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## **Equality Project kickoff event set Feb. 23**

### **Open Circle Unitarian Universalist Fellowship hosts event that focuses on equality for LGBTQ+ persons**

Open Circle Unitarian Universalist Fellowship

FOND DU LAC - As part of the UU Welcoming Congregation, Open Circle Unitarian Universalist Fellowship will host the kickoff event for The Equality Project, a monthly gathering to educate, support and take action to achieve equality for LGBTQ+ persons.

The event will be from 6 to 8:30 p.m., on Feb. 23 at Open Circle, located at 19 Third St., in Fond du Lac. All Fond du Lac residents are invited to attend.

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The evening will begin with a social gathering and refreshments. Welcomes and introductions from local LGBTQ leaders will follow at 6:30, leading to the screening of an episode of "Gaycation," a television series that follows actors Ellen Page and Ian Daniel as they explore LGBT cultures around the world. The episode screened will focus on LGBTQ+ issues in America, followed by discussion.

Plans for upcoming gatherings and related events also will be shared.

The Equality Project is the idea of UW-Fond du Lac Student Leader and Open Circle member Christopher Szymczak.

"In a world full of heteronormativity, The Equality Project is working towards helping end the stigmas and misconceptions about the LGBTQ+ community, starting here in Fond du Lac and then working our way out," Szymczak said. "Although we've achieved marriage equality with the U.S. Supreme Court case Obergefell v. Hodges, individuals who do not identify their sexual orientation as heterosexual are still oppressed and discriminated against in many ways. We still have work to do and right now we're doing it. It can be an uncomfortable topic for some, but we are here to help you understand and feel comfortable."

Like the local Humanity Project, with its goal of getting past race as a barrier, The Equality Project aims to remove gender and sexuality as barriers in understanding each other, and to improve relationships across the community.

Future Equality Project evenings will examine a variety of topics, such as: current issues; civility and equality; religion; LGBTQ history, including social justice leaders, the Stonewall Riots and Pride celebrations; protections for youth at school and in the community; days of remembrance such as Transgender Day of Remembrance and World Aids Day; LGBT families; and mental health.

Equality Project gatherings are scheduled at Open Circle on March 23, April 27, May 25 and June 8. Open Circle offers Sunday services at 10 a.m., September through June.

For more information, visit [ocuuf.org](http://ocuuf.org), or follow Open Circle Unitarian Universalist Fellowship on Facebook.



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