



**DOWNERS GROVE
PUBLIC LIBRARY**

1050 Curtiss Street
Downers Grove, IL 60515
630-960-1200
dglibrary.org

September 12, 2022

To our Downers Grove Community,

For the safety of everyone involved, the difficult decision has been made to cancel the upcoming Drag Queen Bingo program due to threats made against the Downers Grove Public Library. These threats are currently under active investigation by law enforcement.

Providing an inclusive, welcoming, and safe space for everyone in the Downers Grove community is of the utmost importance to the library. We recognize the significance of offering services and programs like Drag Queen Bingo that provide a window to the world, as well as a mirror to it, creating opportunities for patrons to see the wonderfully diverse community in which we live. Unfortunately, in this case, it is not possible to provide a safe place for everyone due to the threats made.

To all of the teens who registered for our event and community members in support of this event: we are sorry Drag Queen Bingo cannot happen at this time. We are determined to find additional ways to support you and your friends in safe, fun, and inclusive representation throughout the library. Hate did not win today. We stand by the event and Aurora Divine. We tried our best to make Drag Queen Bingo happen. However, due to the severity of the threats made against the library, we have been forced to cancel the event. It is our responsibility to keep you safe. We are disappointed and saddened by the some of the vitriolic feedback that we received for what was meant to be an evening of fun and celebration of self-identity and self-expression.

Thank you to everyone who has sent us messages of support; you have helped us reaffirm our commitment to essential inclusive programming in Downers Grove. A special thanks to all those kind and generous folks who have stopped by to offer words of encouragement and thoughtful gestures. We appreciate you.

There is no further information about this threat that may be shared with the public at this time and no further comment can be made.

We ask the community to please show kindness in the days leading up to National Coming Out Day, October 11.

Sincerely,

Julie Milavec, Library Director
and The Downers Grove Public Library Staff

For those who are interested in learning more or finding support, we invite you to explore these resources:

Resources

- [Freedom for All Americans](#)
- [GLAAD](#)
- [Hollaback!](#)
- [Human Rights Campaign](#)
- [NAMI](#)
- [Outwards Journey](#)
- [Pronouns Matter: Beyond He and She](#)
- [The Trevor Project](#)
- [Youth Outlook](#)

Booklists

- [Adults](#)
- [Adults - Films and Documentaries](#)
- [Adults - Nonfiction/Parenting](#)
- [Teens](#)
- [Older Kids \(Grade School\)](#)
- [Younger Kids \(Picture Books\)](#)

FAQ:

What was the threat made against the library? Who threatened the library?

The library may not comment on the threats that are under active investigation by law enforcement.

Was there interest in the program? I heard Awake IL registered for every seat.

There was, and continues to be, strong interest in the library's Drag Queen Bingo program. The library's program had 40 seats available. The waitlist was full and limited to 80 people. Awake IL may have registered for a few seats, however the library can confirm numerous interested teen registrations.

Have you gotten support from the community for this event?

Yes! The wonderfully supportive messages brighten our day and show us how truly vital this programming is. Many messages from tax-paying library-district residents have been received. Positive and supportive messages have also been received by community leaders, community organizations, and local businesses. The library would like to thank everyone for the kind messages of support, the acts of generosity, and for sharing deeply personal stories.

Was Drag Queen Bingo requested by the community? I heard someone utilized FOIA requests and found it wasn't requested.

Programming like Drag Queen Bingo was requested by many people in the community. The library utilizes a variety of methods to gather feedback and program suggestions, including but not limited to emails. Other methods of feedback are through How Did We Do Forms, program surveys, chats, social media comments, and comments received in-person. While the library has no documents to share requesting Drag Queen Bingo specifically, the library has many requests from tax-paying library-district community members for LGBTQ+ programming, inclusive and diverse programming, and fun and celebratory programs that affirm identities. These requests have been made for programming of all ages.

Does the library conduct background checks on presenters?

No, the library does not conduct background checks on each presenter and performer at the library. Instead, the library works closely with other area libraries and community organizations for referrals, establishes relationships with presenters to get a good sense of what the presentation will be, and researches previous programs/presentations. The library would like to remind patrons that it offers over 900 programs a year, many of which feature outside presenters and performers; conducting background checks on each presenter would be extremely cost prohibitive and would dramatically decrease the amount of offerings.

FAQ:

Cancelling the event lets hate win. Why didn't you stay strong and continue the event?

The library consulted with law enforcement after learning about threats made against the library. The threats are severe and credible enough that the library decided for the safety and security of everyone involved, the cancellation of the event was necessary. This was a deeply difficult decision, however it is the library's responsibility to protect the registered teens and Aurora Divine. The mission of the event was to provide a safe space for teens to celebrate self-expression and self-identity. The participants in this program are not political props and are not to be made an example of. The library would like to center the teens' and presenter's safety and felt needs over the politics that surround the event. We remain dedicated to finding ways to celebrate LGBTQ+ identities in our programming and services.

Where can I donate money to support inclusive programming?

Thank you for your support. Please consider donating to the [Downers Grove Public Library Foundation](#). Every dollar donated to the Foundation is returned to the library to fund extraordinary gifts to inspire and engage ideas and conversation.

I saw the library in the news and I have a lot of opinions. Can I share them with you?

The library welcomes feedback, however, the expressed and observed needs of the Downers Grove community are given the most consideration. [To send feedback to the library, please use this form.](#)