



# ANNUAL REPORT

## 2021

*QORRN is a community project dedicated to helping LGBTQ+ individuals in rural areas access the resources they need.*

### OVERVIEW

QORRN kicked off 2021 by pivoting toward local endeavors in DeKalb, IL. We still maintained our online network maps of resources across Illinois and North Carolina, as well as lists of inter/national resources (including crisis and Covid-19 resources.) Rather than expanding our network to other states, we focused on communicating with members of the Queer communities in DeKalb, and offering local events and support.

### HIGHLIGHTS

#### First-ever QORRN Intern

- In Winter 2021, **Daisy Campuzano** joined QORRN as our first intern ever. Daisy was in the final year of her master's program in Sociology at Northern Illinois University (NIU), and worked with QORRN as part of her capstone project.
  - Daisy worked on research, event-planning, and strategic outreach.
  - While QORRN remains a volunteer-driven project, it was a priority to compensate our intern. We were able to provide a stipend of over \$500, raised from private donations.

#### LGBTQ+ Community Survey

- In Winter 2021, we launched a survey for Queer folks in DeKalb County. NIU professor **Courtney Gallaher** helped us with planning and execution.
  - The survey was offered online in English and Spanish.
  - It included 50 questions about life in DeKalb, resources that are and are not available, and effects of the Covid-19 pandemic.
  - Over 120 people participated.

#### Queer Clothing Swap

- In Spring 2021, we joined forces with **PRISM of NIU**, a Queer student organization, to host a community clothing swap.
  - The event offered access to gender-affirming clothes and accessories in a welcoming, judgment-free environment. All items and refreshments were free, donated by community members.
  - Over 40 people of all ages attended.
  - Unclaimed clothes were donated to **DeKalb Mutual Aid, Inc.**

### DeKalb Pride Celebration

- In Summer 2021, we collaborated with local organizations and individuals to launch [DeKalb County Pride](#) and host a first-of-its-kind celebration in DeKalb.
  - On June 18, 2021, over 200 people attended DeKalb Pride, which included a march around downtown and a reception and free screening of the film *Love, Simon* at the **Egyptian Theatre**. QORRN founder Frankie DiCiaccio spoke on the post-film panel discussion.
  - QORRN collaborated with local organizations on the event, including PRISM of NIU, the Egyptian Theatre, **DeKalb Public Library**, **Safe Passage**, and **NIU Gender and Sexuality Resource Center**.
  - DeKalb Mayor **Cohen Barnes** declared June 2021 Pride Month in an official proclamation.

### Data Analysis and Report Preparation

- During the second half of 2021, NIU Professor **Laura Heideman** and her statistics students helped QORRN analyze the Community Survey results.
  - We are in the process of preparing a report to share with our community, area businesses, service-providers, organizers, and government agencies.

### Rural Queer Working Group (RQWG)

- Throughout 2021, Frankie (along with Daisy, during her tenure) attended monthly virtual meetings of Queer organizers, activists, and non-profit organizations across the country. Discussions covered everything from rural organizing to funding models to political praxis.
- On June 30, 2021, the RQWG hosted a virtual town hall, attended by dozens of folks from the rural Queer sphere across the US and abroad. Frankie presented on one of the night's three main themes, Supporting Grassroots Organizing. The other two themes were Racial Equality and Combating White Supremacy and Translational Research and Knowledge Sharing.

## GROWTH AND DIRECTION

As we look forward, we're determined to keep QORRN an anti-capitalist, community-driven project that empowers collective participation. What started as an online catalogue of resources is growing into a hub of local, grassroots activity. As many survey participants indicated in their responses, there is incredible potential in DeKalb for meaningful, welcoming events for and by members of the LGBTQ+ communities.



A young participant plays at the **Queer Clothing Swap**.

*Northern Illinois University, May 22, 2021.*



Panel discussion after the free screening of *Love, Simon*, part of **DeKalb Pride**.

*Egyptian Theatre, June 18, 2021.*

From left: **Amanda Littauer** (Professor, NIU Department of History and Center for the Study of Women, Gender, and Sexuality); **Frankie DiCiaccio** (QORRN founder); **Trevon Smith** (President, PRISM of NIU); **Trinity Alexander** (COO, Sir Donald Foundation.)



### DAILY CHRONICLE

#### 'Finally, we got Pride in DeKalb': Dozens take part in city's LGBTQ+ Pride Month celebration

By Megann Horstead

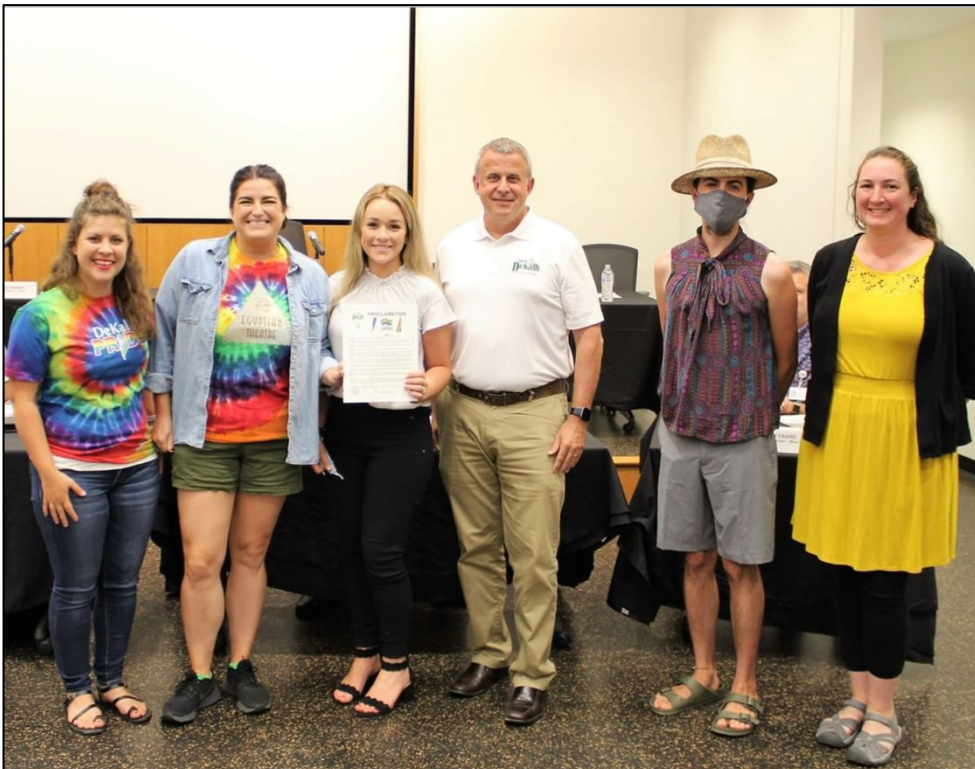
June 19, 2021 at 5:30 am CDT

Expand



Daily Chronicle article about **DeKalb Pride**. Participants were greeted with a variety of free Pride regalia upon entering the Egyptian Theatre lobby.

*Daily Chronicle, June 19, 2021.*



Members of DeKalb County Pride pose with DeKalb City Mayor, who declared June 2021 **Pride Month** in an official proclamation.

*DeKalb City Council Meeting, June 30, 2021.*

From left: **Lynnea Erickson Laskowski** (Safe Passage); **Jeanine Holcomb** (Egyptian Theatre); **Kendal Harvell** (Safe Passage); DeKalb Mayor **Cohen Barnes**; **Frankie DiCiaccio** (QORRN founder); **Emily Faulkner** (DeKalb Public Library).