

## Group of Gay Men in their Prime Celebrate their Pride through Community

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As we continue to celebrate Pride Month, we focus on community. Everybody needs one, and Chicago CBS 2's Joe Donlon caught up with a very special one featuring some guys whose community has thrived for decades.

The Chicago PrimeTimers® revealed what pride means to them.

On the second Sunday night of every month at Ann Sather Restaurant in Lakeview, the Chicago PrimeTimers® are doing what they do best: enjoying each other's company and having fun.

"It's a social group for older gay men, but you know any age is welcome, and they do lots and lots of social activities. Like they have a monthly social dinner, they have a monthly social here," said Lewis Pedi.

There are also book readings, lectures, barbecues, sports, and one heck of a Halloween party. Pedi said he felt a little lost when he moved from Boston to Chicago in 2005, until he found the Prime Timers.

"I feel very very comfortable here. You know, I told my partner, I said, 'You dragged me out of my comfort zone in Boston, and now I'm in Chicago, and I've created a whole new comfort zone. You're not dragging me outta here,'" he said.

The Prime Timers have a 47-year history, and a vibrant present.

"It's an international organization; so the PrimeTimers® Worldwide. I think it started in Boston in the 60s, in very much of a time when gay men didn't have place to go," said board president David Zak.

Zak said everyone with Prime Timers has a

story, and no two are the same.

"I was happy to meet people with different interests; a lot of passion, a lot of stories, a lot of heartache," he said. "There are some people, who like I have, have probably been out our whole lives, their professional lives; but for a whole lot of people, you know, they might be 75, but they only came out when they were 61."

Zak also talked about how important groups like the Prime Timers are to the LGBTQ+ movement.

"There's been so much progress, but there's also been a lot of pushback," he said. "There are people who need to know this group exists, and not be afraid to reach out."

This being Pride Month, CBS 2 asked our new friends what that word means to them.

"Being able to be who you are, be yourself, and not have to make excuses," Pedi said.

"Being able to reach your full potential, and knowing other people encourage that," Larry Lesperance said.

"It's important to celebrate wherever you are; if you're by yourself, or if you're with your family, or if you're estranged from your family, that there are ways to make connections to people, and it's important that you do," Zak said.

To learn more about the Chicago PrimeTimers®, check out their website at [chicagoprimetimers.com](http://chicagoprimetimers.com). You'll find schedules for regular activities, from concerts to Dominos.

*Joe Donlon  
Co-anchor, CBS 2 News Chicago*