



2026 Courage + Pageant

Masquerade: The LOVE Behind the Mask

May 30, 2026 – 4:00pm

LaCage Nite Club – 801 S. 2nd Street, Milwaukee WI 53204

Please Read this document before applying. [Link to apply at end of document.](#)

Courage+ is a Wisconsin-based nonprofit organization dedicated to creating safe, affirming communities for LGBTQ+ youth and young adults while advancing real, systemic change. Founded in 2015, Courage+ exists to ensure that queer and trans young people are not just protected from harm, but fully supported, seen, and celebrated.

Our mission is to provide safe and inclusive housing, trauma-informed care catered to the LGBTQ+ community, education, and reliable data-supported thought leadership.

What began as a response to the rejection, bullying, and displacement experienced by LGBTQ+ youth has grown into a statewide movement rooted in care, safety, acceptance, and belonging. Courage+ provides life-saving programming that spans advocacy, housing, community-building, and empowerment for youth and young adults navigating homelessness, foster care, family rejection, and social isolation.

Courage+ operates Wisconsin's first licensed group home for LGBTQ+ youth, Courage House, and offers transitional housing through C2 Apartments, supporting queer young adults ages 18–24 as they build stability and independence. In addition to housing, Courage+ delivers programming across all 72 Wisconsin counties, with a physical presence in multiple communities and plans to expand throughout the Midwest.

At its core, Courage+ is more than a service provider. It is a movement centered on love, dignity, and the belief that every LGBTQ+ young person deserves safety, community, and the opportunity to thrive.



To apply, submit the following:

- A completed application must be completed via our website www.courageplus.org/events
- Anyone wishing to compete must pre-register by 11:59pm on Friday, May 15, 2026
- Submit your preferred promo picture to hazel@courageplus.org by 11:59pm on Friday, May 15, 2026
- There is NO registration fee required to compete

Late applications will not be accepted. Courage+ will formally announce all registered contestants, judges, performers, and special guests, the week of the pageant via our social media platforms. It is up to each contestant to decide if they want to personally announce their decision to compete before that.

An email will be sent confirming our receipt of the completed application securing your place in the pageant..

Your music should be put on a flash drive in the following order: Track 1) talent, and Track 2) crowning. We recommend bringing two flash drives just in case

MUSIC IS DUE AT REGISTRATION.

DAY-OF TIMELINE

1:30 – Registration

2:00 – Interviews begin

4:00 sharp – Pageant starts NO EXCEPTIONS!!!!

Order of events: Pre pageant interview, Presentation, Talent, On-Stage Question



RULES & REGULATIONS

- The winner from each category agrees to go on to become an Ambassador for Courage+ for the duration of their reign.
- Courage+ will announce all contestants, judges, and performers the week of the pageant via Facebook and Instagram.
- The use of illegal substances by contestants, dressers, or other performers in a contestant's talent number is strictly prohibited. Violation will result in immediate disqualification.
- Any contestant who is not at the designated places at the appointed times will be deducted 10 administrative points. This includes REGISTRATION TIME at 1:00PM sharp.
- Each contestant may have ONE (1) designated dresser without cover charge.
- Any contestant having more than one designated assistant backstage will be deducted 10 administrative points.
- The Founders of Courage+ own the concept of this pageant.
- This Pageant is also a fundraiser to raise funds to support Courage+'s important programming.
- Courage+, its Directors, Staff, Volunteers and LaCage Nite Club are not responsible for any loss of items, and/or any damage to private property.
- Competition order will be determined on the day of the pageant.
- Rules and Regulations are subject to change at any time.
- Courage+ does not discriminate against race, religion, gender or sexual orientation, age, or ability.
- Because most of our work is focused on minors, winners agree to a background check. Should winners have charges against them related to neglect or harm specifically but not limited to minors, the title will be awarded to the first alternate.



TITLE OBLIGATIONS

- You will be required to attend and represent Courage+ on Sunday, June 7, 2026, for the Milwaukee Pride Parade, and the Courage+ Annual Gala on Friday, October 30, 2026 at The Baird Center in Milwaukee. As our new Brand Ambassador, we ask the title holder to attend as many Courage+ events as possible.
- Each winner will be required to plan, organize and host a minimum of 2 events separate from events planned by Courage+ Staff or Board of Directors to raise funds and/or awareness for Courage+ during your reign. The locations of these events are up to you. Please work with the promoters should you have any questions.
- As a Brand Ambassador, you are expected to actively promote in-person and on social media (Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, Snapchat, etc), share, and discuss Courage+'s Mission, events, fundraisers (ours and those hosted by third parties) throughout your reign. All eyes will be on YOU as a source of information for all things related to Courage+.
- A brief monthly virtual meeting will be scheduled with the winner and the Executive Director of Courage+ following the pageant. We believe you need to have as much information regarding the ongoing activities of the organization throughout the year.
- Entering the Club Wisconsin Gent or Miss Club Wisconsin pageantry systems is optional but not enforced by Courage+. We will support any contestant wishing to advance to these Pageants, including paying for your entry fee and providing hotel lodging the night of the Club Wisconsin Gent or Miss Club Wisconsin Pageant. Courage+ is not associated with either pageant system, their rules, requirements and so forth.
- A professional dress code and song selection is enforced for all Courage+ events. Our community LOVES drag, but please always consider our audience. We ask that there be no rips or tears in costumes or "walk around" outfits. Most of our events are family friendly/all ages, so, songs, costumes and garments must reflect this.
- The winners are expected to promote the Courage+ 2027 Pageant to create excitement in the community.

Courage+ reserves the right to strip any title; should they determine these obligations are not being met.



In this event, the First Alternate will assume the role and complete the reign.

SCORING

SCORING IS NOT COMPARATIVE!

Personal Interview: Each contestant will be interviewed individually by a panel of 7 judges. Each contestant is allotted 10 minutes for their interview. The purpose of the personal interview is to allow the judges some insight into the character of each contestant. During the interview, the panel is also afforded the opportunity to evaluate each contestant's basic qualities, such as affect, attitude, and composure, etc. Interview questions will be created by Courage+ residents, staff, and board.

This category is worth 35 points

Presentation: Contestants will prepare one costume, garment, attire, or the like that meets the theme while introducing themselves to the judges and spectators. This year's theme is

Masquerade: The LOVE Behind the Mask

We encourage all contestants to have fun with this category and be creative! You can take it literally, or perhaps as a metaphor.

This category is worth 15 points.

Talent: This category is limited to 7 minutes. Any contestant exceeding that time will be deducted 5 administrative points from their final score. Any props or set-dressing must be set up/removed within 5 minutes before and after their performance. Talent comes in many forms, so prepare an original way to express yours!

This category is worth 20 points.

On-Stage Question: This category is scored based on personality, poise, and impromptu delivery of speech on a microphone in front of an audience, considering the context of the answer in relation to the topic given. On-stage will be created by Courage+ residents, staff, and board.

This category is worth 30 points

TOTAL POSSIBLE POINTS: 100



Tie Breaker: In the event of a tie, the contestant with the highest Interview score wins.

Contestants will receive individual score sheets the night of the pageant.

PRIZE PACKAGE

- On the night of the pageant, the winner will receive a \$300.00 cash prize, crown/medallion, and sash. You will also be featured on Courage+'s website throughout your reign.
- Tips earned during any Courage+ fundraiser or event (with the exception of the Gala in late fall) are yours to decide what to do with. At the Gala we ask all performers to donate their tips for the evening.
- You will be showcased via social media and invited to a multitude of social events as well as media interviews.
- You will receive \$150.00 cash the night of your step down.
- Professional photo session and head shots with GEM (Meg Strobel) Photography
- Each winner will receive a \$200 gift certificate for Lyn Kream Designs for costumes, alterations, etc.

[CLICK HERE TO APPLY NOW](#)