

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Montgomery County Opens First-Ever LGBTQIA+ Pride Resource Center

A Bold Step Forward for Equity, Visibility, and Community Care

Bethesda, MD — August 1, 2025 — The Montgomery County Pride Family, under the leadership of human rights advocate Phillip Alexander Downie (he/him), is proud to announce the *Grand Opening of the Montgomery County Pride Family Resource Center* — the first physical LGBTQIA+ Pride Center in Montgomery County, Maryland. The opening celebration will take place on **Saturday, August 30, 2025**, at the Bethesda-Chevy Chase Regional Services Center.

This groundbreaking event marks a historic step forward in the County's commitment to inclusion, care, and public investment in LGBTQIA+, BIPOC, and other marginalized communities. Open seven days a week, the Montgomery County Pride Family Resource Center (commonly known as the MoCo Pride Center) will serve as a permanent safe haven, gathering space, and community hub for people across generations, identities, and backgrounds.

“We are not just opening a building — we are building a future where no one has to wonder if they belong. This center is about creating permanent, public infrastructure for care, culture, and collective liberation.”

— **Phillip Alexander Downie (he/him), CEO, MoCo Pride Center Inc.**

A Community-Led Vision Comes to Life

The Montgomery County Pride Family Resource Center is home to a deeply interwoven network of LGBTQIA+ organizations working collaboratively to advance justice, wellness, and celebration. The Pride Family includes:

- **MoCo Pride Prom**
- **Live In Your Truth**
- **Trans Maryland**
- **Drag Story Hour DC/MD/VA**
- **Maryland Trans Unity**

- **Poolesville Pride**
- **The Coalition for Inclusive Schools & Communities**

These organizations are collectively transforming Montgomery County into a model of queer joy, intergenerational care, and bold resistance. The Resource Center will also house programs, events, and support services designed to meet the urgent and evolving needs of LGBTQIA+ community members.

Features of the Pride Family Resource Center

- **Drop-In Hours 7 Days a Week (11:00 AM – 7:00 PM)**
- **The Kason Mordechai Smith Inclusive Books Library & LGBTQIA+ Archive**
- **Monthly LGBTQIA+ Maker's Market Pop-Ups on every 4th Saturday**
- **Identity-Affirming Support Groups, Social Meet-Ups & Cultural Events**
- **Rotating Wellness Services: STI/HIV Testing through HHS Partners, Mental Health Referrals & Regular Fitness Classes**
- **Crisis Navigation, Referrals & Advocacy Clinics**
- **Public Art, Exhibits & Storytelling**

This space has been intentionally designed to serve as a beacon of safety, learning, and affirmation. With a focus on intergenerational programming, family inclusion, and intersectional equity, the MoCo Pride Center stands as a direct response to the escalating attacks on LGBTQIA+ lives across the country — and an investment in the kind of future we all deserve.

Grand Opening Celebration Details

Date: Saturday, August 30, 2025

Time: 12:00 PM – 7:00 PM

Location: Bethesda-Chevy Chase Regional Services Center

Admission: Free and Open to the Public

The opening event will feature:

- Dynamic performances from LGBTQIA+ artists
- Remarks from community leaders and elected officials
- Family-friendly programming and affirming activities
- A ribbon-cutting ceremony
- Tours of the new MoCo Pride Center offices
- A celebratory launch of the LGBTQIA+ maker's market, **How Bazaar**, showcasing LGBTQIA+ artists, small businesses, and entrepreneurs

"We will not be silenced. We will not be erased! We are building together, and we are just getting started. To all of my community members, let these words always echo in your being: You have not met all the people who are going to love you yet. You absolutely belong, and Always Live In Your Truth!"

— Phillip Alexander Downie

Avenues of Engagement

August 1 begins our 30 Days of Giving campaign! The Montgomery County Pride Family Resource Center is also always looking for volunteers and allies to collaborate on our vision for the future. Below you can find various ways to get involved with this event and support our long-term programming:

Volunteer to help with the Grand Opening:

<https://www.mocopridefamily.org/grand-opening#grand-opening-volunteer>

Become a regular Volunteer and work at MoCo Pride Center:

<https://www.mocopridefamily.org/volunteer>

Sponsor the Grand Opening: <https://www.mocopridefamily.org/sponsor-grand-opening>

Become a Vendor:

<https://www.mocopridefamily.org/pride-center-services#how-bazaar-vendor-app>

Donate to MoCo Pride Center: <https://secure.givelively.org/donate/moco-pride-center>

About the Montgomery County Pride Family

The Montgomery County Pride Family is the consortium of LGBTQIA+ service, advocacy, and arts organizations committed to building a world where every person can live freely, safely, and authentically in Montgomery County Maryland, and the region. Anchored by **MoCo Pride Center Inc.**, the Pride Family brings together the power of grassroots community care with bold public leadership to meet the moment — and shape the future.

Our Mission: to champion the unwavering right to self-determination of our LGBTQIA+ community, uplifting the most vulnerable, and catalyzing lasting change through empowerment, advocacy, and solidarity.

Website: www.mocopridefamily.org

Follow Us: @MoCoPrideCenter on Instagram, Facebook, and LinkedIn

Media Inquiries and Press Credentials:

Please contact Dr. Maddie Roepe at maddie@mocopridecenter.org



**MoCo
PRIDE CENTER**

YOU ARE INVITED TO OUR

Grand Opening!

Bethesda - Chevy Chase Regional
Services Center

Saturday, August 30th
12 PM

mocopridefamily.org/grand-opening

Grand Opening!

PROGRAM

12 – 5 PM: Vendor Market (1st floor green)

12 – 7 PM: Activities (indoors and outdoors)

12:10 PM: Kick-Off & Community Speakers
(1st floor green)

1 PM: Ribbon-Cutting Ceremony (1st floor green)

1 – 6 PM: Performances (fountain stage)

1 – 5 PM: Face Painting (2nd floor)

1 – 2 PM: Silly Science (2nd floor)

1:15 PM: Office Tours Begin (2nd floor)

1:30 – 2:30 PM: Fitness Class (1st floor green)

2 PM: Library Dedication (2nd floor)

3 – 4 PM: Drag Story Hour (2nd floor)

5–6 PM: Crafting Session (2nd floor)

5 – 6 PM: Evening Yoga Class (1st floor green)

6 – 7 PM: DJ Close-Out Set (fountain stage)