

ORLANDO
YOUTH ALLIANCE

OYA!

ANNUAL NEWSLETTER 2018



#LOVEISLOVE #ORLANDOSTRONG #ONEPULSE WE ARE ORLANDO

OYA'S 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, three weekly groups are offered: Orlando, Lakeland 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 LGBTQ History & Culture classes, scholarships 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
28 years we have
helped 1,700 youth.**

CONTACT OYA

We look forward to hearing from you!

PO Box 536944, Orlando, FL 32853-6944

Info@OrlandoYouthAlliance.org

Voicemail: 407-244-1222

OrlandoYouthAlliance.org
SeminoleYouthAlliance.org
LakelandYouthAlliance.org
PolkPrideFL.com



2018 CONTINUED TO BE A YEAR OF RESOLVE.



As our community continued to heal from the Pulse tragedy, we persevered in the face of adversity and uncertainty. We continued to make our voices be heard as our nation took steps backwards from supporting our transgender youth, service members, and brothers and sisters. We supported other communities as they healed from their own tragedies. In the face of these national and local heartbreaks, OYA continues to provide the resources and support for our Central Florida LGBTQ youth to thrive. We facilitated over 116 support group meetings throughout the year; hosted 24 Friday night drop-ins to provide a safe and social setting for youth to gather; supported 12 engaging activities for our youth to celebrate themselves and build that very important network of support; provided grants to fund the creation and ongoing missions of Gay-Straight Alliances throughout Central Florida; and provided six scholarships to LGBTQ youth to support their post-secondary academic pursuits. On behalf of our board, volunteers and over 100 Central Florida youth with whom we have the privilege of working, thank you for your continued support as we pursue our mission to facilitate in the development of LGBTQ youth and provide a safe space for them to find the support they need to thrive.

With thanks,



**Daniel
Niccum**
PRESIDENT



**Michael
Slaymaker**
CHIEF EXECUTIVE
OFFICER

OYA BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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Daniel Niccum

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YOUTH AMBASSADOR

BOARD MEMBERS:

Cody Kennedy

Audrey Vest

CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER:

Michael Slaymaker, MHR

BABES IN BONNETS



➔ Babes in Bonnets, the annual Easter fixture at the Parliament House, shattered its fundraising record by bringing in over \$32,000 for the Orlando Youth Alliance on March 26. The benefit, which was started over 20 years ago by drag legend Carmella Marcella Garcia, was hosted by Ms. Darcel Stevens and featured Blue Star and Michael Wanzie as the evening's auctioneers. The evening's bonnets were provided by Southern Nights (Orlando and Tampa), Hamburger Mary's (Orlando and Daytona), Costume Couture, Embellish FX, The LGBT+ Center, House of Health, Parliament House, D Squared Productions, Jcruststyle, Orlando Dental Group, The Hammered Lamb, Bliss Healthcare, Trend Studios, Stonewall Bar, Savoy, Jackie Siegel, The Ted Show and WFTV's Jorge Estevez. In keeping with tradition, OYA's youth created and modeled a bonnet of their own. OYA is grateful to the Parliament House, to all those who attended and to those who donated to the auction.

COME OUT WITH PRIDE



➔ Orlando Youth Alliance attended Come Out with Pride 2018 in full force. Our volunteers, board members and youth represented the organization by participating in the parade and lending their time to OYA's marketplace booth. At the booth our youth were able to share their stories with other youth and encourage them to get involved with the organization. It was an incredible day for our youth, especially those experiencing Pride for the first time.

SCHOLARSHIPS

THE ORLANDO YOUTH ALLIANCE AWARDED FIVE SCHOLARSHIPS TO AREA YOUTH. RECIPIENTS OF THE SCHOLARSHIPS WERE:



Emily Mound
SEMINOLE STATE COLLEGE



Danny Faller
SEMINOLE STATE COLLEGE



Cody Kennedy
UNIVERSITY OF CENTRAL FLORIDA



Tyler Vest
UNIVERSITY OF CENTRAL FLORIDA



Maggie Tracy
SEMINOLE STATE COLLEGE

OYA awarded \$10,000 in scholarships in 2018. The OYA Scholarship Program is grateful to **Bill Neighbors** and **Tim Warzecha**, the **Walt Disney Company Foundation**, **Bill Woods** and the **Orlando Sisters of Perpetual Indulgence** for their gifts to help fund a major portion of the program. OYA has been providing financial assistance for education to its members since 2009.

THE GINGER MALCOM GSA GRANT PROGRAM

➔ The Orlando Youth Alliance and GLSEN (the Gay, Lesbian, and Straight Education Network) partnered again this year to support gay-straight alliance (GSA) student organizations at local high schools. OYA Board member Ginger Malcom recognized that GSAs are an essential resource for LGBTQ youth attending school. She conceived a GSA grant program before her passing in 2017, and OYA and GLSEN are proud to award the grants in her memory. This school year so far, OYA and GLSEN gave \$500 to the Celebration High School GSA, Oviedo High School GSA and Lyman High School GSA. Here are the GSA clubs funded since the grant program began:

- Celebration High School GSA
- Colonial High School GSA
- Cypress Creek High School GSA
- Lakeland High School GSA
- Lake Nona High School ALLiance
- Leesburg High School GSA
- Lyman High School GSA
- Oviedo High School GSA
- Titusville High School True Colors

**WANT TO APPLY FOR
YOUR SCHOOL'S GSA?**

Visit OrlandoYouthAlliance.org today!

LGBTQ YOUTH ARE FIVE TIMES MORE
LIKELY TO HAVE ATTEMPTED SUICIDE
COMPARED TO HETEROSEXUAL YOUTH.

40% OF TRANSGENDER
ADULTS REPORTED
HAVING MADE A
SUICIDE ATTEMPT.

92% OF THESE INDIVIDUALS REPORTED
HAVING ATTEMPTED SUICIDE
BEFORE THE AGE OF 25.

SOURCE: The Trevor Project



VOLUNTEERS TRAINED IN GENDER DIVERSITY AND SUICIDE PREVENTION

➔ This year OYA launched a new volunteer training and appreciation program. Volunteers learned to better serve our youth in a relaxed small-group setting, with breakfast and lunch on OYA. Since many OYA youth identify as transgender or gender diverse, volunteers reviewed current language around gender identity and sexual orientation. They deepened their understanding of gender role expectations in society, and became more attuned to the unique experiences of trans and gender diverse youth.

With the financial support of **Bill Woods** and other donors, OYA volunteers also earned certification in the QPR (Question, Persuade, Refer) method of suicide prevention. They practiced listening for the warning signs of suicide and connecting youth in crisis to community resources. Volunteers reported greater comfort and confidence with these lifesaving skills.

SOCIAL & RECREATIONAL ACTIVITIES



HALLOWEEN PARTY

➔ In October, the youth came to together for our annual Halloween party! This spooktacular evening was filled with pumpkin and cookie decorating and a costume contest! Creative costumes from cute to scary and every ghou and goblin had a blast!



A DAY ON THE WATER

➔ In August, the youth made waves at Buena Vista Watersports on Lake Bryan! Kayaking, paddle boarding, tubing, wakeboarding, and jet skiing—followed by lunch under the palm trees at their white sands beach.



HOLIDAY PARTY

➔ In December, the youth dashed through the sunshine and laughed all the way... at our annual holiday party. The celebration included activities that the youth picked out: cookie decorating, gingerbread house building, making ornaments and enjoying holiday movies together.

BOWLING ➔ In July, bowling with the Human Rights Campaign (HRC) at Aloma Bowl in Winter Park, was a great time had by all, and the Orlando Youth Alliance took home the Team Spirit Award!



SEMINOLE YOUTH ALLIANCE



Seminole Youth Alliance (SYA) is the Seminole County chapter of the Orlando Youth Alliance. SYA has been meeting in Seminole County since 2011.

The group meets every Thursday at 6:15 p.m. at the Longwood Hills Congregational Church. Meetings offer a casual but structured environment for youth to make new friends, socialize and find support.

SeminoleYouthAlliance.org

1, 2, 3 Youth participated in the Bracelet Project for Come Out with Pride

4 SYA hanging out with Mr. Sanford Pride at Sanford Pride

5 Panelists for Transgender Day of Remembrance

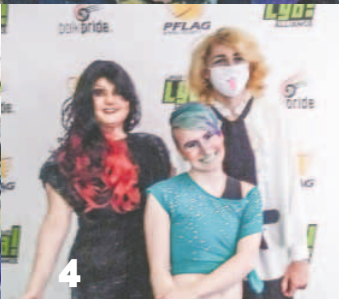
6 SYA friends enjoying the day at the Magic Kingdom Family Reunion

1 LYA night at zinfinity Extreme Air Sports

2 LYA pool party and movie night

3, 4 LYA Drag show during Polk Pride

5 LYA and Polk Pride in the Lakeland Christmas Parade



LAKELAND YOUTH ALLIANCE

➔ The Lakeland Youth Alliance once again participated in the Christmas Parade giving the LGBTQ group great visibility. In addition to the support groups, LYA participated in the Orlando Youth Alliance Family Reunion at Walt Disney World. Discover more at LakelandYouthAlliance.org.

Lakeland Youth Alliance group meetings are every third Wednesday at 6:15 p.m. at St. David's Episcopal Church Meetings offer a casual but structured environment for youth to make new friends, socialize and find support.

LakelandYouthAlliance.org



POLK PRIDE

➔ In 2016, Polk County commissioners declined to consider a proclamation recognizing Polk Pride week in June. In 2017, the county changed course and acknowledged LGBTQ Pride Week at the county administration meeting. Kerri McCoy, president of Polk Pride, worked with Commissioner Todd Dantzler to make the proclamation a reality. Polk Pride is a collaboration of Lakeland Youth Alliance and PFLAG of Polk County. Polk Pride week ran from June 13-16. It is the biggest LGBTQ festival in Polk County on record.

PolkPrideFL.com

1 the Polk Pride board at the kickoff and sponsorship party

2 The crowd at the Pride after dark party

3, 4, 5 LYA Volunteers smile for the camera at Polk Pride

6 Polk Pride board members attend the inauguration of the first LGBTQA school board member in the state of Florida

7 Allegra Williams performs during Polk Pride in the park



FAMILY REUNION



One of the youth's favorite outings is visiting the Magic Kingdom the first Saturday in June for the Orlando Youth Alliance Annual Family Reunion. A special thank you to Walt Disney World and Disney PRIDE for their generous gift to make it a fun and amazing day for the LGBTQ youth of Central Florida!



SHOWING PRIDE



OYA Booth at Come Out With Pride



OYA Booth at Sanford Pride



OYA Booth at Seminole Pride



WAYS TO DONATE!

1. MAKE AN ONLINE GIFT

Log onto OrlandoYouthAlliance.org/Donate.aspx.
Just click on the "donate" button above 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 OYA 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.



OVER \$5000

Anonymous
Orlando Dental Group
Walt Disney World
Bill Woods

RANGER'S PET OUTPOST AND RETREAT®

Scholastic Book Fairs
Brice Schroedel
James Schultz
Jacqueline Siegel
Maggie Smith

\$2500 - \$4999

Jason Lambert
Scott McLeod
& Ralph Cutrone
Modern
Woodmen of America
Sandy Neubarth

Southern Nights Orlando
Stonewall Bar Orlando

The LGBT Center
of Central Florida

Tim Vargas
& Ben Johansen

Watermark Publishing Group

Daniel Niccum
The Hammered Lamb
The Parliament House
The Walt Disney
Company Foundation
Tim Warzecha
& Bill Neighbors

\$500 - \$999

Dustin Baetz
Bliss Healthcare
Services

Jim Bowden
Greg Brown

Embellish FX
Carmella Marcella Garcia

\$1000 - \$2499

Jim & Barbara Caldwell
Central Florida Sounds
of Freedom Band
& Color Guard
Rick Claggett
Jorge Cruz
Disney Worldwide Services
GLSEN Inc.
Brian A. Humphries
JCruzStyle
Longwood Hills
Congregational Church
Network for Good
Orlando Sisters of
Perpetual Indulgence

Tim Gough
Jeff Henderson
John Michael
Wedding & Events
Matt McKnight III
SeaWorld
Michael Slaymaker
& George Bridges
Wilfred Souchereau
& Patrick Caraher
Jeff Speicher
Darcel Stevens
Universal Orlando
Resort

NOR LISTING

\$ 250 - \$ 499

Costume Couture
Edwin DeJesus
D-Squared Productions
Jorge Estevez
James Gilkeson
Glenn Grether
Hamburger Mary's
Jacksonville/Daytona
Hamburger Mary's Orlando
Dr. Bahiyyah Maroon
Maroon Harter Insights Inc.
Orlando Gay Chorus
Nikki Price
Reeves United
Methodist Church
SAVOY Orlando
Ron Schorsch & Bernd Hilbert
St. Matthews
Episcopal Church
Blue Starr
The Ted Show
Trend Studios
Trinity Antiques
Michael Wanzie
Scott Will

Kelly Greenwood
& Wiebe Middendorp
Michael Hollmen
Jeff Horn
Patrick Howell
Patrick James
Bob Kiley
Lou King
Ron Legler
Lynn Luzadder
Scott McCallum
Bill McGinn
& Christopher Baetz
Richard Milian
Mark Niccum
Rafael Pinero
Pom Pom's Teahouse
& Sandwicheria
Mark Powers
Eric Rollins
Gerry Shepp
Sam Singhaus
Software Answers
Darryl Stephens
Max Watzman D.O.
Philip & Judy Wood
Rick Zajac

Detanya Brooks
Chad Brown
Marcus Calvin
Stacey Chung
Nate Crosby
Dan Wisth Lawn Care
Vivian Delgado
Eddie Diaz
John & Emma Dollar
David Dorman
Natasha Douglas
TomAss Engle
Louise Fike
Rodney Frantz
Markeisha Gaines
Harriette Georgiou
Chachita Gift
Paolo Girard
Rae Greco
Bejamin Griffis
Karl Haglund
& Jonathan Eisenberg
Raymond Harman
Hawkers Asian Street Fare
Tiffany Hsieh
Jacqueline Jamison
Sonya Jefferson
Amanda Kenner
Antonio Lanier
William Ledbette
Tasha Long
Tp Lords
Pierre Louis
Shirely Malcom DeV Vaughn
Valerie Mardle
Gerald Mayes
Jacob McCall
Jennica McCleary

Mark McKinsey
Edward Mcneely
Leonel Melendez
Emilie Menendez
Mojo Man
Swimwear & Clothing
Richard & Joan Moormann
Yvette Morris
John Munera
Anne Olive
Niomi Onassis
Ariel Ortiz
Erin Paulin
Terri Pierce
Herb Pleiman
Mercy Rivera
Erica Roberts
Carlos Robinson
Tommie Ross
Rycam Asset Management
Thommy Sandvick
Chris Sant Lorans
Tovarre Simpson
Edd Sinnett
Kim Smalley
Kelly Solomon
Will Speed
St. Mary the Proctectress
Ukrainian Catholic Church
Samantha Sterthaus
Target Corporation
The Woodshed LLC
Yvonne Thorne
Total Quality Logistics LLC
Glorious Gems Two
Annette Wade
Savannah Westbrooke
Chavis Wilkins
Marilyn Williams &
Shane Williams
Phil Windsor
Todd Yarman

\$ 100 - \$ 249

Dustin Baetz
Michael Beaudine
Randy Billingsley
David Brandt
James Brower
Tony Brown
Cardinal Casket Company
Carole Conroy
Lisa Greenwade

UP TO \$99

John Albritton
Amazon Smile Foundation
Sara Andrews
Beauty and
Elegance Designs
Benevity
Betty Bilinski
Cocoa Bowers
Darnell Bowers



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