

Diversity Richmond 2019 Highlights

January 2019

On February 15, 2019, Diversity Richmond held their third annual Black and Bold Leadership Awards Ceremony. The event this year honored Dr. Veronica Ayala-Sims, 2nd Lieutenant Deuntay Diggs, Quincy Evans, Gregg Fordham, Jaide Hinds-Clarke, Congressman A. Donald McEachin, Christmas Snow, SWERV Magazine, and Brooke Taylor for their exemplary leadership in the community. The Black and Bold series has become a cornerstone at Diversity Richmond celebrating the achievements and crucial contributions of Black and African American LGBTQ+ community members. In light of the many barriers people of color and LGBTQ+ people continue to face in society, the achievements and leadership of our Black and Bold community is more than deserving of our recognition and we are proud to honor their work.

March 2019

On March 28, 2019, Diversity Richmond hosted Drag Bingo, featuring Michelle Livigne, Monica DuVall, and Millennium C. Snow. Renowned artist and fashion designer, Michael Birch Pierce guest starred at the event. Diversity Richmond has held Drag Bingo over the years, it is a fundraising tradition in the LGBTQ+ community stemming from the Chicken Soup Brigade organization in Seattle. Drag Bingo is hugely popular and has helped Diversity Richmond donate more than \$1 million to local organizations since 1999.

April 2019

In April 2019, a new radio show called The Front Porch was launched as the product of a partnership between Diversity Richmond and WRIR Richmond Independent Radio. The Front Porch provides a voice for Queer People of Color in the Richmond community. Vice President and Deputy Director, Rodney Lofton hosts the show which addresses issues of race, gender, and inclusion in Richmond's LGBTQ+ community.

May 2019

In May 2019, Diversity Richmond hosted a 5-week Beginner Partner Dance Series with instructor Michael Recant. Every Wednesday from 6-8pm, free dance lessons covering beginner Ballroom, Latin, and Swing couple dancing were held in the Diversity Richmond small event hall.

May 2019

On June 12, 2019, Diversity Richmond hosted Pride at Work, a Richmond LGBTQ Chamber sponsored LGBTQ Job Fair. There were over 25 different employers present for a week of events to aid LGBTQ people in the job-hunting process. From interviewing skills, professional dress tips, and resume advice, the event provided critical help in connecting LGBTQ+ people with inclusive and affirmative employers in Virginia.

June 2019

In partnership with Nationz Foundation, Side by Side, The Byrd Theater, Health Brigade, Black Pride RVA, and Diversity Richmond, VA Pride hosted Mongays, which is a series of queer film screenings every Monday in the month of June. Five different films were screened: Rafiki, Tangerine, Saturday Church, Paris is Burning, and Pariah.

July 2019

On Friday, July 26, 2019, Diversity Richmond hosted "All Americans Block Party for Community Unity." Featuring a Karaoke contest with cash prizes hosted by Emcee Zakia Jemaceye and Karaoke DJ Anne-

Marie. Diversity Richmond's Iridian Gallery showcased the work of local Richmond artists including Mollie Bruce, Sev Gedra, Maureen Hains, Cody Landrum, Hannah Larney, Joanna Patzig/Sam O Neill, Sara Salomonsky, and Taneesha White. The sponsors of this event included Artisan Hill Apartment Community, Treehouse Realty VA, Mongrel, and State Farm.

August 2019

Diversity Richmond hosts Men's Sunday Social Hour on the 2nd and 4th Sunday each month, which is led by Keith J. Watts, a Ph.D. candidate at VCU's School of Social Work. The Men's Sunday Social Hour is a safe environment for gay men to connect, share experiences and find support and comradery. The group meets in Diversity Richmond's on-site classroom.

August 2019

On August 29, 2019, from 7-10pm, Diversity Richmond hosted Drag Bingo with cash prizes in the event hall. There was a grand prize of \$500. Drag Bingo featured performances by Zakia Jemaceye, Misses Kelly Branch, and Melanin Monroe, and also presented celebrity caller, Grace Wetpants.

September 2019

Secretly Y'all and Diversity Richmond presented Pride & Prejudice on September 24, 2019 to discuss how to overcome external as well as internalized prejudice and take pride in being our authentic selves. Pride & Prejudice served as a Jane Austen-free platform for LGBTQ+ people to submit their personal and unique stories and experiences to be told during the event.

October 2019

Saturday October 5, 2019, Viva RVA! Hispanic Music Festival was kicked off with live performances by Quatro Na Bossa and Kadencia. The event featured salsa lessons with Angel Alberto Rodriguez Serrano (The Salsa Guy), authentic Latin food, and Latin lounge music by Richmond locals Margarita and the Maracas. VCU junior fashion students, Levi Haskins and Joe Heffern designed the VIVA RVA! Pride Dress which was on display during the event to represent Virginia Pride, Hispanic Heritage and Diversity Richmond.

October 2019

On October 26, 2019, the Virginia Council on LGBTQ presented Day of Action with Dignity in Schools at Diversity Richmond. A Day of Action with Dignity in Schools is a coalition working to dismantle the School to Prison Pipeline. Day of Action helps to raise awareness of the debilitating effects of the School to Prison Pipeline and School Pushout on LGBTQ+ youth and shares ways to support them.

October 2019

On October 25, 2019, Diversity Richmond hosted fundraising event, "Scary-Oke, a Costume and Karaoke Gaylalala" in their event hall. Scary-Oke featured a costume and karaoke contest with cash prizes of up to \$2000 and was hosted by DJ C-Money and emcee Zakia Jemaceye. This event was sponsored by Lewis Insurance Associates, Treehouse Realty VA and Mongrel. Events like Scary-Oke help Diversity Richmond invest in local LGBTQ+ affirmative nonprofit agencies to meet the goal to educate, advocate and support LGBTQ+ acceptance.

November 2019

On November 28, 2019, Diversity Richmond hosted their annual Feed the Need, Thanksgiving Community Meal. This free to the community event took place in partnership with Black Pride RVA,

Virginia Pride, Side by Side, Health Brigade, Richmond LGBTQ Chamber, Nationz Foundation, Women of Essence, Inc. and more.

December 2019

On Friday December 13, 2019 through January 4, 2020, Diversity Richmond's Iridian Gallery hosted Radiance, a community art exhibit and sale. Radiance was the Iridian Gallery's last show of 2019 and it featured the works of local Richmond artists. There was a raffle for artwork by Michael-Birch Pierce in which the proceeds were used to support Richmond's LGBTQ+ community. Radiance is a biannual fundraising event to help both highlight and support the talent of our local queer artists, but also support Diversity Richmond's work to build a thriving community.