

DEAF QUEER MEN ONLY

TWIN CITIES • 2026



Sorenson



ThinkSelf
MINNESOTA DEAF ADULT
EDUCATION & ADVOCACY

DEAF
EQUITY



DQMO TWIN CITIES 2026



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Many Thanks...



Welcome DQMO to the Twin Cities!

Charles Thompson Memorial Hall, the first social club in the nation designed exclusively for the deaf, is proud to sponsor DQMO-2026 and welcomes Deaf Queer Men Only (DQMO) and all of their friends and allies to gather together and celebrate fellowship!



Please come and visit our
beloved historic clubhouse
located at
1824 Marshall Ave.
in St. Paul, Minnesota.



Later this year in November 13-14, 2026, Thompson Hall will have an anniversary gala to observe the 110th year of operations when the building first opened in 1916.



Charles Thompson Memorial Hall's 110th Anniversary Gala



Friday, November 13, 2026
1824 Marshall Ave., St. Paul, MN
Tour: Charles' homes and Cemetery
Time: 1 pm - 3 pm and 3pm - 5pm
Cost: \$25

Friday, November 13, 2026
At Charles Thompson Hall
Italian Dinner
Time: 5 pm to 7 pm
Cost: \$20
Social 7pm to ??



COMBO TICKET for
Friday: Tour and Italian Dinner
Saturday: 110th Anniversary Gala
\$85 until Oct 1st
\$100 until Nov 1st

TST Creative Catering - Ideal Hall
1494 Dale St. N.
St. Paul, MN 55117
Saturday, November 14, 2026
3 pm - 10 pm ~ Cost: \$70

*** Semi-Formal Attire, No Jeans and No Tennis Shoes ***



Menu

Appetizers
Vegetable Tray with Dip
Caprese Skewers
Cheese Tray & Crackers

Main Course
Turkey or Ham or Vegan
Mashed Potatoes
Green Beans
Mixed Green Salad
Gravy
Rolls and Butter

Dessert
Cake





Dear Friends,

On behalf of Minnesota Deaf Queers (MDQ), we are excited to welcome you to Minnesota and the Twin Cities!

Our vibrant Deaf, DeafBlind, Hard of Hearing, LGBTQIA2S+, and Queer community is honored to host you during this incredible gathering. We are proud to call Minnesota home—a state that has earned recognition as a safe haven for transgender people and continues to champion equality, inclusion, and support for LGBTQIA2S+ communities.

While you're here, we encourage you to explore everything Minnesota has to offer. Enjoy our thriving nightlife, beautiful lakes and parks, arts and culture, local restaurants, and the many spaces where Deaf and LGBTQIA2S+ communities gather, connect, and celebrate.

Most importantly, we hope you feel welcomed, valued, and supported. Whether you're reconnecting with old friends, building new friendships, or simply enjoying the brotherhood and community that DQMO fosters, we hope your time here is filled with joy, laughter, and unforgettable memories.

Minnesota Deaf Queers deeply appreciate the work DQMO does to create spaces where Deaf gay men can connect, thrive, and celebrate who they are. Your commitment to the community strengthens us all.

As you enjoy your stay, we have just one wish: that you leave Minnesota with a few more friends, a few more memories, and maybe just a little bit gayer than when you arrived.

Welcome to Minnesota. Welcome to the Twin Cities. Welcome home.

With Pride, Minnesota Deaf Queers

Jessalyn Akerman-Frank	Jer Loudenback
TK Mehlhaff	Sammie Porter
Kyle Laughery	Riss Leitzke
KC Gallant	



DQMO

TWIN CITIES



5-Day Schedule

Wednesday, July 29th

Registration and Kick off at Hyatt Regency Day, 1300 Nicollet Mall, Minneapolis, MN 55403

4:00 PM to 6:00 PM Regular Registration

6:00 PM to 9:00 PM Opening Ceremony
Land Acknowledgment, Expectations and Schedule,
Icebreaker Activity and Social

9:00 PM to Late Dry Hangout at Hyatt Regency Fireside Lounge
Wet Hangout at Saloon, 830 Hennepin Ave, Minneapolis,
MN 55403

Thursday, July 30th

Charles Thompson Memorial Hall Deaf Club, 1824 Marshall Ave, St Paul, MN 55104

12:00 PM to 1:00 PM Lunch Provided - Tater Tots - Hot Dishes and Cold Dishes
Booths and Tour

1:00 PM to 4:00 PM Workshops and Booths

1:00 PM to 1:45 PM A: Hookups and Hos B: What is Anger?

1:45 PM to 2:00 PM BREAK

2:00 PM to 2:45 PM C: Am I sex Addicted?

2:00 PM to 3:45 PM D: Root in Integrity, in Growing in Identity

4:00 PM to 5:30 PM BID time - Presentation

5:30 PM to 8:00 PM Dinner on your own
Board Games at CTH

9:00 PM until Close Dry Hangout at Charles Thompson Memorial Hall
Wet Hangout at Eagle MPLS, 515 Washington Ave S,
Minneapolis, MN 55415



Friday, July 31st

Loring Park Adventure Day, 1382 Willow St. Minneapolis, MN 55403
(If Rain Day Back up location - Charles Thompson Memorial Hall)

11:00 AM to 12:00 PM	Meet at Loring Park
12:00 PM to 1:00 PM	Lunch Provided
1:00 PM to 4:00 PM	Yard Games, Swimming, Pickleball, Volleyball, Card games Carble games
4:00 PM to 5:00 PM	Picture Time - Wear your DQMO Shirt & Bid Voting
5:00 PM to 7:00 PM	Dinner on your Own
7:00 PM	Register For DRAG BINGO
7:00 PM to 9:00 PM	Drag Bingo GAME
9:00 PM until Close	Dry Hangout at Charles Thompson Memorial Hall or Hyatt Regency Fireside Lounge Wet Hangout at Saloon, 830 Hennepin Ave., Minneapolis, MN 55403

Saturday, August 1st

Cruising through the Twin Cities and Celebration Day
PAUL BUNYAN AND BABE THE BLUE OX ~ MINNESOTA NICE

10:00 AM to 5:00 PM	Tour - Stone Arch Bridge, Minnehaha Falls and Mall of America
5:00 PM to 9:00 PM	Walker Art Center, 725 Vineland Pl, Minneapolis, MN 55403
6:00 PM	Appetizers and Drinks (Cashless Bar)
7:30 PM to 9:00 PM	Closing Ceremony
9:00 PM to Close	Dry Hangout at Hyatt Regency Fireside Wet Hangout at Eagle MPLS, 515 Washington Ave S, Minneapolis, MN 55415

Sunday, August 2nd

Farewell Brunch Day at Nicollet Diner, 1333 Nicollet Mall, Minneapolis, MN 55403

10:00 AM to 1:00 PM **Meet for Brunch, purchase your own meal.**





LUNCH IS ON US!

THURSDAY, JULY 30 • 11:30 AM – 1:00 PM

BEFORE THE WORKSHOP



- ✓ Tater Tot Hotdish
- ✓ Vegan Tater Tot Hot Dish
- ✓ Jello Salad
- ✓ Veggie Salad
- ✓ Fresh Fruits
- ✓ Dinner Rolls
- ✓ Coffee, Lemonade, and Water



CHARLES THOMPSON MEMORIAL HALL

1824 Marshall Ave
St Paul, MN 55104



**SNACKS PROVIDED
ALL DAY!**



BAR IN THE BASEMENT

Enjoy beers, wines, and wine coolers
in bottles and cans.

Plus, delicious snacks and foods
available to order!



**DQMO
TWIN CITIES
2026**

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DRAG BINGO NIGHT

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59

★ *Featuring LaVanna Hill!* ★

GAME | PRIZE | SOCIAL

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30

FRIDAY, JULY 31 2026

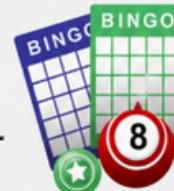
EVERYONE IS WELCOME TO JOIN!

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**DOOR OPEN 7 PM
TICKET \$20
10 ROUNDS**

**CHARLES THOMPSON MEMORIAL HALL
1824 MARSHALL AVE
ST. PAUL MN 55104**



**DQMO
TWIN CITIES 2026**

CLOSING CEREMONY MINNESOTA NICE

*Paul Bunyan &
Babe the Blue Ox*



FLANNEL



DENIM



BOOTS



LEATHER



MINNESOTA PRIDE



**SATURDAY,
AUGUST 1, 2026**



**5:00 PM –
9:00 PM**

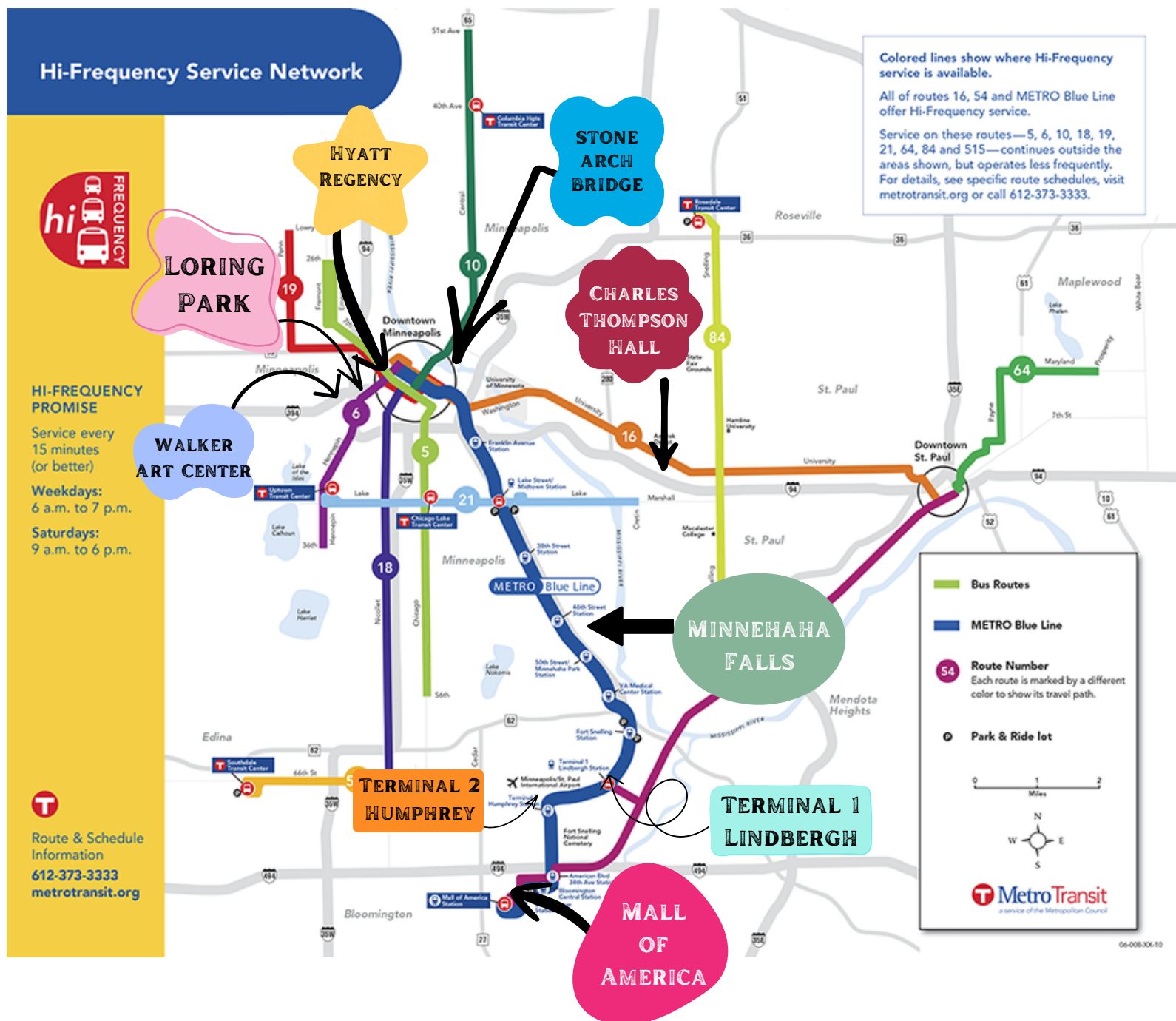


**WALKER
ART CENTER**



*Wear Flannel If You'd Like...
Or Wear Whatever Makes You Feel Great!*





<https://www.metrotransit.org/metro-info-for-metro-bus-and-light-rail>
FOR BLUE LINE: LIGHT RAIL IS CLOSED, USE METRO BUS

<https://www.metrotransit.org/free-ride-buses>

RIDE FOR FREE TO AND FROM THE MINNEAPOLIS CONVENTION CENTER HERE:
-BOARD A NORTHBOUND RT 18 BETWEEN NICOLLETT & GRANT TO HENNEPIN & WASHINGTON
-GET ON A SOUTHBOUND RT 10 BETWEEN HENNEPIN & WASHINGTON AND THE CONVENTION CENTER.

“Hookups and Hos: Honoring Consent and Boundaries in Relationships”

Topics: how to obtain and give consent, navigating boundaries in intimate relationships, and gaining awareness of polyamory and ethical non-monogamy through personal stories of Deaf queer men.



Brian Berlinski (he/him) is Deaf, Queer, and polyamorously partnered with a hearing man for 11 years. Minneapolis 2026 is Brian’s fourth time attending DQMO. Since 2005, Brian has been with DeafHope, a Deaf-led community-based organization that works to end violence in Deaf communities. Within DeafHope, Brian has served in various roles such as art therapist, advocate, board member, and now as an Empowerment Director. Brian and his partner live with a chihuahua named Beto - although strictly monogamous and gets jealous easily, Beto is a cute doggie and he gets to live with them.

James Paul Beldon identifies as queer and polyamorous since coming out in 2019. He comes from a big multigenerational Deaf family and bilingual deaf-centered education background. Minnesota holds a special place in his heart, where he was raised and graduated from. Many of his fond memories were found around the Twin Cities especially by the beautiful lakes. Four years ago, he dared himself to grow depth as a versatile individual by relocating in Austin, TX. His ambitious goal is to study medicine and become a doctor for Deaf, Deaf Blind and HoH patients. Meanwhile, he enjoys providing access to communication as a Certified Deaf Interpreter (CDI). He is currently dating himself, but open to potential romantic partners. He lives with an orange cat Dasher, a people friendly company. Dasher reserves permanently the authority to jump on the bed at any time.



Robb Dooling (he/they) is Deaf and queer. He and his hearing husband, Tam Vo, have been in a polyamorous relationship for seven years. Minneapolis 2026 is Robb’s fourth time attending DQMO. Robb is very proud to have spent much of his early life in Minnesota and that “Minnesota Nice” is central to DQMO this year. In his free time, he loves reading, writing, and biking.



“What is Anger?”

Topics: Anger is a natural human emotion that everyone experiences at times. However, it can sometimes become unwanted, irrational, or difficult to control. Anger may be triggered by trauma, mental health challenges, substance use, financial hardship, relationship conflicts, or various forms of addiction. Understanding the underlying causes of anger is the first step toward developing healthy coping skills, improving emotional well-being, and building stronger relationships.

Kenton Twidt lives in Riverside, California, and Minneapolis will be his sixth DQMO gathering.

In his free time, Kenton enjoys cooking, traveling, reading, and meeting friends for coffee. He also loves treasure hunting at thrift stores, garage sales, and estate sales.

Kenton shares his life with his two beloved Chihuahua fur daughters: Hope, a 10-year-old white-and-tan Chihuahua, and Faith, a 17-year-old black Chihuahua with a sweet white face. One of his favorite ways to relax is taking Hope and Faith for walks together.

He's excited to reconnect with old friends, make new memories, and experience another unforgettable DQMO gathering in Minneapolis.



“Rooted in Integrity, Growing in Identity.”



Kashif Bin Arif is a DeafBlind photographer, graphic designer, and multimedia professional whose work is rooted in storytelling, accessibility, and authentic human connection. He works full time in higher education while continuing to pursue freelance creative projects that celebrate community and representation.

As a gay Muslim of Pakistani heritage, Kashif has spent much of his life navigating identities that are often misunderstood or seen as incompatible. Those experiences have shaped his belief that integrity begins with embracing every part of who you are instead of hiding pieces of yourself to meet the expectations of others.

Through both his creative work and personal journey, Kashif is committed to fostering spaces where people feel seen, respected, and valued. He is honored to join the "Rooted in Integrity, Growing in Identity" panel and looks forward to sharing his experiences of resilience, self discovery, and belonging while encouraging others to embrace their own authentic identities.



Zion Harper is a proud Black gay man from Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. Through his lived experiences, he encourages others to embrace their identity, live with integrity, and find strength in community. As a freelance photographer and advocate, Zion is passionate about creating spaces where people feel seen, valued, and empowered. His story as a panelist and believes that when we stand in our truth, our voices have the power to inspire, create connection, and transform communities.



Erick Gallegos was born and raised in Southern California. He identifies himself as Latino and DeafBlind. He communicates in English, American Sign Language, and Protactile. He also uses Braille.

Erick graduated with a Bachelor's degree in English from California State University, Northridge in 2013. He also graduated from Tactile Communications in 2024, where he learned Protactile.

Erick gained experience working in the Blind Field Services, providing trainings and support in Braille and assistive technology. He also provides trainings and support in Protactile and CoNavigator in the DeafBlind community. He is currently considering returning to graduate school related to Blind Field Services.

Erick is an active member of the LGBTQ community. In addition to advocating for disability rights, he also advocates on sexual orientation identities. He believes in recognition and inclusion for all.

Erick enjoys reading, cooking, swimming, biking, fishing, stand up paddling, kayaking, and traveling.





A Journey of Identity, Resilience, and Service

Rich Rice growing up Hard of Hearing in a Deaf family in the Philadelphia area, identity and culture were woven into daily life from the very beginning. Navigating the world alongside a Deaf gay twin brother provided a unique shared lens on community and connection. However, the path through education presented its own set of challenges: as an autistic student mainstreamed without ASL interpreters until college, self-advocacy and adaptability became essential skills long before entering the professional sphere.

Out as a gay man since age ten and rooted in his Jewish heritage, Rich's journey has always been defined by the rich intersectionality of his lived experiences. Over the years, this personal perspective naturally grew into a

calling to build bridges across diverse communities. Active in space-making and advocacy, he engaged in interracial dating across both Deaf and hearing gay communities. Through his work with Men of All Colors Together (MACT) he earned a community service award from the Philadelphia chapter for his pioneering support of a Deaf/hearing interracial couple and his efforts to promote inclusive, cross-cultural connections. Rich's professional life spans decades of dedicated service in public health, mental health, and Deaf education. Living with HIV since 2005 and navigating related health issues firsthand, he brought profound empathy, resilience, and clinical knowledge to his roles. As a former nurse and licensed mental health counselor, he worked to support individuals at the intersection of physical and emotional well-being. For over ten years, he served as an HIV prevention program director in both Philadelphia and Washington, DC, designing initiatives that directly addressed the needs of marginalized groups within the Deaf community. Beyond public health leadership, Rich dedicated time to passing on language and cultural knowledge as an ASL instructor at the Pennsylvania School for the Deaf (PSD) and the Community College of Philadelphia. Embracing his identity as a Neuroqueer (autistic or neurodivergent) individual, he highlights the distinct experiences within the Deaf population—where an estimated 3% share a neurodivergent identity compared to 1% in the general population—advocating for broader understanding and acceptance of neurodiversity within the Deaf gay community.

In 2024, his decades of dedication were formally recognized when he was awarded the Pennsylvania School for the Deaf Alumni Association Lifetime Hall of Fame Award, honoring his exemplary leadership, character, and lifetime of service to the Deaf community. Now retired, Rich resides in Silver Spring, MD and leaves behind a lasting legacy of advocacy, education, and bridge-building.



David Goyette, and my sign name is "DG." I was born in Oklahoma City, Oklahoma, and grew up in Wisconsin. I currently live in Rochester, New York. I graduated from the Rochester Institute of Technology (RIT) and now work as a substitute teacher and teaching assistant at the Rochester School for the Deaf.

I am passionate about supporting Deaf students through art and helping them express themselves creatively. Outside of work, I enjoy traveling, graphic design, baking, woodworking, fitness, and exploring different cultures.

I'm excited to be here today to share my experiences and be part of this important conversation about BIPOC diversity.

“Am I sex addicted?”

Topics: Breaking the cycle: This workshop explores compulsive sexual behaviors and how they can affect emotional well-being, relationships, and daily life. Participants will learn to recognize unhealthy patterns, understand the role of shame and trauma, and develop practical strategies for healing and lasting change. The focus is on self-awareness, healthy relationships, personal responsibility, and self-compassion rather than judgment.

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DEAF LEATHER FRATERNITY



Congratulations to Deaf Queer Men Only (DQMO)

On behalf of the Deaf Leather Fraternity (DLF), we proudly congratulate DQMO on your 2026 Gathering, July 29–August 2, 2026.

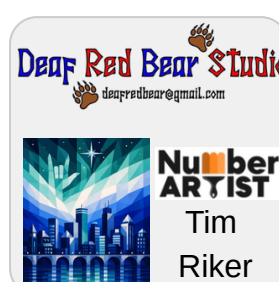
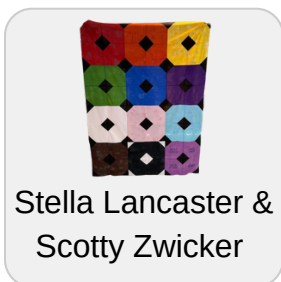
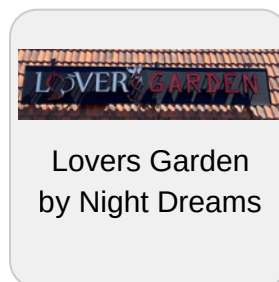
Your commitment to creating a welcoming space where Deaf Queer men can gather, connect, support one another, and celebrate their shared experiences continues to strengthen our community. We recognize and appreciate the hard work of your leaders, volunteers, and members who make this event possible year after year,

As you gather for fellowship, education, and celebration, we wish you a gathering rich in meaningful connections, memorable experiences, and continued success.

Many Thanks to Our Supporters & Sponsors

We are grateful to all the individuals, organizations, and sponsors who made DQMO 2026 possible.

Your generous support helps create a safe and celebrative space for our Deaf queer community.



Thank you for your support! ❤️ 🏳️‍🌈