



OYA!

**ORLANDO
YOUTH
ALLIANCE**

*If darkness surrounds you,
look for the light.*

**2023
ANNUAL
NEWSLETTER**

PRESIDENT & CEO'S MESSAGE

Every year is a challenge running a small, nonprofit organization, but 2023 brought more challenges than we ever thought possible. The "Don't Say Gay" law and other anti-LGBT policies and actions targeted our vulnerable minority like never before. Youth came to OYA looking for hope, answers and assistance. Providing a safe space is our mission and **our dedicated volunteers and staff rose to meet the needs of every youth who came to us.**

OYA and its chapters held 152 support groups and activities to allow our LGBTQIA+ youth create a circle of nonjudgemental friends to support them, role models to learn from and an environment to thrive. **OYA provided support to more youth in 2023 than we ever have in our 33-year history.** We couldn't have done it without our grantees and donors.

Creating the leaders of tomorrow is important to OYA that is why we gave out **college scholarships to nine young people.** We provided scholarships for three youths to attend an LGBT summer camp.

The community took note of our work and impact in the community. OYA was honored as the recipient of the **Nonprofit of the Year** from the Pride Chamber and won an **award for Innovation & Excellence in Fundraising** from the Association of Fundraising Professionals at National Philanthropy Day.

On behalf of our board, volunteers, and hundreds of Central Florida youth with whom we have the privilege of working, thank you for your continued support as we pursue our mission to facilitate the development of LGBTQ+ youth and provide a safe space for them to find the support they need to thrive. **Thank you for being a part of the success of the Orlando Youth Alliance in 2023!**

With thanks,



Patrick Howell
President



Michael Slaymaker
Chief Executive Officer

MISSION

The mission of the Orlando Youth Alliance and its chapters is to provide a safe space for lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and questioning youth in Central Florida.

BASIC OVERVIEW OF OYA

The Orlando Youth Alliance has offered a weekly peer-to-peer support group for LGBTQ youth in Central Florida since 1990. Today, four groups are offered: Orlando, Lakeland, Kissimmee and Longwood. Monthly social, educational and recreational activities occur to further help our youth to develop a core group of friends and peer supporters. In addition to the support group and activities, OYA provides LGBT History & Culture classes, scholarships, mental health referrals and career exploration. Numerous professionals have spoken to our youth about their careers and the options that await them. Developing this nucleus of friends is the key to never feeling alone. Since LGBTQ youth are five times more likely to commit suicide than their heterosexual classmates, it is vital that we provide the services of OYA to our area youth.

The impact of OYA: Over the past 33 years we have helped 2,500 youth. One of those youths serves on the board of directors.

CONTACT US

We look forward to hearing from you!

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www.orlandoyouthalliance.org
www.seminoleyouthalliance.org
www.lakelandyouthalliance.org
www.osceolayouthalliance.org



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LGBTQ YOUTH ARE FIVE TIMES MORE LIKELY TO ATTEMPT SUICIDE COMPARED TO THEIR HETEROSEXUAL CLASSMATES.

SCHOLARSHIP WINNERS

The Orlando Youth Alliance awarded scholarships to area youth. Here are the mid-year reports from our scholarship recipients.



Tala Alqadi | Since receiving this scholarship last Spring, I have been able to begin my career at Valencia College in scientific research through Valencia College's Undergraduate Research program and a UCF REU site titled Conservation, Restoration and Communication where I investigated the genetic diversity of *Halodule wrightii* in the Indian River Lagoon and am continuously working on the project. I will also soon be presenting this research at the Florida Undergraduate Research Association's Posters at the Capitol. The Orlando Youth Alliance is incredibly important to me as a bisexual Arab because it allows me the space to speak about my experiences and meet other people in my communities who can relate. As I age out of being an OYA youth, I intend to find ways to stay involved with the OYA community and even invest my time in other LGBTQ+ organizations in academic spaces. I hope that the donors also continuously support us LGBTQ+ students through OYA because to invest in us students is to ensure our success. With donor's aid, we are able to focus on our passions rather than worry about financial burdens. I can personally attest to the benefits I've gained from the additional financial support.



Andres del Castillo | I began my junior year at Penn State, majoring in Mathematics at Pennsylvania State University (B.S.) with a focus on Artificial Intelligence engineering. It's been an exciting year: My first scientific paper, co-authored with PhD students from Penn State and the University of the Sunshine Coast in Queensland, Australia, was published. We researched the rapidly decreasing population of native Dingoes in Australia, uncovering genetic 'consequences' from poaching and habitat loss and how, if conservation efforts aren't taken soon, extinction might be a possibility. A key part of our research involved a custom-built Python computer software I developed, which calculates statistics from dingo DNA to compare genetic mutations across Dingo populations in Australia.

Moreover, I was invited by the Math Alliance to attend their national conference in Atlanta this past October, and for the fifth semester in a row, earned a spot on the Dean's list. I'm looking forward to continuing my hard work in my higher-level classes, specifically geared towards computer science and applied mathematics, while also remaining committed to advocating for the queer community on and off campus.

I am immensely grateful to the OYA donors; their continued financial support has been pivotal in attending Penn State, building my research network, and fostering the future I now envision post-graduation as an AI engineer.



Andrew Wiater | The first chapter of my academic journey is soon coming to a close. In May I will be graduating with my bachelor's degree in social work, once I finish my senior year internship that started in the first few days of January. I have worked very hard to get where I am but I would not be here if it were not for the support of my loved ones and friends who have encouraged me endlessly along the way. I feel especially grateful for everyone at the Orlando Youth Alliance for being also a shining pillar of support in the first chapter of my academic journey. As for the next chapter I plan to apply for graduate school for a master's degree in social work, to expand my knowledge of the field. To ultimately become a licensed clinical social worker, and have my therapeutic practice one day, to help Queer and disabled people among many others find the power and potential of their voices. For now though, I feel forever thankful for my support system and finding my own inner strength these last four years.

SCHOLARSHIP WINNERS (continued)



Chayene Ross

New York University

Over the last 6 months I've been able to accomplish things I never deemed possible. First off, I transferred into my dream school; NYU. Through the OYA scholarship I was provided, I was able to financially and confidently make this transition into my new college. In June I experienced a dream come true by meeting my idol Misty Copeland at a Sadie Nash Leadership Event. We talked for five minutes, she gave me encouraging words on my nonprofit Brown Boy Ballet, and took a photo with me. The ability to grow my organization to such a level has been a gift. I've also gained experience professionally. I started working at NYU's Alumni and Relations department, and now work as an admin assistant for a big law firm in downtown Manhattan. Lastly, I've officially become a signed model, being able to showcase my ballet and other talents in photo shoots. The encouragement, mentorship, and acceptance OYA has provided me over my formative years has truly led to my success in my young professional life, and I can't wait to watch them impact more young lives.



Kevin Wonder

University of South Florida

This spring 2024 I am entering my senior year at USF and will hopefully be graduating at the end of fall 2024. Lately I have been reminiscing about my time at USF and how the opportunity to study here has shaped me in the last 4 years. I wouldn't have had such an amazing experience here if it weren't for the scholarships that lessened the financial stress and let me fully enjoy my time on campus. As I near the end my degree my goals are to academically finish strong, and get more involved in student life to maximize what I can of my time and make connections for post-grad life.



Alyson Trowell

Valencia College

I would like to thank you for awarding me the scholarship for the school year. I have truly been grateful for what I have been able to accomplish. I was able to take classes without having the stress of worrying about how much money I would be out of, and how I would pay for additional materials required for classes, such as books and lab materials. This has allowed me to enjoy my classes and immerse myself in them and learn better. I am confident that this scholarship will allow me to take me one step closer to my goal of helping my community and will open many new avenues for me as well. I would like to say thanks to OYA for choosing me as a recipient for this scholarship, and to the donors for making it possible.



Liam Clarke

Maryville College

I am now in the last half of my senior year at Maryville College and I plan to graduate in May 2024 with a bachelor's degree in American Sign Language/English Interpreting and a minor in Relationship and Sexual Health. I have been able to work with so many amazing people from all different backgrounds in my studies and I am thankful for all of the experience I have gained. I have just started an interpreting internship here on campus and I am so excited for the opportunities I will have in the coming months, as well as after graduation and years down the road. I am so grateful to all of our donors, this scholarship has helped so much and made attending a college that is right for me possible.

SCHOLARSHIP WINNERS (continued)



Joel Figueroa

University of South Florida

As I begin my final year at the University of South Florida, I am writing to express my deepest gratitude for awarding me the Orlando Youth Alliance scholarship. This scholarship has not only helped me financially but has also given me the motivation to pursue my career goals. Your generosity has allowed me to focus on my studies and participate in activities that broaden my educational experience such as joining USF exclusive lectures. I am honored to have been selected for this scholarship and will work hard to uphold the standards set by its donors. Thank you again for this amazing opportunity and the role it has played in my success.



Carlos Vasquez

University of Central Florida

Last year was quite the journey for me. Leaving my job to restart my second bachelor's in computer science—I originally enrolled in it just before the pandemic and had to subsequently put it on hold—was nerve racking, but I was determined to see if that initial interest in coding could become a passion. And it has.

Coming from my first degree in psychology, a “soft” science, I was worried that I might jump into STEM and sink to the bottom of the pool. But I have made many friends along the way, and I think my grades across all three semesters last year (including 5 classes last semester) speak for themselves: All A's, B+'s, and B's. I am especially proud and, frankly, relieved for having done well last semester, not just for the course load, but because I did well despite a multitude of family and personal issues that began in mid-November. Some are ongoing today.

Since then, staying focused and motivated has not been easy, but I know how difficult it would be to regain momentum if I were to stop now. I have more now to juggle in addition to my classes, but I know that I am investing in myself and setting up a future career doing something I truly enjoy, and which intrigues me. I plan to pursue a career in artificial intelligence/machine learning to incorporate my two degrees together. The next step in my academic journey is to apply to UCF's accelerated bachelor's to master's program in computer science in which I would be allowed to take up to 12 credits of graduate classes that would count toward both the undergraduate and graduate degrees. In spite of the bumps along the way, my momentum continues.

Thank you,
Carlos.

The OYA Scholarship Program is grateful to **Bill Neighbors** and **Tim Warzecha**, the **Walt Disney Company Foundation**, **Bill Woods**, **Barry Miller**, **Neil Starkey**, **The 49 Fund at the Central Florida Foundation** for their gifts to help fund a major portion of the program. We thank **Maggie Martin Lloyd** for funding *The Rodney Hughley Memorial Scholarship*. OYA has been providing financial assistance for education to its members since 2009.

ACTIVITY HIGHLIGHTS FROM 2023



SUMMER CAMP SCHOLARSHIPS

CampOUT is a weeklong camp held in Ocala. Three scholarships were provided by the Mukti Fund.

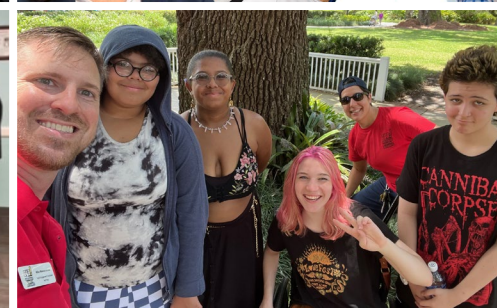
I couldn't be more grateful for the experience that I had at CampOut this year!!!! Words can't begin to express how wonderful it felt to be enveloped in an environment brimming with love and acceptance. Being able to authentically express myself at camp without fear of judgement was amazing! The camp loads of fun, filled with an array of engaging activities and enriching workshops. From makeup classes, to enlightening sessions on queer history and mental health, each moment felt like a stepping stone toward personal growth and understanding. One of my most favorite moments was undoubtedly the preparation for the talent show. The camaraderie within the cabin was heartwarming as we all came together to do each other's makeup and hype each other up! It truly felt as though we were one big family!!! I am deeply appreciative of the experience that I had at CampOut and am looking forward to (hopefully) applying for their counselor in training position next year! :) - Lydia



The camp was amazing! I got to try so many new things like paddle boarding, rock climbing, etc. My counselors Juno, Slammy, Kayden, Fern and others were amazing and I won't forget them. Having a camp where you are called the right name and pronouns is great (and kind of sad that that sometimes doesn't happen). The dance party, drag shows and all the other after hour things were awesome as well. I found so many cool things in the closet too. The lake was so much fun too. If I can, I would love to go again next year - Loki



OYA FAMILY REUNION AT WALT DISNEY WORLD
 COME OUT WITH PRIDE & NATIONAL
 TRANS VISIBILITY MARCH
 PRIDE PARTY
 HOLIDAY PARTY
 FARM & GARDEN TOUR
 FUN SPOT
 OSCEOLA COUNTY PICNIC
 ORLANDO PRIDE GAME
 OSCEOLA POP UP CLOSET
 QUEER & DISABLED PANEL
 PANEL ON ANTI-LGBT LAWS
 LEU GARDENS

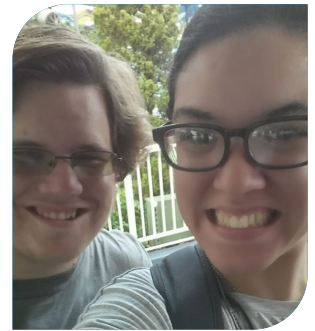


WHERE ARE THEY NOW?

VICTORIA LOPEZ



My name is Victoria and I started my OYA journey in the late 2000s. One of my first experiences that I remember was at their “Homo” Homecoming. Growing up with Catholic Parents I was always told that it was not okay to be Gay. So going to that event was a giant step against the norm. However, I wanted to be happy and be myself. The moment I walked in I was greeted with smiles and love. I felt safe. I felt free. I felt joy. Most importantly I felt myself. The people I met that evening and through other meetings have shaped me for me. The drop ins have given me many amazing memories. Super deep belly laughs in the darkest of days too. Many outings from Indoor Skydiving to going to Gay Days have made dreams come true. I am so thankful for OYA and how it has shaped me. I have so many amazing friends that have cheered me on. I am still in touch with most of them and we are cheering one another on still. Fast forward, to me now. I am in my 30s. I work as a



Geriatric Activities Coordinator Assistant. My next major milestone will be in May. I will be obtaining my third degree. I'll always be so thankful for OYA and impact it has had on me. Lastly, I want to say I'm thankful for all the facilitators at OYA too. They have helped me come out of my comfort zone. Without that help I probably would still be the painfully shy person that I was all those years ago.



MAT ELLENBURG



The Lasting Impact of OYA on My Life

As a member of Orlando's first queer youth group, OYA (formerly Delta Youth Alliance), I discovered a place where I could fully embrace my identity. It was a haven where I experienced many firsts and formed lasting friendships. Attending meetings weekly, along with activities the group participated in, like the monthly 'gay skate' at the local skating rink and the annual 'Gay Days at Disney', provided me with tools to navigate challenges specific to our community with dignity and confidence. Now, at 44, I reflect on the journey from those days to where I am: proud owner of The Orlando Men's Hair Studio, an avid rock climber, and someone who enjoys close life-long friendships and a strong family bond. The support and camaraderie I found in OYA were pivotal in overcoming life's obstacles as a young person, and I am immensely grateful to its facilitators

like Jeff Horn, for their dedication. As OYA continues to offer a safe, inclusive space for today's youth, I am inspired to give back, acknowledging the profound impact it had on my life.



CENTRAL FLORIDA COUNTIES

LAKE/SEMINOLE/ORANGE/OSCEOLA/POLK

POLK COUNTY UPDATE

We had our annual float in the Lakeland Christmas parade and with a welcoming response from other participating organizations, the City of Lakeland, and the parade goers. This event has annual attendance of about 50,000 people including mostly school and civic organizations. We have found it to be a great way to inform about our organization and have a bump in interest following the parade each year.

- We are in the planning stages for Polk Pride. Mark your calendars for Pride in the Park, our largest event, on June 15, 2024 10a-3p in Munn Park - Downtown Lakeland.

Scott Guira, President Polk Pride



www.polkpridefl.org



www.lakelandyouthalliance.org

CHECK OUT OSCEOLAYOUTHALLIANCE.ORG!

AWARD WINNING NONPROFIT

The community took note of our work and impact in the community. OYA was honored as the recipient of the Nonprofit of the Year from the Pride Chamber and won an award for Innovation & Excellence in Fundraising from the Association of Fundraising Professionals at National Philanthropy Day.



FUNDRAISING EVENTS

OYA held the second annual **Celebrity Server** event where servers vie to see who could generate the most money in tips.

THANK YOU TO OUR CELEBRITY SERVERS!

- Adrian Keirulf-Velez
- Brandon Bracale-Llewellyn
- Carlos Guillermo Smith
- Gary Lambert
- Jeff Starks
- John Paonessa
- Linda Reid
- Niki Friedman
- Patrick Howell
- Stan Miller
- Trina Gregory
- Wayne & Moira Dictor

A total of \$58,000 was generated to support the youth of the Orlando Youth Alliance!



Orange County Sheriff John Mina presents Michael Slaymaker with a \$5,000 grant to support our youth programs. Additional grants were received from **Walt Disney World, Orange County Government, Contigo Fund, a fiscal sponsored project of Proteus Fund, Born This Way Foundation,** and an anonymous grant. Funds from grants totaled over \$125,000.

Central Florida Sounds of Freedom Band and Color Guard March 2023 concert was a benefit for OYA. They generated \$2,433.



The staff at **Casselberry Patio Bar & Lounge** once again hosted a June Pride fundraising event to benefit OYA. Over \$1,000 was raised.

OYA 2023 DONOR LISTING

Legacy Society

Phil and Gary Ashland
GLOWS founders
Sandy Neubarth*
Edward Earl Sinnett, Jr.
Michael Slaymaker
Neil Starkey
Scott Woodrick

Over \$10,000

Anonymous
Contigo Fund, a fiscally sponsored
project of the Proteus Fund
Patrick Howell & Jason Martinez
Sandy Neubarth Trust
Orange County Government
Walt Disney World
Watermark Media
Bill Woods

\$5,000 - \$9,999

Born This Way Foundation
Sarah Lesko
Barry & Georgie Miller
Network for Good
Orlando County Sheriff's Office
Jim & Alexis Pugh
Wayne & Shelley Taylor

\$2,500 - \$4,999

Jim & Barbara Caldwell
Scott & Niki Friedman
Sally Hogshead
Old Town
Mukti Fund
My VIP Tour
Ryan Reinke
Frank Santos
Thearon Scurlock
Michael Slaymaker &
George Bridges
Neil Starkey
Jeff Starks
Walt Disney Foundation
Tim Warzecha & Bill Neighbors

\$1,000 - \$2,499

Vanessa Brewster & DJ Marston
Bright Funds
CAFA
Can't Cancel Pride
Casselberry Patio Bar & Lounge
Central Florida Sounds of
Freedom Band & Color Guard
Robert J. Crackel
Mike & Catriona Harris
Brad Hodum
Jason Lambert
Al Leach & Jim Merritt
Krista & Jonathan Ledden
PayPal Giving Fund
Frederic Potvin & Brent Kelleher
Stephen Roberts
Eric Rollings
Jessica Sams
Jeff Speicher
Martin Stow & Family
Rick & Dylan Todd
Vmware Foundation
Walt Disney Company
Cathy Wright

\$500 - \$999

Anonymous
Brandon Bracale-Llewellyn
Nayte Carrick
Charities Aid Foundation America
City of Orlando
Jorge Colon
Robert Garcia
Trina Gregory
Dawn Kallio & Lisa Brown
Charles Knippen
Eva Krzewinski
Matt McKnight
John Paonessa & Michael Rogier
Commissioner Patty Sheehan
Jo & James Stewart
Universal Orlando Resorts
Daniel Waldron
Thomas Winters &
Rebecca Moroose
Phillip & Judy Wood

\$250 - \$499

America Online Giving
Anonymous
Anonymous
Anonymous
Anonymous
Edward Baklor
Brazos Bookstore
Scott Capon
Wayne & Moira Dictor
Fidelity Charitable
LaDessa Freeman
Harmony Healthcare Orlando
Michael Hollmen
Jacobson Consulting
Applications, Inc
Jason June
Adrian Kierulf-Velez
Bob & Judy Kiley
Louis King
Gary Lambert
Stanley Miller & Chris Oliver
Chris Nault
Brett Rigas
Sarah Saylor
Susan Marie Schappert
Ron Schorsch & Bernd Hilbert
Wells Fargo Community
Care Grants Program
Westgate Resorts Foundation
Scott Will
Rick Zajac
Shannon Abitbol
Robert Adams & Gary Ouzts
Anonymous
Anonymous
Anonymous
Anonymous
Anonymous
Brandy Baker

\$100 - \$249

Mary Brooks & Phyllis Murphy
Amy Cantley
Daniel Chappell
Dan Clay
Phil Diamond
E-Chapter of the National
Association of Pediatric
Nurse Practitioners
Kell Ferris
Keith Folse
Sammy Goldstein & Bill Yahner
Christina Green
Barbara Grodin
Catriona Harris
Alan Harris
Shawn Hunt
Paul Ilgen
Patrick James
Brandon Kiley
Ben Laube
Deb Llewellyn
Valerie Mardle
Joseph Mathews
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Scott Maxwell
Joshua Meitin
Josh Mieitin
Kim Mitchell
Richard Pearson
Patrick & Jo Ann Polley
Prime Timers of Central Florida
Phillip Schoppe
Brandon Selser
Shoney's
Ian Stacy
Scott Stowell & Jay Lovell
Axavier Strick
Christopher Tofte
James VanMiddlesworth
Kenneth Vinal

Up to \$99

Boaz Abramovich
Trent Adams
Jorge Aguilar
Chase Albinson
Jamie Alexander
Walter Allen
Anonymous
Anonymous
Anonymous
Anonymous
Mark Bebermeyer
Veronique Bufkin
Faith Bussey
Laura Calcaterra
Emily Carroll
Charity On Top Foundation
Candice Chatterpaul
Shelby Clark
Kathleen Clifford
Cage Cline
River Cloum
Natasha Colin
Ron Colpus
Steven Compton
Mike Conway
The Matthew Cousins Family
Alex Cowan
Steven Cox
Brittany Cox
Mari Daniels
Ray De La Rosa
John Denning
Michael Derry
Carrie Dishman
Chase Drought
Jonathan Eisenberg
Joey Fernandes
Louise Fike
David Forrester
Robert Frew, Jr.
Jarrod Fritz
Audra Gefter
Harriette Georgiou
Anya Gibson
Tranquilla Golden-Taylor
Gunnar Goodwin
Melissa Haenggi
Amanda Hamer
Hank's Orlando
Elaine Harbilas & Diane Loar
Phillip Hargrove
Christopher Horsley
Jessica Hunt
Syd & Enid Jackowitz
Tom Jacobson
Evan Jones
Brett Lackey
Morgan Lane
Gwen Lemmerman
Jamie Li

Olivia Lipson
Lockheed Martin Corporation
Diane Lovine
Jennifer Macharsky
John Magee
Linda Malone Rhoads
Gabriel Mangiante
Deron Martin
Josie McClendon
Ron & Andy McCulloch
Jen McKechnie
Michael Morroni
Christopher Morrow Thompson
Jennifer Nemeth
Megan Nuttall
Orlando Magic
Ikponmwosa Osakue
Holly Parrish
Melina Paulino
Jessica Peffer
Michael Pendleton
Guillermo Perez
Sarah Queen
Ellen Ramia
Reyes Mezcaleria
Emma Rogers
Catherine Rollinson
Aaron & Melanie Rowe
Daniel Ryan
Madeline Sanchez
Karen Sandler
Skyler Saunders
Anna Schuman
Ciara Segerlin
Meghann Sellers
Jake Sierra
Dustan Simko
Swan City Syndicate
Target Corporation
Wes Tattinger
The Glass Knife
The Neighbors Orlando LLC
The Ravenous Pig
The Strand
The Welbourn Restaurant
Greg & Amanda Thys
Teddy John Tracy
Brad Trowbridge
Nicole Ustjanowski
Carlos Vasquez
Justin Vibber
Samantha Villarreal
Sascha Voss
Eric Walker
Leah Weinberger
Tom Werner
Linda White
Marilyn Williams and Shane Williams
Kelsi Yu
Katharine Zimmerman

* *deceased*

OYA'S LARGEST GIFT

The largest gift OYA received in 2023 was the gift of volunteer time. OYA has over 35 volunteers who serve our youth on the board of directors, group facilitators, chaperones for activities, drop-ins, fundraising, marketing and program design and implementation. As of July 2023, the estimated national value of each volunteer hour is \$31.80. Our dedicated volunteers donated 1,764 hours to support the youth. That calculates to **over \$56,095 in volunteer time** to OYA and its chapters.



**PLEASE REMEMBER
ORLANDO YOUTH
ALLIANCE IN YOUR
WILL OR TRUST.**

Ways to donate:

1. Make an online gift.

Log onto

<http://orlandoyouthalliance.org/donate>

Just click on the "donate" button to make a credit card gift via PayPal.

2. Mail your gift.

Send a gift through the mail to:

Orlando Youth Alliance

PO Box 536944

Orlando, FL 32853-6944

3. Put OYA in your Will or Trust.

Individuals wishing to include Orlando Youth Alliance in their will or estate plan, can find information on our website. For more information please call 407-244-1222 or email us at info@orlandoyouthalliance.org.

A COPY OF THE OFFICIAL REGISTRATION OF ORLANDO YOUTH ALLIANCE, INC. (#CH25270) AND FINANCIAL INFORMATION MAY BE OBTAINED FROM THE DIVISION OF CONSUMER SERVICES AT WWW.800HELPFLA.COM OR BY CALLING TOLL-FREE 1-800-435-7352 WITHIN THE STATE. REGISTRATION DOES NOT IMPLY ENDORSEMENT, APPROVAL, OR RECOMMENDATION BY THE STATE.

OYA VETTED MENTAL HEALTH REFERRAL PROGRAM

Orlando Youth Alliance welcomes local mental health professionals who have an interest in supporting the needs of LGBTQI+ youth to join our referral program. Such professionals are listed on our web site (www.orlandoyouthalliance.org) and on informational materials (e.g. brochures) so that our youth and their families may access them as needed.

Participating in the OYA referral program is free to you and requires that the following 5 criteria be met in order to be listed as a referral:

1. **A criminal background check (standard for all OYA volunteers and affiliates)**
2. **A copy of your current license to practice counseling/psychotherapy**
3. **Proof of malpractice insurance (e.g. a copy of your certificate)**
4. **A current fee schedule**
5. **A statement that you repudiate aversion and reparative therapy**



If you are interested in being listed as a referral source for OYA youth or have any questions, please feel free to email info@orlandoyouthalliance.org or call **407-244-1222**.

OYA appreciates the support and dedication of our professional referrals. The mental health needs of LGBTQI+ youth can be unique, and access to informed and inclusive care is vital. Thank you for being part of our efforts!

Greg Meeks, PhD

GSA GRANTS

The Orlando Youth Alliance provided grants to fund the creation and ongoing missions of Gay-Straight Alliances/Gender Sexuality Alliance throughout Central Florida. The grants are named after former OYA Board member Ginger Malcom who recognized that GSAs are an essential resource for LGBTQ+ youth attending school. She created the GSA grant program before her passing in 2017.

Want to apply for your school's GSA? Visit <https://orlandoyouthalliance.org/Grants>.

OLDER YOUTH GROUP

The age range of our youth is 13-23. But the information and discussion needed for a 13-year-old and the 23-year-old are totally different. That is why in 2020 OYA formulated an Older Youth Alliance group for members 18-23.

YOUNGER YOUTH GROUP

You have to be 13 to join OYA. But youth are coming to terms with their identities younger and younger. That is why OYA partnered with Little SMYALS out of Washington, DC, to offer programming to youth ages 6-12.

Find this resource and others at <https://orlandoyouthalliance.org/Resources>

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