



# PAARS PAPER

The Purple Paper is part of the PAARS campaign, for all secondary school students  
Edition 2020-2021

 [www.paars.today](http://www.paars.today)

 [paars.today](https://www.instagram.com/paars.today)



Jacoba (25):  
"I don't feel sexually attracted to anyone"

Theatre artist Jaouad Alloul:  
"My family told me I should just learn to live with it"

OECD:  
"Homophobia could cost Belgium € 8 billion"

Teacher Nina:  
"My colleagues don't talk about their sexual orientation either"

Top model Hanne Gaby Odiele:

**"BE WHO YOU ARE,  
LOVE YOURSELF!"**



# EMBRACE DIVERSITY

Hey!

Thanks for your interest in our - admittedly - special newspaper. It will give you a view into a completely different world, though you'd be surprised at how closely you're connected with that world.

Connected... and yet not. Sometimes we don't know enough about certain cultures, hobbies, traditions, gender identities, sexual diversities, or religions to form an image of them. That's why we ask you to be open to what's covered in this newspaper. We hope that, through these stories, you'll gain new insights and understand how others live in our diverse world.

Diverse... and yet not. In a diverse world, you don't have to know everything about everyone, but it can be so enriching to know what other people can be like. Sometimes we may feel scared by diversity or we refuse to learn anything more about it because we already have an image of it in our heads. This kind of tunnel vision means that our stereotyped

ideas never change, even though they may be images and ideas we didn't necessarily come up with ourselves. Often, they're imposed on us by the media or by our environment. Or we form an image of something without really knowing its background.

Tunnel vision... and yet not. The fact that you're still reading, proves that you're open to taking a turn in the tunnel, to broadening your knowledge and seeing how diverse the world is. That makes life adventurous, impressive and hopeful ...

PAARS embraces diversity. When you wear purple, you embrace diversity.

Jeroen Thierens

- Co-organisator of PAARS



## "They ride their bike"

He/him and she/her are not the only personal pronouns in English. For example, there's also "they/them", which is common among non-binary people.

By Anke Truyers

The pronouns that a person uses, depend on their personal preference. Therefore, it's important that we learn to take this into account and use their pronouns correctly. Otherwise, some people feel excluded or invisible.

### Creative solution

Then how should you use those pronouns? Just the same as he and she. When someone goes for a walk, you say, "He/she is going for a walk." But you can also say: "Ask them if they are going for a walk." It may sound strange at first, but as always when you learn something new, only one thing counts: practice, practice, practice! For example, during class use only "they/them/their" pronouns. Do you run into a "strange" sounding sentence? Then challenge yourself and come up with a creative solution. It's a small effort for you, but for people with those pronouns, it's an important step towards recognition.

# PAARS, BECAUSE WE THINK IT'S NECESSARY

**No, the PAARS campaign has nothing to do with football teams or political parties. PAARS is part of a global school campaign to promote more tolerance and respect in Flanders and Brussels for LGBT+\* youth.**

We are calling for people to wear purple or purple accents during the week of May 17th, International Day Against Homophobia and Transphobia, to show support for LGBT + youth.

### Stop the bullying, wear purple

In 2010, 15-year-old American Brittany McMillan called upon her fellow students through social media to wear purple, as a sign of solidarity with LGBT + youth, who were often bullied. The event, known as Spirit Day, was a great success.

Brittany chose the colour purple because it comes from the rainbow flag and symbolises strength and courage, "Spirit" in other words. Everyone needs strength and courage to stand up for themselves and to be who they are.

After the overwhelming success in the United States, other countries followed with a similar campaign, including the Netherlands, where every year more than 1000 secondary schools participate in "Purple Friday".

### Belgium

The campaign has existed in Flanders since 2011 and is simply called "PAARS". A group of super enthusiastic volunteers, with help from experts, has been able to encourage more and more schools to participate in the PAARS campaign every year.

### PAARS newspaper

In 2019, the campaign shifted into higher gear and together with the students from the AP Hogeschool in Antwerp we created the "PAARS newspaper". Post-secondary education got involved in the campaign in 2019, after the Antwerp colleges with thousands of students had spontaneously organised PAARS on their own campuses too.

### All together now

In 2020, along with numerous secondary schools in dozens of cities and towns, all the universities and colleges in Flanders and Brussels declared that they also wanted to participate in the campaign. From 2021, PAARS will also be taken up by primary schools and youth associations.

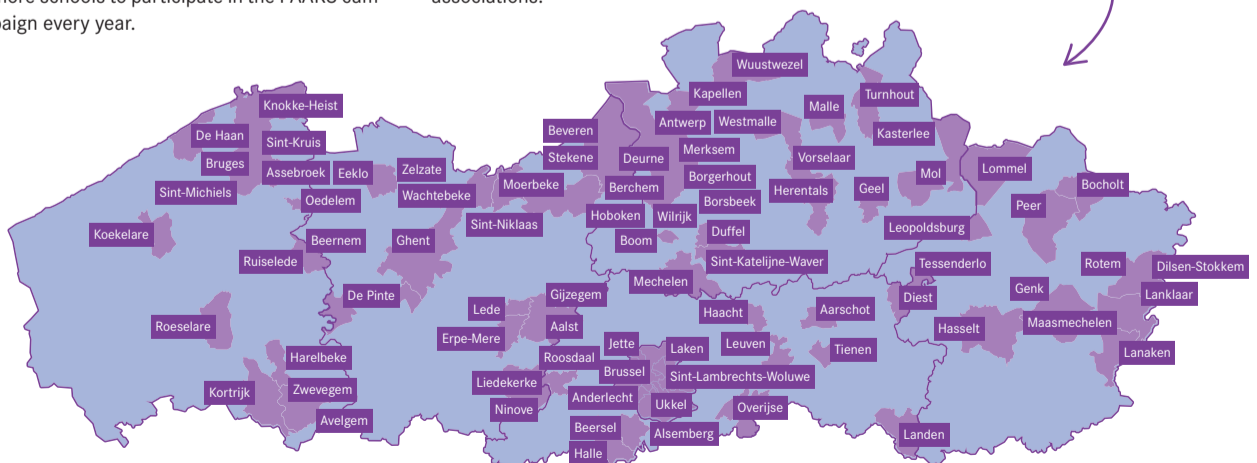
Would you like to organise PAARS at your school? Then get in touch with the school directors and student council to discuss it, take a look at our website [www.paars.today](http://www.paars.today) and contact [info@paars.be](mailto:info@paars.be) for more information.

**All the colours of the rainbow**

Each colour of the Pride flag has its own meaning. Pink stands for sexuality and red for life, orange for healing and yellow for sunlight. Green symbolises nature, indigo tranquillity and violet/purple spirit.

The American artist Gilbert Baker designed the flag.

On this map you can see in which cities and towns schools are taking part.



\* LGBT +: Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender and all other gender and sexual identities.

# “I get energy from the realisation that I can make a difference”

Ex-ambassador for PAARS, Senne, on role models

#PAARS #WelJongNietHetero! #rolemodel

Everyone has someone they look up to. Spokesperson for Wel Jong Niet Hetero (roughly “Young Yes Hetero No”) and former ambassador for PAARS, Senne Misplon (22, he/him), talks about his hero in the LGBT+ community and how he experiences being a role model for other young people.

By Martha Van den Eede en Fenne Verbeeck

“My hero in the Flemish LGBT+ community is Joppe De Campeneere\* (they/them) because they always find the right words to explain structural problems and emotions very clearly. They also very often use their platform to open up important issues, such as LGBT+, for discussion. That’s why I’m extremely happy that I get to work with them every day at Wel Jong Niet Hetero.”

“I didn’t have a role model, so I became one myself”

Did they make it 'easier' for you to come out as a trans?

“I didn’t know Joppe yet when I came out as a trans, so he didn’t necessarily make it easier for me. After this process, on the other hand, they

have become a huge example for me and for as long as I’ve known them, I’ve really looked up to them.”

How do you deal with the fact that you’re an LGBT+ role model for many young people?

“That’s an incredibly cool thought. Especially because I never really had that kind of role model when I was growing up, so I simply became one myself! I do feel a certain pressure, because I know that people follow me and look up to me. So I pay very close attention to the things I say and the way I behave. It does take some responsibility and sometimes that can be very tiring. Anyway, I get energy from the people around me and from the realisation that I can make a difference.”

Senne also gives online training on gender and sexual diversity. Here, he explains concepts such as gender, sex, gender expression, etc., and discusses gender stereotypes. There are also tailor-made training programmes for young people in secondary school.

Last year, Jitske Van de Veire (27, she/he) and Uwi Van Hauwermeiren (29, they/them) were

also ambassadors for PAARS. Like Senne, they are spokespersons for Wel Jong Niet Hetero and are very much involved in LGBT+ activism. They also consider body positivity and gender expression to be important subjects.

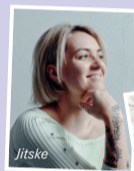
“I’m happy that I get to work with Joppe”

Their social media accounts are full of inspiring messages.

@jitskevandeveire  
@uwi.tempspournous  
@sennemisplon  
@joppe\_dc

Joppe De Campeneere fights for diversity

Joppe (23, they/them) identifies as queer, doesn’t like labels and thinks that people shouldn’t be pigeonholed. Just like Senne, Joppe is active at Wel Jong Niet Hetero, as a ‘digital content creator’. They are also a freelance journalist and have a lifestyle blog, Sparkel.eu. On this blog, it’s all about diversity and Joppe creates a platform with other voices from the queer community.



Jitske



Uwi



Senne

Photo Jitske: Jitske Van de Veire.  
Photo Senne: Fabrice Oyedele.  
Photo Uwi: Uwi Vanhauwermeiren.

## Coming out in your youth group

#scouts #Chiro #KSA #KLJ #ComingOut #It’sOkaytoSayStop #TalkAboutIt

For many young people, the meeting-place of the local scouts, Chiro or KSA are like a second home. But it can also be quite daunting to out yourself there. Fortunately, there are always people ready to help you, such as your leaders or your friends!

By Louise Anthonissen & Julie Gedopt

“After an embarrassing silence, an even more embarrassing applause followed”

“I was 15 and realised that some jokes weren’t funny and even hurtful. Sven, a leader, made me realise that I can say “stop”. When we were together as a group, I stepped forward and said “I’m gay”. Five seconds of silence followed, very embarrassing, then, more embarrassingly, they started to applaud. Still, I was happy, I had been afraid I would be bullied or would have to quit Scouts.” – Philippe

“Everyone already suspected it”

“We were in a group when the leaders announced that someone needed to say something. Philippe confirmed what I already suspected. The next five seconds remained very quiet because you don’t experience something like that every day. I was one of the first to applaud. I wanted to show respect and signal that it totally doesn’t matter”.

“I was considerate of Philippe as much as possible. When we’d be talking about girls, I would ask him about the boys. It always felt a bit awkward, but I thought it was important.” – Quinten

“We celebrated it while doing the dishes”

“We were washing the dishes with a few leaders, then another leader - that one had a girlfriend herself - suddenly asked another leader: “Lynn, I’ve wanted to know for so long now. Do you like girls?” We’d had a hunch for some time, but no one had ever dared to ask so explicitly. Our suspicions turned out to be correct, so we held a small party between doing the dishes to celebrate Lynn’s coming out.” – Lori

“Some no longer wanted to share a tent with her”

“We were at Chiro camp when a girl came out. Some girls found it uncomfortable to sleep in her tent afterwards. I had not yet outed myself at the time, but had felt that I liked girls for some time as well. I talked to her to reassure her. And a leader who had been open about it for some time had a constructive conversation with the rest of the group.” – Fien

Anna (45):

# “Parents have to help children be themselves”

#LiveAndLetLive #BeWhoYouAre  
#GenderNeutralParenting

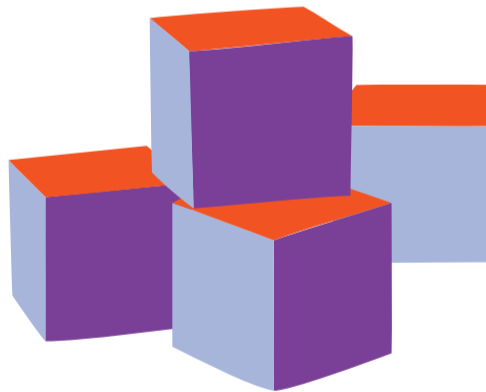
More and more parents are raising their children without a distinction between girls and boys. Anna is one of those parents. She carries her convictions into her work as an educator.

By Demi Feron

“Toys are an important part of gender-neutral parenting. If a boy wants to play with a doll, that's okay. If he doesn't want to, that's okay too. For me all colours can be for boys or girls, and I always pay attention to the use of pronouns. I remember a 10-year-old girl who corrected me when I said "Girl" to her. In her eyes she had no gender. I try to take this into account by using their name as much as possible.”

If you think about it, children themselves make no gendered distinction at all in their choice of toys. “I once played 'hair salon' with my class. We took care of the children's hair and even applied nail polish. It's very important in such cases to make it clear that every child is allowed to participate. The boys were also allowed to paint their nails. The kids had so much fun with it. They wanted to do it again some time.”

There are still many prejudices against gender-neutral education, Anna remarks. “I was often viewed strangely and not taken seriously, which is a pity, because in my opinion it's important that a child is happy. Whether it's with a doll or racing car in their hands, as long as a child can be itself. Parents need to support their children in this. But there's still a lot of work to be done.”



## Not just for women

Always, the brand for menstrual pads and tampons, advertised their products for years with the feminine Venus symbol. That's not right, thought transgender men, and they demanded gender-neutral packaging. So, Always removed the symbol.

# CIS, GENDER, TRANS, PAN! - EVH, WHAT?

#BiseksuWhat #PlayWithWords #SelfLove

If you don't know what you're talking about, you'd better keep quiet, right? Therefore, you can find a list of basic terms below. You'll get the hang of it in no time.

By Seppe Frans en Senne Croonen

Y	S	Y	T	M	L	Z	N	C	Q	F	U	I	H	R	R	Q	K
D	N	E	U	H	O	M	O	S	E	X	U	A	L	A	X	K	V
V	W	X	E	S	R	E	T	N	I	Y	M	R	O	A	H	V	E
C	Z	H	F	Y	B	V	P	W	J	V	D	G	N	L	X	R	R
I	Y	O	I	X	X	P	C	X	T	B	V	G	B	U	O	V	B
V	A	W	L	E	C	N	A	I	R	A	V	R	E	D	N	E	G
S	S	N	J	A	I	R	G	H	W	U	H	E	N	G	G	V	U
H	E	A	U	Z	U	C	E	B	W	V	H	O	O	X	I	K	Y
P	X	I	P	P	T	X	H	D	M	Q	N	T	X	V	S	K	H
L	U	B	F	L	B	E	E	S	N	B	R	A	L	O	G	L	B
T	A	S	M	A	G	L	Q	S	I	E	B	E	I	Z	L	A	I
S	L	E	F	D	L	T	F	N	I	Y	G	H	E	D	V	U	J
R	O	L	Y	L	W	T	A	Y	M	B	X	S	P	U	T	X	A
B	B	E	J	H	A	R	X	I	K	D	H	S	I	V	Q	E	W
E	I	G	R	Q	Y	P	K	G	E	N	D	E	R	C	X	S	E
F	E	T	R	A	N	S	G	E	N	D	E	R	U	B	I	N	K
A	T	Q	E	Z	G	A	C	W	F	U	W	Q	P	K	V	A	U
Q	T	H	U	K	N	U	N	J	G	F	V	D	C	W	R	P	I

### LGBT+

The term LGBT + stands for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender. The + stands for all other sexual and gender identities. So, it's an overarching term for the whole community.

### Homosexual

A homosexual man is a man who is attracted to other men.

### Lesbian

A lesbian woman is a woman who is attracted to other women.

### Bisexual

People who like men as well as women. That is to say that they experience romantic or sexual attraction towards both men and women.

### Asexual

Asexual means that you feel little or no sexual attraction. You can be emotionally attracted to someone but not be interested in sex.

### Intersex

Intersex people's bodies have both masculine as well as feminine characteristics. Those can already be visible at birth or only show themselves later in life. Therefore, being intersex has nothing to do with attraction or gender identity. (see also p. 7)

### Pansexual

Pansexuality is when you are attracted to someone regardless of their gender.

### Queer

It's an umbrella term for all individuals who are not straight or cisgender. The term used to be used to shame people, but has by now grown into a pillar in the LGBT+ community.

### Gender

You are born either a boy or a girl. Thus begins a process in which ideas and expectations arise around masculinity and femininity.

### Cisgender

Cisgender means that a person's gender identity matches their assigned gender at birth.

### Transgender

If your gender identity does not correspond to the one you were assigned at birth, you are transgender. Some transgender people transition, which may mean hormone replacement therapy (HRT) or surgery, or changing the way they present themselves, e.g. through clothing.

### Non-binary

A person who identifies with or expresses a gender identity that is neither entirely male nor entirely female.

### Gender variance

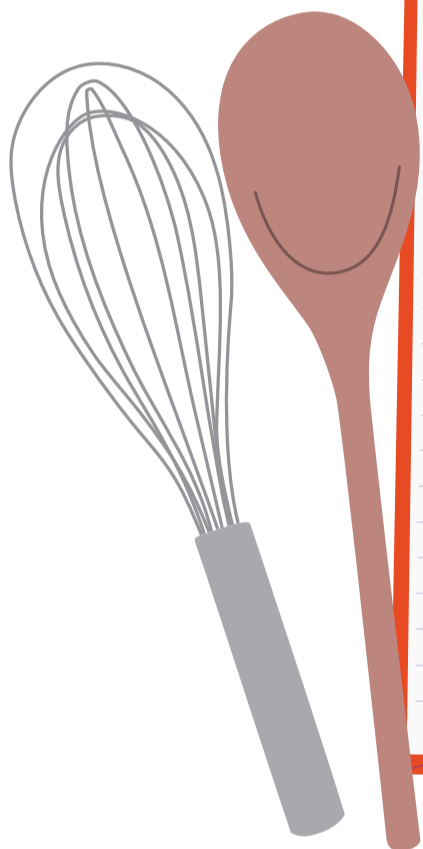
At birth, you are assigned a particular gender, and are then pushed towards a particular stereotypical role. For example, boys wear blue and girls wear pink. Gender variance means that you disagree with and do not dress or behave according to those stereotypes.



# How to bake GENDERBREAD

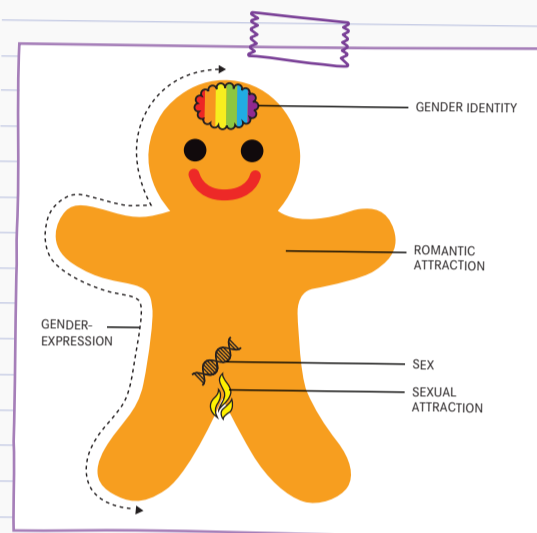
By Senne Croonen

#EatingGood #FeelingGood #ComfortFood



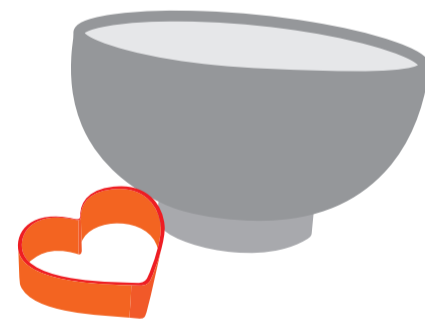
## Ingredients:

- \* 250 grams gender identity  
(How do you feel inside, masculine, feminine, something in-between or something else?)
- \* 100 grams of romantic attraction  
(Who do you fall in love with? Does gender identity matter at all, or do you not feel attracted to anybody?)
- \* 4 tablespoons of sex  
(Your sex is determined at birth based on your physical characteristics, penis, vagina, body hair ...)
- \* 2 parts sexual attraction  
(Do you feel turned-on by someone? Or are you not sexually attracted to others?)
- \* 5 lumps of gender expression  
(How do you behave? How do you speak, how do you move, how do you dress ...)
- \* A pinch of love  
(Love is when 2 or more people have strong feelings of affection, attachment, devotion, fondness, or passion towards each other)
- \* 1 baking sheet



## Preparation:

- 1 Preheat your heart to 37 degrees.
- 2 Finely chop the romantic attraction
- 3 Sift the gender identity until there are no more doubts.
- 4 Add the romantic attraction, a pinch of love and a dash of self-confidence.
- 5 Mix the dough until you get a magical mixture that will come out of your heart deliciously.
- 6 Roll out the dough and shape the genderbread bodies, in whatever way feels right to you.
- 7 Put the genderbread on a baking sheet and put it gently in your heart. That way, when you need it, you can always take a little genderbread from your heart.
- 8 Enjoy your special genderbread!



**CAVARIA**  
FORUM VOOR HETBEN EN TRANSGENDER

Want to learn more about genderbread?  
Take a look at [www.cavaria.be/genderkoek](http://www.cavaria.be/genderkoek)

## OMG, AM I ACTING TOO GAY?!

Having fun without having to wonder if you're acting "too gay" or might seem "a little weird" can do you so much good. At Min19 online and in real life.

On min19.be you'll find other young people in your area, you can chat, share your stories and experiences in the forum ... Create an account with your e-ID, and you're good to go. Completely safe.

Min 19 organises activities throughout Flanders and Brussels. Sometimes they'll do a city game, go to an amusement park, to Pride or hold a movie afternoon. In spring and autumn, they organise a weekend and, in the summer, you can join them on the Min 19 summer camp.

Are you between 13 and 19 years old and are you gay, lesbian, bisexual, pansexual, transgender... or unsure about your sexuality or about your feelings, then please be sure to take a look at the website!



[www.min19.be](http://www.min19.be), also on Facebook  
[min19@weljongniethetero.be](https://www.facebook.com/min19@weljongniethetero.be)

min19

# BEYOND GENDER ROLES

## “I still stand out in that big group of men

#DownWithStereotypes #GenderRoles #ArmyGirl

During the week she can be found in the auditoriums of Ghent University, but every now and then she swaps her skirts, dresses, and colourful sneakers for camo patterns and combat boots. Valerie is 21 and, for two years now, has been training to become a doctor in the army.

By Louise Anthonissen

“I’ve always wanted to do something out of the ordinary, something adventurous. When I discovered that I could study medicine and combine it with a military job, that was the ideal scenario. And that soon became a reality: at the beginning of my third year, I started working for the Ministry of Defence.

I’m a normal student in student housing, but I’m also a second lieutenant. A few weekends a year, I take extra classes like preparation for my job in the Defence department, later. During the

“It’s totally not true that all women in the army have a masculine side!”

summer I spend two weeks at military camp and I do a two-week internship at the military hospital. Every now and then I march in parades or have to take exams at the Royal Military Academy.

I give up some of my spare time for it, but my studies also have many advantages: I lead the same life as my friends, but at the same time, I have a steady income. I wouldn’t want to be a student anymore without being a soldier!”

### Man’s world

“The prejudice that the military is a real man’s world is partially correct. As a woman, I still stand out in that

big group of men. But that’s gradually changing, especially in the medical services. And you also notice that everyone treats us with great respect and care. I haven’t encountered many nasty comments or situations.

But for the physical tests that I have to do, there is a difference between the sexes. The requirements are adjusted – just like in high school running tests – and as women, we don’t have to score as high. For combat functions, that is not the case. A woman who wants to become a para-commando has to be able to run just as fast as a man.

And one more bias I want to debunk: it’s totally not true that all women in the army have a masculine side!”

### What’s next?

“The fact that I’m now in training at the Ministry of Defence also means that my plans for the coming years have already been determined. After my medical training, I will become a lieutenant and after my specialization, I will have to continue to work for one and a half times as long as Defence has paid me up till now – so, in my case about six years – for the Belgian army. I will then work part-time at the base and part-time at a normal hospital, because as a doctor I also have to maintain my non-military skills, of course.

Once or twice a year, I will go abroad to provide support to departments of Defence there. Those are not always war situations, it can also be training missions. Belgian soldiers always have to have access to the same medical service abroad that they would get here in Belgium and it’s my job is to provide that.” ■

Some professions are inseparably associated with a certain gender. We call these stereotypes. We went out in search of individuals who have broken out of that gender role pattern. More testimonials are available at [www.paars.today](http://www.paars.today)!



## “Sometimes I wonder why parents choose me

#AnythingButStereotypical #DaycareFather #Hetero

Anyone looking for a childminder in the Lier area might come across... Harald. He’s a male childminder who runs an in-home daycare service, a job generally done by women.

By Julie Gedopt

### Gender-neutral toilets

From now on all new office buildings are required to have a gender-neutral toilet. From this summer forward, the Belgian National Railways will also start providing gender-neutral toilets in all train stations. They are not yet mandatory in schools.

“My wife is a night nurse and I was working night shifts at Het Laatste Nieuws. With three young children, that became impossible to combine.” So Harald started looking for an alternative.

“I don’t really know why I became a daycare provider, maybe because I spent so many years in the Chiro scouts. And turning 40, that does something to you.”

### Getting your nails done

“In Belgium, there are only 400 of us ‘daycare fathers’ in total, a real minority. I don’t really have any trouble with it except, at major events, when it’s all childminders. Then I feel quite out of place. All the activities are aimed at women, such as make-up stands, getting your nails done...”

### Why me?

“This week, it’s been exactly 10 years since I started. I started my first day with a 3-month-old

baby.” That was the beginning of Harald’s career as a daycare provider.

“Everything goes much smoother, now, dealing with the children but also with the parents. Sometimes I wonder why parents choose me. I once had a lesbian couple who brought their daughter to me, so that she would also have a male figure in her daily life.”

### Calling

“I’ve never had any problems or comments, right from the start I received very positive reactions. Being a childminder was never my calling. Yet, it’s a profession that’s not for everyone. And that’s a very important factor if you want to be a good daycare provider.” ■





Because Hanne is non-binary, the pronouns them and their are used. So, you won't read "she was born in 1988", but "they were born in 1988". Also not "At the age of 29, she told her friends that she is intersex", but rather, "At the age of 29, they told their friends that they are intersex". But don't worry, you'll soon get used to it!



"Be who you are.  
Love yourself!"

#Intersex #NonBinary #LoveYourself



Photo: Dominique Models Agency. Photographer: Rafégram. Styling: Geoffrey Masure. Makeup: Sébastien Peffer.

**Hanne Gaby Odiele (32) revealed publicly three years ago that they are intersex. In this way, they became a role model in addition to being a model**

By Louise Anthonissen

**Being born an intersex person, what does that mean exactly?**

"I was born with gender characteristics that don't really fit within the typical description of male or female. It's often thought that intersex people are in between the two sexes, but that's a misconception. We fall outside the traditional binary world. We sometimes say to each other that we're born too cute to be binary." (laughs)

**You're also non-binary, but that's not the same as intersex?**

"No, that's true, while intersex is about sex, non-binarity is about gender, about how you identify yourself. Someone who's intersex is not always non-binary, because how you feel

is different for everyone. I chose to go through life as non-binary, because my own body was taken from me. As a child I was operated on, without my consent. By now determining my own gender identity, I can reclaim a bit of my body."

*"It's about a person, and how that person wants to present themselves."*

**You were operated on without your consent?**

"Yes, I was very young and wasn't aware of it when I had surgery. That has left me with permanent injuries, both physically and psychologically. I want to fight the fact that those operations still happen without children giving their consent. That's one of the main reasons I came out as intersex. We still live in a binary world, in which we have to put ourselves in the boxes of man or woman as soon as we're born,

but we need to move away from that. It's not about gender, but about a person, and how that person wants to present themselves."

**According to the figures of Intersex Flanders, about 1.7% of the population is born with an intersex condition. Why is the term still so unknown?**

"There's still a lot of shame about it. You often can't tell by looking at us that we are intersex, so we keep it to ourselves. Plus, there's a lot of fear, such as the fear of not being able to fall in love with anyone, for example, and that's really

*"Since I came out as intersex, I have really felt tremendously relieved."*

unfortunate. But ever since I came out as intersex, I have really felt tremendously relieved. Before I came out publicly, I first told my friends one by one. Many of them had never heard of

intersex people either, but it all went very well. And in the meantime, I've become really proud of it, that I was born like this.

That's also what I want to give to young people who are born intersex. Ultimately, it's only a small part of yourself, and personally, I think it's great. And there are always people who are going to really love you. Be who you are. Love yourself." ■

### Hanne Gaby Odiele

- \* Born in 1988 in Kortrijk
- \* Lives and works as a model in New York
- \* Has been on magazine covers including Elle & Vogue
- \* Married the American DJ John Swiatek in 2016
- \* Announced in 2017 that they were born an intersex person and are non-binary

## GAY SON

I have a son who's gay. His father and I have nothing against gay men, and when our own son turned out to be gay, that was no problem for us, as opposed to our son himself, who had a hard time with it.

He would never find a good partner, he thought, because he felt he was the only gay man in the world. And the idea that even a single person at school might laugh at him for being gay was unbearable for him.

Why did our son stay miserably in the closet for five years? As parents, were we really as open-minded as we thought we were? What could we have done differently? For starters, use the word "fairy", which in fact we did use now and then, without giving it any thought. What I'd also do is read stories to him from a young age about families with "two moms" and "two dads".

Little straight boys would then see that there can be forms of relationship other than a prince who marries a princess. And little gay boys wouldn't feel all that stress later, when they realize that they don't fall for princesses.

PAARS didn't exist when our son was in high school. I sometimes think: what would the effect of such a campaign have been on him? A campaign that's all about showing support and solidarity to LGBT+ youth and providing an accessible way to talk about the LGBT+ topic?

In the end, everything turned out fine for our son; he has a partner with whom he has been together now for six years.

— Petra, chair of parents with LGBT kids 'Proud Parents'; co-organiser of PAARS. [www.trotseouders.be](http://www.trotseouders.be)



Proud Parents

# BI OR PAN, DOES IT MATTER?

#Bi #Pan #RainbowhouseLimburg #OutandProud #Labels



**Are you familiar with the difference between bi and pan? Timo (25) from the Rainbow House Limburg says it's not necessary to understand it. "You are your own definition."**

By Belén Zárate Garay

"Bi" stands for 'bisexual': you like both men and women", says Elke (26), who is also a volunteer at the Rainbow House. 'Pan' is ancient Greek for 'everything'. That means you can feel attracted to all gender identities, including to trans people. Bisexuality is therefore an umbrella term, and pansexuality is a branch of it."

"Of course, there's a difference between the two," says Timo. "For example, I could personally identify with the more specific pan, but bi is sufficient."

Elke nods. "I doubted for the longest time whether I was bi. That type of 'precise' label can give you something to hold onto if you are still a bit confused, but in time you learn to let it go again."

*"We don't want to overload the students with all sorts of terms"*

#### Education

The Rainbow House also gives training in schools. "In two hours of class time, we try to teach something as clearly as possible. We make a point of starting from the knowledge

that the schoolchildren already have. After all, the LGBT+ community is big, and we don't want to overload the students with all sorts of terms."

Timo emphasises that some kids have only just begun to come into contact with LGBT+. "Binary thinking still dominates," adds Elke. "Many of them already have trouble with the concept of being bi. If you add pan to that and multiple gender identities, for some of them it gets to be too much and they don't take anything away from the training. So, we keep it simple with them, if necessary."

#### Out and proud

Elke has often noticed that people cramp up when the subject of LGBT+ themes is broached. "When I was an educator, someone came out as trans. Colleagues insisted that we should not talk about it because it was something 'weird'. I was against that, but they didn't listen to the objections of a young girl like me. I went and got a lot of information about binary thinking from the Rainbow House in Hasselt that I tossed on the table at the next meeting of the teachers' group. 'Here's all the info, inform yourself,' I said."

Now Elke helps others. "When I still had my doubts about my sexuality, I was surrounded here at the Rainbow House by people who are out and proud. That helped a lot. Now I provide information to others and I try to give back as much as possible what I got here."



www.regenbooghuislimburg.be

# HOORAY! 25 YEARS OF THE PINK HOUSE!

#25YearsThePinkHouse #SafeHaven #HappyBirthday

Dear Pink House,

First and foremost, I wish you a very happy 25th birthday! During that period, you have already done a good job of defending our rights and fought tenaciously to give the LGBT+ community a place of its own. You should be very proud of that. Here's hoping that there will be another twenty-five years at least to come, so that the world can become even more inclusive and our community can grow even bigger and stronger.

Second, I would like to thank you for what you have done for me personally. You gave me a place as part of your reception team, which has fulfilled a bit of my lifelong ambition, namely, making the world a little more beautiful - if only by being able to help a few people by listening to them and/or help search for solutions.

Also, the opportunities that I have at your house or at events such as T-Day to give training on gender-inclusive language and non-binarity mean a lot to me. In this way, you have given me the chance to further develop my capacities. Thanks!

— Anke Truyers, works at Gender-spectrum Antwerp



Photo: Tom Van Laethem



www.hetrozehuis.be

# AT EASE THANKS TO THE RAINBOW CHARTER

**36 municipalities in West Flanders have already signed the rainbow charter from Rebus, the West Flanders rainbow house. It shows their commitment to ensuring that everyone feels safe and accepted.**

By Julie Gedopt

The charter contains six goals:

- 1 We inform the public and spread awareness
- 2 We collect knowledge and surround ourselves with experts
- 3 We support and empower LGABTRQIA\* persons in our municipality/city
- 4 We increase equal opportunities and safety in our city
- 5 We pay attention to LGABTRQIA\* persons in what we offer and the image we project
- 6 We need each other; we are all in this together

Rebus is a network of associations in West Flanders that provides support for schools, associations and municipalities.

Torhoutsesteenweg 123, 8400 Ostend  
059 43 96 17 – 0499 63 36 47 – info@rebuswvl.be

# 'JA & OF!' (YES, INDEED!)

By Milan Baeyens

Leuven. Weekly activities. LGBT+. Under 30. The '&of' group combines it all.

'&of' is an association in Leuven, focused on LGBT+ youth and activities. That ranges from training about coming out and sexuality, to leisure activities such as bowling or ice skating. &of is the place for getting to know new people. Newcomers don't have to fear the unknown, because they can already get a taste during one of the beginners' events.

www.enof.be



# PAARS: A SIGN OF SOLIDARITY AND ACCEPTANCE

#RainbowCorridor #UnitedWe'reStrong #PAARS2020

**The PAARS campaign is dear to the heart of Julie Van Gerven, a teacher at the Atheneum Voskenslaan in Ghent. "It's an open project in which young people show solidarity together and a safe climate is created for the LGBT+ community."**

*By Manon Van Hauwaert*

Van Gerven has been teaching non-denominational ethics for eight years. There is room in the lesson plan for different aspects of identity. "The PAARS campaign fits in perfectly with any ethics lesson. I was covering the theme even before I knew about PAARS."

*"By wearing purple, we create a safe climate for the LGBT+ community"*

### Genderbread

The teacher uses the genderbread cookie (see p.5), a visual aid for talking about all aspects of identity. "I mean, I make it clear to my students that identity varies and that someone doesn't have to behave in a certain way just because he or she is gay."

### From rainbow ice creams to a rainbow corridor

All the ethics teachers worked together to make the topic of LGBT+ accessible for

class discussion. So, the children knew what was on the programme on PAARS day. "We sold rainbow ice creams during break times. We used the proceeds to buy purple fabric to dress up our school mascot, the fox. The hallways were decorated with posters and students shared bracelets and stick-on tattoos. At the end of the day, we had a PAARS school. Cool!"

The campaign has left a permanent mark: a "rainbow corridor". A rainbow decorates the wall of the corridor where the ethics classes are taught. That way, it's a little PAARS all year round."



*Foto: Julie Van Gerven*



*Photo: Julie Van Gerven*



# 3 COOL SPOTS IN BRUSSELS

Belgium is one of the most LGBT+ friendly countries in the world, so it's no surprise that the capital has many great places to discover. From the Rainbow House to cool cafes and clubs, you'll find it all in Brussels.

*By Annelies Tolenaar*

### The RainbowHouse

Kolenmarkt 42, 1000 Brussel

The Rainbow House is both an information point and a meeting place in Brussels. In collaboration with Brussels associations, all kinds of activities are organised there, including festivals and film screenings.



### Street art by Tikkou en König

Lollepotstraat, 1000 Brussel

The beautiful murals throughout the Lollepotstraat were made for the 2015 Pride Festival. The project "Out in the street" came about through the cooperation between the Rainbow House, the City of Brussels, the non-profit organisation Urbana, the HuisvandeMens and the Ancienne Belgique.



### Kolenmarkt

Kolenmarkt, 1000 Brussel

Eat, have a drink, dance, shop... It is all possible in the "Rainbow-village" on the Kolenmarkt smack in the city centre. Be sure to visit café Le Fontainas or one of the many other great bars nearby.



# Coming-in

Most people are fairly familiar with the concept of 'coming out of the closet', but it means more than that. You are also making your entrance into the LGBT+ community.

## "Among my people, in my place"

**"I was 17, angry with my parents and said: 'I'm chatting with a boy, I'm gay.'" That was the coming out of Sfiso (22). His 'coming in' was a time of wonder and renewal.**

*By Thabo Xulu*

"The first time I came into contact with the community was at the Pride. I still remember feeling 'Wow!...: I'm here among my people, in my place.' It was also an eye-opening time, sexually. The line between the sexual and the platonic was almost non-existent."

## "I changed my name"

**"Fre (24) posted on Facebook that he's bisexual"**

*By Silke Haentjens*

"I was already in the community before my coming out. I went to 'Verkeerd Geparkeerd' (Parked Wrong) in Ghent, an association by and for LGBTs between ages 19 and 30. The people there helped me tremendously. A lot has changed since my coming out. I embrace my feminine side, I like to wear make-up and heels, even if I don't dare walk down the street like that yet. But I dare to walk more openly myself. And I changed my name from Frederik to Fre because that sounds more gender-neutral."

## "Many people are biphobic"

**Thomas (19) has been in the community for a while, but not all of his experiences have been positive.**

*By Mathilda Jack*

"A lot of people don't realise how biphobic they are. Not only straight people, also members of the gay community itself. Some gay men think being bi is easier. It's absolutely not like that. My friends from the community forced me to come out, but I wasn't ready at the time."

## "As long as there's love"

**Julie (20) is pansexual and feels super like that.**

*By Martha Van den Eede*

"Sometimes older people stare as we go by, whispering 'Were those actually two girls?' But when I get to know people who also identify themselves as 'non-heterosexual', there's already a kind of bond. The feeling is hard to explain but it seems like a family. We know that in the past, people fought and suffered to be able to be who they are, that's why there's now such a sense of community."

It's great to be in a community which doesn't judge you for who you are or for how you identify. That doesn't matter anyway, as long as there's love."

# LAWS, RULES AND RIGHTS, HOW DOES THE WORLD VIEW LGBT+?

#PositiveAndNegative #GayMarriage #Worldwide

In some countries, LGBT+ people are free to do whatever they want, in other countries, they are outlawed and sometimes literally hunted. In 72 countries, homosexuality is still a criminal offense. This map shows some tragic examples as well as some LGBT+ rights success stories. More info about LGBT+ rights worldwide is available from ILGA\*.

By Anne de Nijs



## Lesbian prime minister

11/06/2010: the **Icelandic** parliament made marriage gender-neutral. On June 27, 2010, same-sex marriage was legalised and Prime Minister Jóhanna Sigurðardóttir married her female partner. She was the first head of government to be married to someone of the same sex.



## What do the people say?

22/05/2015: **Ireland** is the first country to hold a referendum on same-sex marriage. 62% of the Irish were in favour of a constitutional amendment for same-sex marriage. On November 16, 2015 same-sex marriage was legalised.

## LGBT+ country

If the entire LGBT+ community were a country, that country would have the fourth largest GDP\* in the world. With a GDP of 4.6 trillion US dollars, it would only be behind the US, China and Japan. Belgium would follow at a considerable distance with a GDP of just under half a trillion.

\* GDP (gross domestic product: the total monetary value of all goods and services of a country)

## The first in the world

01/04/2001: **The Netherlands** allows marriage for people of the same sex. It is the first country in the world to do so. For the first time, there is a place where gay people can officially get married! There is no separate gay marriage; civil marriage is now for everyone.

## Silver for Belgium

2019: ILGA-Europe\* ranks **Belgium** as the second best country (after Malta) for LGBT+ rights in Europe. But there's still a lot of work to be done here, especially in Brussels. Main reasons that are given for this: social disadvantage, religion and a more outspoken macho culture.



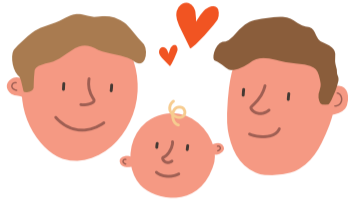
## Nothing in the law

There's nothing about being LGBT+ in **Egyptian** law. Yet you can get up to 17 years in prison for it. In 2013, 95% of Egyptians thought homosexuality should not be accepted. As an LGBT+ tourist, you can also be refused entry into the country or be deported.



### Veto from the president

26/01/2006: registered partnership for LGBT people is approved in the **Czech Republic**. But president Václav Klaus still holds back the law with a veto. On March 15, 2006, that veto is overturned and the partnership is allowed anyway. Meanwhile, LGBTs have also become legally eligible to adopt children.



### Torture and murder

From 2017: In the **Chechen Republic**, gays are being abducted and tortured. In 2017 there were at least 100 men taken. Several of them perished. In 2018, the Chechen government launched a new campaign to combat gays. Russia refuses to investigate that campaign.



### First in Asia



17/05/2019: **Taiwan** is the first Asian country to legalise gay marriage. Couples are allowed to get married if both partners have the nationality of a country where same-sex marriage is allowed. Adoption is not yet possible.

### Stoning

03/04/2019: In **Brunei**, gay men get the death penalty by stoning. Inspired by Sharia, the strict Islamic law was introduced by Sultan Bolkuah. Worldwide there is protest, among others by celebrities such as George Clooney, Elton John and Ellen DeGeneres.



### To the World Cup soccer, or not?

In **Qatar** it is not clear what punishment you can receive for homosexuality, but there have been known cases in which people have been locked up for life there. In 2022, Qatar will host the World Cup, and there are many gay fans who are afraid of the consequences if they travel to the country.



### Non-constitutional

01/12/2005: in **South Africa** the court ruled that same-sex marriage should be allowed. The constitution states that there should be no discrimination based on sexual orientation. South Africa legalised same-sex marriage on November 30, 2006 as the fifth country in the world and first African country.



# “I’M OFTEN NOT TAKEN SERIOUSLY”

Jacoba (25) has no interest in sex

#Ace #Invisible #SexEducation #Representation #Queer

“If I had known before what asexuality is, I never would have convinced myself that I needed to have a relationship. I sometimes feel guilty towards previous partners, as if I’ve wasted their time or lied to them.”*Jacoba is asexual.*

By Belén Zárate Garay

“I would describe asexuality as a lack of sexual attraction. When you’re straight you feel no sexual attraction towards your same sex, if you are gay, you don’t feel any for the opposite sex. I have those feelings too, but then, towards everyone.”

Before I knew what asexuality was, I thought everyone had to go through a difficult phase where they had to force themselves to fall in love. I just thought I had to try harder.”

**Negative reactions**

When Jacoba was 19, she heard about asexuality for the

first time. “That’s quite late, but in high school they only focused on relationships or safe sex and never on when you don’t want sex at all. Let alone on asexuality.”

For a long time Jacoba did not know how to deal with the fact that she did not experience sexual attraction. “At first I thought I was bi because I felt the same kind of feelings towards everyone, or rather, lack of feelings.”

When I came out as asexual or ace, I mostly got negative reactions. People said I couldn’t know that I was ace unless I had tried ‘it’ and that I couldn’t expect my future boyfriend to give up sex for me.

*“Representation is so important”*

But I’m happy with how things are, that’s difficult for many people to understand.

**Even geeks have sex**

I still have to justify myself. I often don’t get taken seriously when I say I’m ace, but what else can you expect? It’s really difficult to understand something that you’ve never come into contact with, that’s why there need to be more examples.

Sex is so normal in daily life that even a geek like Sheldon Cooper from ‘The Big Bang Theory’ has sex. I was thrilled when an asexual character was included in the Netflix series ‘Sex Education’. Representation is so important. People would understand asexuality much better if there was more representation.”

www.asexual.be



# “LEARNING TO WALK IN HIGH HEELS WAS NO EASY FEAT”

#HighHeels #MisterGayBelgium #ComfortOverFashion

People who think of high heels for men often associate it with drag. Joren Houtevels, a finalist for Mister Gay Belgium 2020, proves the contrary. He combines heels with hoodies, T-shirts, jeans. And everyone regards that as menswear, right?

By Jana Huysmans

“People often look surprised when I walk down the street in heels. I understand that. I’m already 1.86 meters tall myself. So that’s 2 meters with heels, which makes me stand out more anyway. In the beginning it was difficult to ignore looks, but now I want people to look at it and be confronted. Men in heels or men with makeup exist. People just have to get used to that.”

**Comfort over fashion**

“Every beginning is difficult, they say. That’s how it was for me when I had to learn to walk in heels. Especially on the cobblestone streets of Leuven, that’s no easy feat. That’s why I switched from stilettos to slightly thicker heels, such as boots. I can easily walk around in them all day long without getting sore feet. They’re that comfortable!”

**Not a daily routine**

“My heels are not part of my everyday outfit. I mainly wear them when I go out. I sometimes dare to wear them during the day to school. Then I get up and think: ‘Yes, I will wear them again today.’ And then I wear them with pride.”



# “I dazzle the bus driver with my highlighter”

#Mua #BeautyKing #MenWearMakeupToo #Homo

*Everyone in love*

People with Down’s syndrome fall in love with people of the same sex too. For example, Peter told the TV show Down The Road that he has a crush on Dieter Coppens.

More and more men are wearing makeup. Beauty brands are responding alertly to this and have been marketing makeup lines for men for several years, now. Jari knows them all. He has grown from a natural beauty to a true beauty king.

By Jana Huysmans

“Of course I was nervous when I tried makeup for the first time. Who wouldn’t be? I secretly stole my mom’s makeup and watched makeup tutorials on YouTube. ‘How to get a sugar daddy makeup tutorial’ by Jeffree Star is one of them, although I didn’t go that extreme at the time. I started subtly: a little concealer, eyebrow gel and that’s it. Later came lip gloss, highlighter, glitter in the corner of my eye, and so on. It took a while before I really wore it out on the street, but now, I dazzle the bus driver with my highlighter.”

**Strong together**

“Buying makeup is a different story. Mostly I go for the safe option: order online and have it delivered at home. People sometimes give me

funny looks when I’m standing in the makeup aisle in the store. But, on the other hand, I dare to go shopping with a girlfriend. I think it’s just nice to have someone at your side because then you feel you’re not alone.”

*“Makeup is a universal thing for all ages, colours and therefore also genders”*

**Do what makes you feel good**

“People think that wearing makeup is feminine because society has imposed it. But it’s a universal thing for all ages, colours and therefore also genders.”

We have been wearing clothes for so long, and we want to feel good in them. I consider my makeup as a garment. When I wear makeup, does it even touch you? No. The only thing my highlighter does is shine. And if that bothers someone, they should just look the other way or wear sunglasses.”





# “MY PARENTS ARE JUST NORMAL PEOPLE



Nora (21) grew up with two mothers

#Family #SameSexParents #ComingOut

**"A family consists of a mother, a father and the children," you sometimes hear. But there's no ingredients list for a family. What if you only have a mother or father? Or two mothers like Nora? Her parents have been together for 30 years and Nora has never known them to be anything but a family.**

By Annelies Tolenaar

"When I was very little, I didn't have the feeling that people looked at my parents differently. I simply wasn't aware that my parents were different from most people's. But at a certain point I noticed that everyone 'only' had a father and a mother and I didn't, which was a little strange. I've never questioned that myself but others certainly have."

*"OMG, I really want to meet your parents"*

#### Clumsy reactions

"When I was about 10 years old, my classmates often reacted with 'hey, wait a minute, what are you saying?' or with a whole lot of disbelief and then they'd say 'that's a lie' or 'are you sure?' Yes, I am sure my parents are two women because I live with them."

Nora still gets clumsy reactions that sometimes come across as negative, although they aren't necessarily intended as such. "Oh, I don't know anyone who has that," with a tone as if it were a disease. I also get very personal questions while I've sometimes only just met the person asking them. 'OMG, I really want to meet your parents.' Then I think: 'Why? I don't want to meet your parents, do I?' My parents are just two normal people."

*"I grew with up an extreme amount of love"*

Nora has never managed to find a way of dealing with those reactions. "I usually ignore it a bit. When I get questions like 'Oh, are you adopted?' or 'don't you think that is strange?', that's very uncomfortable for me. How I deal with it differs depending on the situation. Sometimes I dismiss it with a joke, but other times it catches me off guard and then I can't manage to say anything at all."

#### Love

"What people often don't realise is that I grew up with an extreme amount of love because I was very much wanted. It was a conscious choice by my parents to have a child, they had to go through a lot of trouble for it. I am very happy with my parents and I still feel every day that my parents are happy with me." ■

# “SEEING HER HAPPY WAS ALL THAT MATTERED

#TransPride #LoveIsLove #ItsAGirl!

**Sabine and Peter's son became Lisa. They proudly show a photo of their daughter. "Sometimes we wonder if her masculine side is still visible to others."**

By Demi Feron

**"Mom, I want to be a woman."**

"Lisa was never one to open up about her feelings," Sabine says. "I always had to insist to get her to tell me if something was wrong. During that particular weekend, something was clearly wrong. When we were alone in the car it all came out." Peter didn't know until later. "I was afraid of his reaction, and that's why I kept putting it off," admits Sabine. "As it turned out, I shouldn't have worried about it at all. He just said that from then on, we would simply have two daughters."

#### Rough transition period

Lisa had a very rough time and struggled emotionally during her transition. "It's frustrating when you see your child in pain and don't know how to help them. Especially if you also feel that the doctors and psychologists don't take you seriously. Even when Lisa started self-harming, we were told it wasn't serious enough." Eventually they found a psychiatrist whom she felt was actually able to help her. "We feel that the guidance for transgender people can be done a lot better. We experienced that ourselves, the hard way."

*"The guidance for transgender people can be done a lot better. We experienced that ourselves, the hard way."*

#### It's a Girl!

After the operation, Sabine and Peter had traditional birth-announcement favours made for Lisa. "It seemed appropriate to us. 'It's a Girl!' they said. It was an emotional moment for the whole family, as if a weight was lifted from our shoulders."

Although the healing process was long and hard, it was a beautiful period. "You saw Lisa blossom and discover herself. She was radiant. She had spent years feeling trapped and now she is finally free to do whatever she wants. It never felt strange. Sometimes it was hard going there. But we never let ourselves dwell on that. Your child is your child. Seeing her happy was all that mattered." ■



## Coming-out

The people around you are super important when you come out, although it can sometimes be disappointing, too.

**"It's great that she came through it"**

**Romy (19) watched her girlfriend after a bumpy childhood nevertheless become happy in spite of a bumpy childhood.**

By Luka Dams

"She used to be bipolar and things went from bad to worse with her. So, she ended up in a juvenile detention centre. Her coming out was therefore not ideal.

Later she had a child with her girlfriend. They are no longer together, but the child is still with her. She's happy now and I'm happy for her."

**"Fear of the reactions"**

**The struggle to escape from the 'pressure' of society has been troubling Arno (21) for three years.**

By Mats Somers

"A friend of mine promised to dye his hair pink if I came out. That was not the 'push' I needed, but it was still very cool and funny when he kept his promise. Fortunately, my friends also responded positively and we can now joke about it."

**"Sexual orientation will never make any difference, he'll always be my brother"**

**Thabo (23) saw how people reacted negatively when his brother came out but nothing changed in his eyes.**

By Martha Van den Eede

"Thanks to his dark skin colour, my brother always had to deal with negative comments. When he came out of the closet, people would ask me if I had a problem with it. Why? His sexual orientation will never make any difference, he'll always be my brother.

How is it possible that people in Belgium are still so narrow-minded as not to be able to look further than someone's orientation or skin colour?"

**"My brother started to cry"**

**Not everyone was able to deal with Sander's coming out. He has broken off contact with his brother.**

By Bryan Maesschalck

"I chose to come out right after my grandmother passed away. She was the only one who knew that I'm gay. My brother burst into tears. He left that same day."

\* Sander is a pseudonym because the person in question prefers to remain anonymous.

# “COMING OUT OF THE CLOSET USED TO BE NO BIG DEAL”

David (35) learned to combine his faith with his sexuality

**#Judaism #NoBigDeal #ComingOut**

**David's parents were not surprised when he came out of the closet, but this is often not the case for other Jews. He tells us about his experience as a gay man in the Jewish community.**

*By Belén Zárate Garay & Amber Deckers*

“LGBT+ was never an issue in the synagogues of Luxembourg, where I come from. Although the rabbis were happy to talk about it, it was only when the first Jewish LGBTs came with questions for the liberal synagogue that a support base grew.”

David became active in the Jewish community when he

went to study in the United Kingdom, where there's a strong liberal Jewish movement. “That's where I came out of the closet, which was no big deal at all. It was normal for everyone. My parents were even expecting it.”

*“Some Jewish LGBTs face problems because they have a Jewish identity.”*

Coming out doesn't always go smoothly for Jews, in some places, David notes. “Some Jewish LGBTs face problems because they have a Jewish

identity. Jewish families can sometimes find the sexual orientation of their children difficult to accept, because they fear that no new generation of Jews will follow.

In the eyes of the Orthodox Jews, I'm probably not a Jew, but I think I have more in common with people who share my values than with them. For me, they are not Jews, but people who still live in a by-gone age.” ■



# “Cause no suffering”

**#Buddhism #Respect #GayIsOkay**

**Buddhism does not look at gender**

**Most Buddhists have no problem with homosexual relationships, as long as both partners have mutual respect.**

*By Kobe Pieters*

Buddhism is not really a religion, but a philosophy of life with guidelines for those who want to become a good person. Buddhist teachings are very gay-friendly because it does not prohibit homosexuality.

After all, Buddhism is not based on laws and commandments. It doesn't take the perspective of "thou shalt" and "thou shalt not" as in religions. It is "descriptive"; it asks the believers to let themselves be guided by weighing whether "their behaviour may or may not cause suffering". In Buddhism relationships therefore revolve around mutual respect, so it doesn't matter whether or not it is a homosexual relationship.

**Local differences**

Buddhism is a philosophy of life that is interpreted differently in different cultures. As a result, it is in many cases difficult to say what is originally part of Buddhist teachings and what is the local culture. And thus the answer that you will get from a Buddhist to the question "Is your philosophy against gays?" will differ from place to place. ■

# HOW LGBT + - FRIENDLY ARE YOU?

**Do the test!**

*By Amber Deckers & Kobe Pieters*

## Help! Do I have an STI?

At the Tropical Institute in Antwerp you can register for free and anonymous testing for HIV and STIs. You can also go there for advice or a meeting with a sexologist. For an appointment, register online, or call 03 21 02 88. You can also just drop in. [www.itg.be/N/helpcenter](http://www.itg.be/N/helpcenter)

**There are more than 50 different gender identities. What do you think about that?**

1. Great! That way, everyone can be who they want to be. (2)
2. It is what it is. (1)
3. I think that's ridiculous! There are only 2 genders and that's the way it should stay. (0)

**You are on the playground and someone of the same gender gives you a kiss on the cheek. How do you respond to this?**

1. I smile and don't mind it. (2)
2. I find it disgusting and push the person away. (0)
3. I don't care. It's none of my business. (1)

**The annual Pride happens to be passing through your city. What do you do?**

1. I just stay home. (1)
2. I find all that incomprehensible and just want to leave as soon as possible. (0)
3. I will go watch or join in the Pride as an 'ally', someone who isn't LGBT+, but supports the community. (3)

**For a few years now, the term pansexual has been increasingly common.**

1. Why does there have to be a label for everything? (0)

2. Great! Everyone can be themselves. (2)
3. I don't care. (1)

**There's a drag queen walking down the street. What do you do?**

1. I make a comment. A man shouldn't dress like that. (0)
2. I don't care, but I'd rather they didn't do it in public. (1)
3. I don't do anything. It's a good thing they can be themselves. (2)

**You see two boys kissing on the street. What is your reaction?**

1. I'm glad they're happy together. (2)
2. I have no problem with it, but it does make me feel uncomfortable. (1)
3. That is really unacceptable! (0)

**Your best friend turns out to be gay. What do you do?**

1. I'm happy that they aren't afraid to be honest with me. (1)
2. They're still your best friend, their orientation makes no difference. (2)
3. I absolutely don't want to be friends with someone who is gay. (0)

**What if your dad wanted to become a mom or your mother, a father?**

1. They are still my family and

- I love them just as much as ever. (2)
2. That's his/her choice, not mine. (1)
3. Then I would never speak to them again. That's not normal. (0)

**What do you do if your little brother wants to paint his nails?**

1. I take the nail polish away from him at once. Boys shouldn't do that. (0)
2. I just let him do it or help him with it. (2)

3. Nothing. If he wants to do it, who cares? (1)

**Do you think that a homosexual couple should be allowed to get married?**

1. Of course! Love is love. (2)
2. No. That's not how it's meant to be. (0)
3. Yes, but I do feel strange about it. (1)

### 0 TO 5: THE OPPONENT

You have a very difficult time with LGBT+ people. You think homosexuality goes against the norm, and you don't want to be associated with it.

### 6 TO 12: NOT A FAN

You are not a fan of the LGBT+ community. You're not against it but would rather not have the community near you.

### 13 TO 18: SUPPORTER

You are open minded towards LGBT+ and you like that these people can be themselves. You would love to go to Pride and have a look and think it's okay if one of your friends turned out to be gay or trans.

### 19 TO 21: ALLY

The ally, the total supporter, that's you. Everyone should be allowed to be who they are, and you're not afraid to say it. Two things are important to you: love is love, and everyone should be themselves.



# “I understand heartless comments”

Theatre artist Jaouad Alloul builds bridges between communities

#Gay #Muslim #TwoWorlds

**For theatre artist Jaouad Alloul, LGBT+ and religion are easy to unite. He left his home and family after he came out and wants to be a role model himself for young people who struggle with their sexuality and religion.**

By Anne de Nijs & Amber Deckers

**How do you reconcile LGBT+ with Islam?**

For me, the two go together perfectly. Islam is for me a guide with ritual practices and my homosexuality is my sexual preference. The two have nothing to do with each other. On a certain level, I understand that according to Islam, homosexuality is unacceptable, but I don't understand why my relationship with my husband is brought to the forefront rather than my faith in God. It's very strange that the two cannot go together.

*“According to my parents, I just had to learn to live with it.”*

**After you came out, you didn't see your family for nine years. How do they feel about your homosexuality now?**

That's still a dilemma. They do know that I was born this way, because they've known me since I was a child. On the other hand, they remain convinced that it was my choice to experience my homosexuality. According to them, I just had to learn to live with it.

**How do you unite your background with your gay sexuality?**

I try not to blindly fixate on the dark sides of cul-

ture, that you have to adjust to fit in, for example. I immerse myself especially in beautiful things, such as art and creativity. In an ideal community, that dark side would not exist. There, everyone would have respect for each other and for each other's opinions.

*“I try not to blindly fixate on the dark sides of culture.”*

**You say you are a bridge builder. What do you mean?**

I am often in contact with devout youngsters and I understand them very well. I myself am part of that community and I believed my homosexuality was a sin. But on the other hand, I'm also just Flemish and homosexual. As a result, I can understand both sides well. If you don't know the world of those Muslim youngsters, you'd be quick to think that their comments are heartless. But I hear their arguments, and understand where they are coming from. That's why I think I can be a good bridge builder. There is truth in every opinion.

**You have set up an association with Nyira Hens called Be Human. What exactly does it do?**

We are storytellers, and we support and develop talent. We therefore organise workshops, for example, for homeless people or for prisoners. This year we put together the second Pride of Color, so we work on creativity, connection and celebration. The party brings



Photo: Mandy Agbonzee Jr.

people together. That Pride of Color has to be a safe place for people of color who are LGBT+. And the regular pride just has bad music (laughs).

We received the Campaign Award from Çavaria. It's nice to get recognition, that motivates us to make Pride of Color an even bigger event next year. ■

[www.behumanvzw.be](http://www.behumanvzw.be)

# “IT WOULD BE TERRIBLE IF MY FAMILY WERE TO DISOWN ME

Farah (20) can't yet openly express her sexuality

#Muslim  
#Uncertainty  
#Lesbian

**Farah's sexual orientation never seemed strange to her, but in her Muslim family her sexuality is less accepted. In Algeria, where her mother comes from, homosexuality is punishable by death.**  
By Amber Deckers

“In my third year of high school, I came out of the closet as ‘bisexual’ because I didn't know whether I only liked girls. And oh boy. My mom said she had made a mistake in my upbringing. She also said bisexuality does not exist. I then used Wikipedia to demonstrate that it does.”

Farah's mother is a Muslim. She has immersed herself more often in her religion lately. The rest of the family doesn't know that Farah is a lesbian, and it will stay that way. “In my family there's still a strong division between

men and women, so my aunts really know me and share the same passions. I rarely speak to my uncles. I'm not at all sure if I would be safe if I came out to them.

I'm lucky to have been born here in Belgium. I still have a roof over my head and I know that in other countries, that is not always the case.

*“My mom said she had made a mistake in my upbringing.”*

So I hope my family doesn't find out because it would be terrible if my family were to disown me because of my sexuality.” ■

# “Prayer is self-control”

Jehovah's witnesses don't disapprove of desires  
#JehovasWitnesses #Taboo #NoHomoHate

Jehovah's Witnesses have their own approach to LGBT+ members. “We let ourselves be guided by our Bible,” explains a member who wishes to remain anonymous.

By Kobe Pieters

“Our Bible does not endorse LGBT+. If you are gay, that's okay as long as you don't give in to your desires. Of course, that's the literal version from our Bible, which dates back several hundred years. Not much has changed over the centuries.”

For most followers of our faith, LGBT+ remains a taboo, but let's be clear: we are absolutely not gay haters. We don't have any problem with the person himself, only the actions, which we think are wrong.

We understand that others see that position as extreme, but we live according to our Bible. Within our faith there are many people who have struggled with their sexuality. So it's certainly nothing exceptional for us. And those people aren't punished for their desires either. We then organise conversations and prayer meetings to help them develop their self-control.” ■



# Homophobia Is expensive

#Economics #Money #Community

The cost of homophobia can be as much as 1.7% of GDP (gross domestic product). For Belgium, this represents more than 8 billion euros. The Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) is tackling that problem by better integrating the LGBT+ community into the economy.

By Yorben Geerinckx

In a first step, the OECD wants to gain a picture of all forms of homophobia by conducting surveys in all 36 Member States. Studies have already shown that LGBT+ people often have to deal with discrimination in the labour market. The OECD prohibits this and has begun monitoring it through undercover job applications.

The OECD also wants to raise awareness among the population about (unconscious) prejudices, in order to get rid of them. Finally, it calls on them on them to tackle the gender pay gap, which would also benefit the LGBT + community.

# Homosexual animals?

#Animals #SameSex #Biology

That animals are also attracted to same-sex members of their species, comes as a surprise to a lot of people. Yet it's nothing out of the ordinary.

By Wouter Van Biezen

Little work has been done scientifically about homosexuality in animals, but the 'phenomenon' of homosexuality can be observed in more than 1500 animal species. So, you have penguins, flamingos, bison, beetles, cows, monkeys, and many others that display gay behaviour.

More than 90% of giraffes are said to make love to the same sex. They seek contact with each other by gently caressing each other's bodies with their necks. Bonobos, a species of great ape, are most active 'between the sheets'. Males regularly mate with each other. Dolphins sometimes have exciting adventures with members of the same sex too.

More than 90% of giraffes are said to make love to the same sex.

### The explanation?

Some zoologists think this homosexual behaviour may have to do with the social hierarchy in animals living in herds. By mating with animals of the same sex they could enforce dominance within the group. In this way, they can show who is in charge. But those are just speculations, the real reasons for the homosexual behaviours are still unknown. Fascinating, isn't it?

## Non-binary Court

The Belgian Constitutional Court has ruled that the binary gender registry, M for man or F for woman, is unconstitutional. So, there could be the addition of an X, for non-binary. Or maybe they will just get rid of the registration of gender altogether!?



# IT'S ANCIENT HISTORY, BABY!

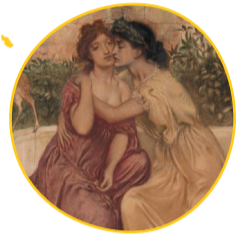
LGBT+ a recent phenomenon or a fad? Forget it. Classical Egyptian scriptures already contain stories about gay relationships.

By Kobe Pieters



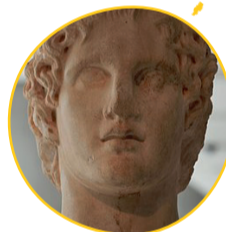
Khnumhotep & Niankhkhnum (c. 2504 to 2347 BC)

Historians conjecture that these men could be the first documented homosexual couple. They are depicted in a drawing kissing intimately, which is probably a representation of marriage.



Sappho (630 BCE c. 575 BC)

Was a poet from ancient Greece who first sang about women's love. She lived on the island Lesbos, from which the term 'lesbian' is derived. If someone talks about 'sapphic love', now you know where that comes from.



Alexander the Great and General Hephaestion (356 - 323 BC)

This relationship still remains the subject of debate. Traditionally, Hephaestion is depicted as the lover of the king. In that time, the majority of Greeks would not have considered this abnormal.



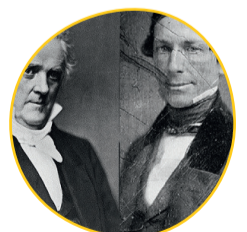
Benedict IX (1012-1056)

Benedict was the only pope who was very open about his homosexuality. Because of that, he is also one of the most controversial popes. According to sources, the Pope even held gay parties at his palace.



Michelangelo (1475-1564)

In his poems and letters, this world-famous Renaissance artist attested to his love for men. He is also said to have found inspiration for his paintings in gay saunas and brothels.



"Miss Nancy" en "Aunt Fancy" (1791-1868)

The fifteenth American president, James Buchanan, apparently had a relationship with vice president William R. King. They even gave each other pet names.



# 10 must-see LGBT + movies & series

LGBT+ themes are increasingly appearing in movies and series. Here's a list of ten that are definitely worth a look.

By Annelies Tolenaar & Demi Feron

#Netflix #BingeWatching #GrabYourPopcorn

## 1 Moonlight

"I cry so much sometimes I might turn to drops."

In Moonlight, a young African-American man struggles with his identity and sexuality while coming of age. The movie zeroes in on the image of masculinity and how people deal with their emotions. It's not exactly a cheerful movie, but Moonlight has a very beautiful message.



## 2 Orange is the New Black

"This year I'm loving someone who deserves me. Me."

"Orange is the New Black" has been well known for some time. The "Netflix-original" has been a hit with the general public for seven seasons already. Laverne Cox, or Sophia Burset in the series, didn't just become the first transgender on the cover of Time Magazine but also the very first transgender ever nominated for an Emmy Award!



## 3 Call Me by your Name

"Is it better to speak or to die? ... Better to speak, she said"

The movie tells the story of Elio, a 17-year-old Jewish-American boy, in the summer of 1983. He lives with his parents in a country house in Italy. Elio's father, a professor of archaeology, invites Oliver, a student who is also Jewish-American, to spend the summer with the family and to help with his academic work. At first, Elio wants nothing to do with Oliver but gradually he feels increasingly attracted to the student ...



## 4 Girl

"You are at one of the best dance schools in the country. You are being treated by doctors. Everything is OK. Everything is OK."

This 2018 film was directed by the Belgian director Lucas Dhondt. The main character, transgender Lara, dreams of a career as a prima ballerina. "Girl" depicts, in a confronting and emotional way, how Lara deals with her identity. At the Cannes film festival in 2018 the movie won awards including the 'Queer Palm', an award given to films that address LGBT+ themes.



## 5 Please Like Me

"He is gay. Josh is gay. I'm his boyfriend"

In this funny, realistic and yet a little bit dramatic series, Josh, who has just broken up with his girlfriend, realises that he is homosexual. With the support of his (now) ex-girlfriend, Claire, and roommate Tom, Josh must help his mother in her fight against a depression. That gets trickier when he explores his sexuality with the handsome, young Geoffrey and he comes out of the closet.



## 6 The death and life of Marsha P. Johnson

"There is a massive number of transwomen who have been murdered. Their cases just went cold."

This Netflix documentary film is about the life of LGBT+ icon, activist, and drag queen Marsha P. Johnson, who was found dead in June, 1992. Many believe she was murdered. Not only does this documentary further elaborate on this theory, it also shows the daily difficulties and the violence transgender people still have to endure.



## 7 Sex Education

"Everyone has a body, right? It's nothing to be ashamed of."

Otis, the son of an off-beat sex therapist, together with his classmate Maeve, sets up a secret sex therapy practice at school. They help other students who have sex problems through advice in exchange for money. Otis is himself still inexperienced sexually yet they go ahead with the plan.



## 8 Euphoria

"She hated her life. Not because it was bad, but because when you hate your brain and body, it's hard to enjoy the rest."

This Teen Drama series doesn't sugar-coat anything. It shows, in a raw and explicit way, the problems that young people have to deal with: drugs, alcohol, weight, and appearance but also identity and gender.



## 9 Queer Eye

"My goal is to figure out how we're similar as opposed to how different we are"

Netflix's Queer Eye is a makeover programme with a twist. In the show, the "Fabulous Five", (each an expert in a different category) transform "heroes" of all different genders and backgrounds.



## 10 Pose

"How lucky are we? We create ourselves."

"Pose" scores with the largest trans cast ever. This series has no fewer than five trans actors in important and recurring roles. The story is set in the LGBT+ community of 1980s New York. Although the series has a fairly upbeat tone, it doesn't sidestep heavier themes such as discrimination and AIDS.



## READING TIPS: SOMETHING FOR EVERYONE

### Zij en ik (She and I)

— Nic Stone  
15+ B

"She and I" is about love and friendship, about discovering who you are and who you want to be. Three people tell us about their love for the others: Courtney (straight), Jupiter (lesbian), Ray (bi).



### Drama Queen

— Derk Visser  
13+ L

Angel is a real street fighter. She lives with her mom in a rough neighbourhood, and she's proud that she knows how to take care of herself. But it comes at a cost: Angel takes a tough stance in order to survive. In three parts, Derk Visser describes Angel's teenage life, in which she gradually dares to be herself and dares to let love in.

### Birthday

— Meredith Russo  
15+ T

The author of this book is herself trans. When she was growing up, she wished she had books with credible trans characters in which she could recognise herself. With this book she wants to change that.



### En toen kwam Timothy (And then came Timothy)

— Jacques Brooijmans  
15+ H

The second book about the now 14-year-old Jordi, who writes his own songs and doesn't care much about what others think of him. Refreshing and sweet.

### Niemand ziet het (Nobody sees it)

— Dolf Verroen  
10+ H

A little story set in 1947. Victor, the 14-year-old main character in this book, has known for a while that he likes boys. How should he share this secret? Victor's parents especially deserve applause. The book is about the past and about being different.



### De onverklaarbare logica van mijn leven (The inexplicable logic of my Life)

— Benjamin Alire Sáenz  
15+ H

As an American adopted child, Sal grew up with a gay Mexican father. Is he American-Mexican then, or Mexican-American? What behaviour has he learned from his loving father, and what characteristics come from his biological parents?

These tips come from from Katrien Temmerman, Johanna Pas en Caroline Elskens.

Katrien is an expert in books for young people. She shares her knowledge on her blog: [boekenboekenboeken.blogspot.com](http://boekenboekenboeken.blogspot.com)

Johanna is the owner of the LGBTQ bookshop Kartonnen Dozen in Antwerp: [www.kadolgbt.be](http://www.kadolgbt.be)

Caroline Elskens is a volunteer at the Halebibib of Het Roze Huis: [www.halebibib.be](http://www.halebibib.be)

## Free book!

Receive a **free LGBT+ themed book** at the Kartonnen Dozen bookstore (one book per person, promotion valid until July 31, 2021 or while supplies last) When you show the PAARS paper. Drop in at Kartonnen Dozen, Draakstraat 34, 2018 Antwerp

## Letter to yourself

#LetterToYourself  
#Self-reflection  
#LookInThePast  
#Gay

### Always keep dreaming

K3 made it clear at the end of last year that for them, love has no colour, age, or gender. In the video clip from the song "Always Dreaming" you see multiple forms of couples, including a lesbian couple. This generated positive reactions.

Dearest Gaetano,

It feels strange writing myself a letter. I find it so hard to write about myself. That way I get to know myself and question myself. I'm learning to reflect on my life and that's one of the most important things that I can do.

Here you are as a 20-year-old, at a moment in your life that you really looked forward to! Unfortunately, you had to go through the most difficult years of your life first. There is so much that I would want to tell you and to warn you about. That would save you a lot of trouble. But unfortunately, you have to endure the misery, otherwise you would have never learned those life lessons. Never forget that things could always be worse and that as long as you have hope, nothing is lost yet.

Life will never be perfect, but you have so many things that make it worthwhile. Above all, you have learned that gender is something people have come up with. The world is a tough place and not everyone is always open-minded, but luckily there are many people who are. Don't give up the fight! Strive for equal rights for everyone, because everyone deserves a place in this world! Every day more and more people want to get up and be their authentic selves. Keep doing your best and never forget that it's okay not to be okay.

Above all, keep believing that the world can one day become a place for everyone and not only for people who fit into the absurd "boxes" of our society.

Maybe see you in 20 years? Best wishes!

Regards,  
Gaetano





# “I'M MUCH CLOSER TO MY STUDENTS NOW

In 2016, Mr. Donckers of the Sint-Dimpna College in Geel became Mrs. Donckers. That meant a radical change for Nina herself and for her students, but it made their bond much stronger.

By Yorben Geerinckx



#Trans #InTheClassroom  
#TeacherVsPupils

On an ordinary Wednesday afternoon, in the first week after the spring break, the students of the Sint-Dimpna school were informed of the upcoming gender reassignment of one of their teachers. The next day, Nina was immediately showered with declarations of support: “In a classroom where I often taught, they told me they knew it was simply me and good job that I dared to do it. That was pretty emotional. Then the whole class started to applaud, and I couldn't keep a dry eye anymore. A student asked if she was allowed to give me a hug, which resulted in a group hug with the whole class. That was a very powerful moment for me”

Those positive reactions were a real relief for Nina, who had been very worried about coming out: “Actually, I was only the centre of attention for a short while and the ‘storm’ quickly blew over. The fact that I'm transgender of course doesn't make me teach any better or worse.”

### Open for dialogue in the classroom

But Nina also drew strength from the less positive reactions: “I then decided to make a lesson about transgender people and told the students that they could ask me any of their questions. Since then, I have been a guest speaker every year for the fifth-year classes in Human Sciences. The students are always very positive towards me and my story.”

However, it is not a must for Nina to open up the topic for dialogue in class: “If it comes up, I'll tell my story, but I don't announce it to my new students at the start of a new school year. That is the past for me. After all, my colleagues don't talk about their sexuality either.”

### Stronger bond

After her transition, Nina felt there was a stronger connection with her students than ever before: “I'm now closer to my students and the emotional aspect has become much more

important to me. For example, I notice faster when a student is feeling down and I will do everything I can to cheer them up.”

*“I am simply who I am and they just have to accept me this way.”*

Partly for this reason, Nina has strongly supported an LGBT+ discussion group at the school: “This is how we want to give the message that everyone can be themselves at school. I am also simply who I am and they just have to accept me this way.” ■

# “Blood, sweat and (a few) tears, but the result isn't half bad”

Twenty enthusiastic journalism students from AP Hogeschool in Antwerp put together this newspaper over the course of three months. It did not always go smoothly, some of them say. “As with anything you do for the first time.”

By Topsana Du Bois



Wouter: “A newspaper like this really makes sense. A lot of people don't know the term LGBT+ yet, and there is still a taboo around the theme. Many of the interviewees did not want to have their picture taken, for fear of reactions from their environment.”

### How did the making of the PAARS paper go?



Manon: “For three months everything was all about the PAARS paper. In between classes we sprinted from one interview to the next.”

Demi: “Talking to people from the LGBT+ community, the stress of writing good articles... an emotional rollercoaster!”



Julie: “I got to know a lot of new people. Very nice!”

### What went better than expected?



Jolien: “It was very educational. I didn't even know that the genderbread and Safe(r) Space existed. Hopefully the readers will find the newspaper as enriching as I do.”

Yorben: “I can now better understand the community because I've learned to look further than the concepts that are sometimes vague to me.”



### What went less well than expected?



Seppe: “Writing was not easy, because terms such as cis and non-binary cropped up which I'd never heard of.”

Kaat: “It was quite a challenge. I had to discover what a number of terms mean and what I could write about them.”



### What do you think of the end result?



Jana: “It was not easy to work against the clock, but the appreciation that you get from your interviewees when they read your piece, that's what you do it for.”

Louise: “The PAARS paper was the first real newspaper that we contributed to and, as with anything you do for the first time, it was not always smooth sailing ... But I'm quite proud.”



Manon: “The newspaper cost us blood, sweat and (a few) tears, but the result isn't half bad!”

# Swinging in any style

Music brings people together. LGBT+ also comes in all styles. An ode to diversity.

By Anne de Nijs & Milan Baeyens

#MusicConnects #Diversity #GayPlaylist

## Rock

**Strong representation**

The LGBT+ community is also well represented in rock music. Gender and sexual orientation are even popular subjects for bands.



Melissa Etheridge – Come To My Window  
Terrorvision – Josephine  
Arcade Fire – We Exist  
David Bowie – Rebel Rebel

## Punk

**Rebellion and diversity**

You might not immediately connect punk and LGBT+. Yet punk stands for rebellion, being different, and diversity. And so, the two fit together.



Green Day – King For A Day  
Against Me! – The Ocean  
MDC – Dead Cops / America's So Straight  
Lunachicks – Mister Lady  
Pansy Division – That's So Gay

## Disco

**The classic combination**

The ultimate LGBT+ genre! For good reasons. Glitter, neon lights, a full dance floor... For years, Disco has been the music that makes the LGBT+ community go wild.



ABBA – Dancing Queen  
Gloria Gaynor – I Will Survive  
Diana Ross – I'm Coming Out  
Thelma Houston – Don't Leave Me This Way  
Sister Sledge – We Are Family

## Pop

**LGBT+ in the spotlight**

Troye Sivan, Sam Smith, Lady Gaga, these pop artists are part of the LGBT+ community or are big supporters of it. Pop has contributed immensely to the growing openness to LGBT+ of today.



Troye Sivan ft. Betty Who – HEAVEN  
Christina Aguilera – Beautiful  
Hayley Kiyoko – Girls Like Girls  
Bleachers – Alfie's Song (Not So Typical Love Song)  
Panic! At The Disco – Girls/Girls/Boys  
Lady Gaga – Born this way  
Mary Lambert – She keeps me warm  
Sia – Alive  
Sam Smith – HIM

## Metal

**Clothing from the gay movement**

Several metal bands have members who are LGBT+. And the typical 'metal style', with leather and studs, comes from the gay movement. The gay singer of Judas Priest introduced it.



King's X – Over My Head  
Faith No More – Be Aggressive  
Cynic – How Could I  
Otep – Rise, Rebel, Resist  
Judas Priest – Lightning Strike

## Classic

**The LGBT+ songs**

Of course, we mustn't forget the real LGBT+ songs. You hear them at every Pride! And they are great for letting off steam.



Madonna – Justify My Love  
Cher – Save Up All Your Tears  
George Michael – Freedom '90  
Loreen – Euphoria  
Whitney Houston – I Wanna Dance With Somebody  
Elton John – Elton's song  
Culture Club – Karma Chameleon  
Queen – Bohemian Rhapsody

## Hiphop

**A blossoming friendship**

Hip-hop and LGBT+ is a combination that seldom went hand in hand in the past, but nowadays the two are more likely to embrace.



Frank Ocean – Forrest Gump  
Macklemore & Ryan Lewis – Same Love (Feat. Mary Lambert)  
Janelle Monáe – Make me feel  
Big Freedia – Explode

## Country

**An unexpected relationship**

Country, like hip hop, doesn't exactly have the closest connection with LGBT+. Still, there are some artists who are making waves within the music style.



Emmylou Harris – A Love That Will Never Grow Old  
Lavender Country – Back In The Closet again

Listen to these and other LGBT+ songs in the PAARS playlist on Spotify

Scan the code



COLOFON

This newspaper was created by journalism students from Artesis Plantijn Hogeschool led by Wouter Frateur, graphics and digital media students from AP Hogeschool, led by Bavo Van Hecke, and the non-profit JOEN.

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More info: The PAARS newspaper is distributed in secondary and postsecondary schools and is used as a didactic tool. The full newspaper and new articles can also be viewed and downloaded online for free at [www.paars.today](http://www.paars.today). The PAARS newspaper has a free teacher's manual created by Çavaria. The teacher's manual is also available on [www.paars.today](http://www.paars.today).

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