New York City where he chases both his dreams and subway rats on the daily. A graduate of Ball State University in Indiana, he has traveled the world performing for anyone who will watch. Colin performed in the Broadway national tour of “Guys & Dolls” and the international tour of “Beauty & The Beast”.

His two nephews and niece are his favorite, and chocolate chip cookies fall a close second. Follow Colin on Instagram @dcolinlee.

Colin will write a regular column for TYLER EQUALITY NEWS.

Generally speaking, life in a spandex onesie isn't for the weak. Oddly enough, this is not something I ever saw myself learning firsthand. At least, when I try to think back, I don't *remember* 10-year old Colin expecting or planning life in a spandex onesie, buuut then again, I've never been accused of having the best memory. All the same, life happens and hindsight is 20/20.

You see, I'm an actor, one of those annoying dancing and singing ones. It's ok, I can say annoying, I've been in a bar with 40 of us. Let's call a spade a spade. My parents wanted me to be something refined, but refined was never really my calling. Spandex onesies and boxed wine after a two-show day seemed more my style.

Anyway, in this particular instance I was working for pennies on the dollar in a production of CATS, the famed (for reasons I know not) Broadway musical about, you guessed it, cats. (Sidebar, there *IS* one number in which the cats pretend to be dogs!! If you ever find yourself with an afternoon alone, just go on and pretend to be a cat, pretending to be a dog and get back to me with how that made you feel. Liberated is the word you'll be looking for.) But, back to my being a cat. I'd just walked off-stage, or more likely crawled, limped, groped like the newly blind, because as is so often the case in live theatre, things *had not* gone as planned. In my own head I'm always a star, but in theatre there are actual stars, and in this particular instance I had to hoist one of the *actual* stars up onto my shoulder for the final pose of a grand musical number about, ya know, how great it is to be a cat or whatever.

Moments before everything went awry and turned into this feline episode of “I Love Lucy”, things were going wonderfully. I was smiling my cat-like smile, leaping, turning, liiiifting and then, WHAM! In his grand, “*I'm a star cat, look at me shine*” final pose, the actor on my shoulder brutally slammed me in the head, knocking out a contact directly before the most epic dance number of the night. “AHH! *What the crap am I going to do,*” I thought. “*I can barely perform this thirteen minute dance number on a good day, let alone a half-blind one!*” Mind racing, I dropped to the floor and frantically pawed for the lens, hoping the audience would dismiss my behavior as “*that weird spastic cat*”. The rest of the cast, not knowing I was now blind and concussed, went on about their business. Then, just as I found the contact lens and leaned down to get it, victory permeating the air, someone unknowingly stepped on the hair from my wig, which was so tightly pinned to my head it felt like I was being scalped. “*Owwwww!!!*” I'd just gone from “*weird spastic cat*” to “*weird spastic cat who yelps*”. Great. “*What the hell is happening?! I'm in the seventh circle of Hell in front of 500 people,*” I whimpered to myself. Now concussed, limping blindly, and missing a piece of my scalp, I looked up just in time for the spotlight to hit me. “*Wait, what?... Omg my line! I have a line here! I'm dying, and I have a line here. Why, God why? What is it? What is my line? Something about being happy. Something about...*” ...?....? Nope. Noooo line at all. Spotlight on, mic at max volume, a full house of attentive eyes watching me, and all that came through the radio silence was “*meeeeep,*” and a trickling tear. Later, I thought how ironic it was that in my blindness and numbing pain, my line was actually, “*Jellicle cats are merry and bright.*” Life in a spandex onesie *isn't* for the weak. ■

Visit Colin's website at [www.colinleeactor.com](http://www.colinleeactor.com)



# Tyler Area Gays Reoccurring Activities

## COMMUNITY SERVICE

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### A Listening Ear

A support group for the youth of the LGBTQIA+ community that meets on the 3<sup>rd</sup> Thursday at 5:30 p.m. each month in a safe and confidential environment and free hugs. You are not alone. You are worthy. You are loved. *Due to COVID-19 and facility restrictions, [A Listening Ear](#) is currently suspended.*

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### Adopt-A-Street

TAG has adopted Bois D'Arc in downtown Tyler between Front Street and Gentry Parkway through Keep Tyler Beautiful. We arrange quarterly cleanups on Saturday mornings four times a year. Visit [www.tylerareagays.com](http://www.tylerareagays.com) for the next scheduled cleanup.

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### Hummingbird Project

Putting an END to LGBTQIA+ homeless youth in East Texas through advocacy, and education outreach. TAG's long term goal is to secure and creating LGBTQIA+ Safe Shelters and Sober Community Centers in the East Texas area. If you would like to make a donation to the Hummingbird Project please contact TAG at [info@tylerareagays.com](mailto:info@tylerareagays.com).

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### Quarterly Charity Drive

TAG coordinates with area nonprofit organizations to determine their need and runs a drive for donations of material or funds of which 100% goes directly to the selected organization. The Quarterly Charity Drive operations in conjunction with Monthly Game Night. *Due to COVID-19 and facility restrictions, the Quarterly Charity Drive has been suspended for the remainder of 2020.*

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### Thomas R. Preston Scholarship Program

This program allots two \$500 scholarships to individuals entering college, university, trade, or technical school. The candidates may read the qualifications, submission deadlines, and download an application at [www.tylerareagays.com](http://www.tylerareagays.com).

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### Toys for Tots

TAG participates in collection toys for the Toys For Tots Program held at the end of the year.

## SOCIAL ACTIVITIES

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### Dinner Group

Friends of TAG meets on the 3<sup>rd</sup> Wednesday of every month for a social dinner at different restaurants each month. The location is posted on TAG's website and Facebook group. All are invited.

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### Ladies Dinner Group

Lady Friends of Tag meets once a month for dinner. The location, date, and time is posted on TAG's website and Facebook group. All ladies are invited.

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### Game Night

Always held on the last Saturday of each month, Game Night is a chance to get together with old friends and to meet new ones. Food and non-alcoholic beverages are provided. Sometimes a guest speaker will give a brief presentation and have questions and answers afterward. *Due to COVID-19 and facility restrictions, [Game Night](#) is currently suspended.*

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### Annual Ball

TAG's largest fundraiser. Ticket prices provides a buffet dinner, entertainment, casino tables, and a bar to purchase adult beverages. This is a 21+ event. Historically the Ball has been held in the spring. Watch out for an exciting update to the Ball format in 2021. *Due to COVID-19 and facility restrictions, the 2020 Luau Ball has been cancelled*

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### PRIDE in the Park

TAG's first annual PRIDE event was in 2019 with great success. This event is held in October around National Coming Out Day.

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### Holiday Party

TAG hosts an annual holiday party which is held on the 2<sup>nd</sup> Saturday in December. *Due to COVID-19 and facility restrictions, the 2020 Holiday Party has been cancelled.*

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### Pickleball

On a regular basis, a group of TAG friends get together to play pickleball. Visit TAG's website for dates, times, and location.

## ORGANIZATIONAL

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### Board Meeting

Tyler Area Gays Board of Directors meet once a month on the 4<sup>th</sup> Wednesday at 6:00 p.m. and is open to the public. The Agenda is posted on Sunday prior to the meeting. Due to COVID-19 the meeting venue may vary. The 2020 Chair is Summer Adams.

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### Social Committee

The Social Committee is responsible for planning social events listed in the middle column on this page. The Committee meets on the 2<sup>nd</sup> Wednesday of each month. The 2020 Chair is Jay Hilburn.

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### Finance Committee

The Finance Committee is in charge of TAG finances from donations, maintaining bank accounts, finance planning for events, to preparing annual tax reports. The 2020 Chair is Jay Hilburn.

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### Scholarship Committee

The Scholarship Committee is responsible for collecting donations for the annual scholarship fund, collecting submissions, and making recommendations to the board. The 2020 Chair is currently vacant.

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### Volunteer Committee

The Volunteer Committee is responsible for recruitment of volunteers to assist TAG with the various events throughout the year. The 2020 Chair is Tara Gower. ■





# Newsletter Sponsorship

## info

For more information, or to obtain a sponsorship form  
[info@TylerAreaGays.com](mailto:info@TylerAreaGays.com)



**TYLER EQUALITY NEWS** has monthly sponsorship for a donation of \$50 and is tax deductible. You would be helping Tyler Area Gays accomplish their mission of promoting community wellness and celebrating our diversity through support, education, outreach, and advocacy. Tyler Area Gays believes that, through community collaboration, we can accomplish great things and make Tyler, Texas a better place to live and work!

These are just some of the ways your donation would help improve the community:

- **Thomas Preston Scholarship Foundation** – a scholarship for those seeking higher education.
- **Quarterly Charity Drives** – a charity drive for local nonprofits based on their needs.
- **Adopt-A-Street** – provide supplies to assist volunteers in keeping Tyler streets clean.
- **Hummingbird Project** – by helping to put an end to LGBTQIA+ homeless youth in East Texas through advocacy, educational outreach, securing and creating LGBTQIA+ safe shelters and sober community centers.
- **Toys For Tots** – Volunteers work to collect toys in the holiday season.
- **A Listening Ear** – an LGBTQIA+ support group aimed at our youth who need a listening ear in a judgement free and safe environment, but is open to all ages.
- **PRIDE in the Park** – planning for Tyler’s annual pride festival that began in 2019 with great success.

And what you will get in return for your donation?

- Your logo and/or picture published in TYLER EQUALITY NEWS that has an e-mail subscription of approximately 500 members.
- Your logo and/or picture will be published on Tyler Area Gays website at [www.tylerareagays.com](http://www.tylerareagays.com).
- Your logo and/or picture will be published on Tyler Area Gays social media – Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter.

## TYLER EQUALITY NEWS SPONSORS

### 2020

July: The Gramman Insurance Agency, Melissa Gramman  
March: Performance from the Inside Out  
February: Merritt Insurance Services  
January 2020: Rayford Florist & Gifts

### 2019

December: W. C. Hundley & Associates  
November: Labs Your Way  
September: Luke Cave & Tina Huff  
August 2019: Yonna L. Yelverton, Realtor

Donate to  
Tyler Area Gays



Your monetary contributions enable TAG to continue promoting community wellness and celebrating its diversity through support, education, outreach, and advocacy. Donations made without a designation will be used to continue programs that support TAG's vision and mission. Scan the QR code above if you wish to donate. All donations are tax deductible. You can request a donation letter by contacting Tyler Area Gays (TAG) at [info@tylerareagays.com](mailto:info@tylerareagays.com).

*Thank you for your sponsorships and donations!*

# Monthly Sponsorships Available



[info@TylerAreaGays.com](mailto:info@TylerAreaGays.com)

## YOUR AD ON THIS PAGE

### What do you get?

- Full page ad in Tyler Equality News with a distribution of over 500;
- Listed in Tyler Equality News as a sponsor for up to 12 issues;
- Advertisement on TAG's Social Media (Facebook, Instagram & Twitter);
- Listed on the Website under Resources.