

OYA!

ORLANDO YOUTH ALLIANCE

*ANNUAL
NEWSLETTER
2019*



#LOVEISLOVE #ORLANDOSTRONG #ONEPULSE



WE ARE ORLANDO

PRESIDENT & CEO'S MESSAGE

The bottom of our stationery reads "the children are our future." As we work with, dialogue with and mentor the youth in our support groups, we can see the hope, the spark, the creativity and the energy. The Orlando Youth Alliance knows that we are helping to develop the leaders of tomorrow. In 2019, the Orlando Youth Alliance continued to grow. Our outreach into Central Florida has created two new support groups: Leesburg and Kissimmee. Both groups will start meeting in January 2020. Dedicated volunteers gave hundreds of hours to create those safe spaces for our youth. We thank them for their time and dedication. Our financial health is strong. We appreciate our donors who believe in our mission.

We facilitated over 112 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 five 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,



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, 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 LGBT 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 three 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 29 years we have helped 1,800 youth.

CONTACT US

We look forward to hearing from you!

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



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YOUTH SIGN INS AT SUPPORT GROUP MEETINGS & ACTIVITIES

2019 Totals	OYA	SYA	Drop Ins	Activities	LYA	Total	Polk Pride
	463	189	136	68	286	1,142	10,000

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 April 15.

The benefit, which was started over 21 years ago by drag legend Carmella Marcella Garcia, was hosted by Ms. Darcel Stevens and featured Blue Star as the evening's auctioneers. The evening's bonnets were provided by Hamburger Mary's Orlando, The LGBT+ Center, Parliament House, Orlando Dental Group, The Hammered Lamb, Sanford Pride, House of Health, Seacoast Bank, MAC, Commissioner Patty Sheehan, Bliss Healthcare, 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.

We lost a legend in 2019. Carmella Marcella Garcia, the creator of Babes in Bonnets, passed away. We are forever in her debt as one of the most generous souls.



COME OUT WITH PRIDE

Orlando Youth Alliance attended Come Out with Pride 2019 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.



SCHOLARSHIP WINNERS

The Orlando Youth Alliance awarded five scholarships to area youth. Recipients of the scholarships were:



Emily Mound
University of
Central Florida



Jack Mills
Florida State
University



Tyler Vest
University of
Central Florida



TJ Tracy
Seminole State
College



Violet Jane Humphrey
Rochester Institute
of Technology

OYA awarded \$10,000 in scholarships in 2019. The OYA Scholarship Program is grateful to **Bill Neighbors** and **Tim Warzecha**, the **Walt Disney Company Foundation**, and **Bill Woods** 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.

GSA GRANTS

The Orlando Youth Alliance provided grants to fund the creation and ongoing missions of Gay-Straight Alliances 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 conceived the GSA grant program before her passing in 2017. Here are the GSA clubs funded by the grant program:

- Celebration High School GSA
- Colonial High School GSA
- Cypress Creek High School GSA
- Denn John Middle School Round Table
- Lakeland High School GSA
- Lake Howell High School GSA
- Lake Nona High School ALLiance
- Leesburg High School GSA
- Lyman High School GSA
- Narcoosee Middle School Rainbow Bears
- Oviedo High School GSA
- Titusville High School True Colors
- Winter Springs High School GSA

Want to apply for your school's GSA?
Visit www.orlandoyouthalliance.org today!

LGBT 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**

—THE TREVOR PROJECT—



VOLUNTEERS TRAINED IN GENDER DIVERSITY AND SUICIDE PREVENTION

OYA volunteers learned to better serve our youth in a relaxed small-group setting. 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.

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 ghoul and goblin had a blast.



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.



MEDIEVAL TIMES

Thanks to a generous donor, OYA youth stepped back in time to medieval Spain to enjoy the Orlando Medieval Times spectacular dinner show and tournament! Horsemanship, swordplay, knights, jousting, and falconry plus a 4-course, utensil-free meal served in a castle-like space. The crowns were a big hit!



ART CANVAS AT THE CENTER

The LGBT+ Center of Orlando (where OYA meets each Tuesday) offered our youth a wall to display their art. The youth enjoyed the creative process. The art wall of canvasses was unveiled in March 2019 with a reception for the youth and their family members.



SEPHORA

Sephora provided a Bold Beauty Makeup class for our youth. Makeup is a skill that takes practice. The youth learned the basics of makeup such as how to apply foundation, powder, mascara, eyeliner, and many other helpful hints. Thank you to our wonderful friends at Sephora!



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.

CENTRAL FLORIDA COUNTIES

LAKE/SEMINOLE/ORANGE/OSCEOLA/POLK



**SEMINOLE
YOUTH
ALLIANCE**

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. Our friends, Parents, Families and Friends of Lesbians and Gays (PFLAG), also meets at this location.

seminoleyouthalliance.org





TWO NEW CHAPTERS

Two new chapters of the Orlando Youth Alliance were formulating in December 2019. Check out the orlandoyouthalliance.org website for meetings of the **Lake County Youth Alliance** (Leesburg/Tavares) and **Osceola County Youth Alliance** (Kissimmee).

YOU ARE NOT ALONE!

LAKELAND YOUTH ALLIANCE

2019 has been a year of growth, new challenges and fun for Lakeland Youth Alliance and Polk Pride.

We have had many successful LYA meetings and events! Our events started off with a prom open to all youth where we had an attendance of 45 youth. In June we had Pride for Youth, we had a Drag Queen Skate with over 80 youth attending. Besides our regular monthly meetings we also had a float for the 6th time in the Lakeland Christmas parade.

lakelandyouthalliance.org



**LAKELAND
YOUTH
ALLIANCE**





POLK PRIDE

Polk Pride has its biggest year yet! Implementing happy hours across all ends of the county have been successful and been a great network opportunity. Our 2019 Pride week was 4 action packed days with our largest event Pride in the Park with over 10,000 in attendance and over 100 vendors and booths.

polkpridefl.com



polkpride 2019 

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polkpridefl.com




FAMILY REUNION 2019

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!



OYA 2019 DONOR LISTING

Over \$10,000

Anonymous
Orange County Government Florida
TIAA

\$5,000 - \$9,999

Jason Lambert
Orlando Dental Group
The Hammered Lamb
The Parliament House
The Walt Disney Company Foundation
Walt Disney World

\$2,500 - \$4,999

Brian Schlosser
Tim Warzecha & Bill Neighbors
William Woods

\$1,000 - \$2,499

Central Florida Sounds of Freedom Band
and Colorguard
City of Orlando
Rick Claggett
COME OUT WITH PRIDE
Stanley & Sandra Croy
Niki & Scott Friedman
Don Granatstein & Susan Unger
IGT
Longwood Hills Congregational Church
Lucky's Market
Modern Woodmen of America
Network for Good
Sandy Neubarth
Daniel Niccum
Pat Padilla

Commissioner Patty Sheehan
Neil Starkey
The LGBT Center of Central Florida
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Megan Widhalm & Lindsay Petite
David Wyzynshi

\$500 - \$999

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GEICO
Chad Gilezan
Tim Gough
Brian Lorenz
MAC Cosmetics
Jason Marks
Matt McKnight
Nick Nastase
One Mighty Party
Polk State SALO
RANGER'S PET OUTPOST
AND RETREAT®
Daniel Rencher
Stephen Roberts
Jacqueline Siegel
Michael Slaymaker & George Bridges
Jeff Speicher
Shirley Stamper

State of Florida, Tobacco Free Polk
Stonewall Bar Orlando
The Citrus Club
United Health
Universal Orlando Resort

\$250 - \$499

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Karen Brown
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Empire Beauty Schools
Jorge Estevez
Florida Polytechnic
Glenn Grether
GTE
Michael Hollmen
House of Health
John & Shirley's Catering
George Kalogridis
Orlando Gay Chorus
SAVOY Orlando
Ron Schorsch & Bernd Hilbert
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Darcel Stevens
The Ted Show
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Jim Brower
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Hamburger Mary's Orlando
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Amy Iennaco
Patrick James
Gary Ouzts & Bob Adams
Porte Noire Studio 8
Sanford Pride
Software Answers, Inc.
Trend Studios
Vamp
Eric Walker
Christi Wallace Clarke
Max Watzman
Wild Florida
Phillip & Judy Wood

Up to \$99

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Anonymous
Anonymous
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Barefoot Wine
Becker & Poliakoff

Donne Bitner
Thais Campos
Nicke Coco
Carter Cook
Thor Falk
Louise Fike
Michael Fried
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Jim Gilkeson
Karl Haglund & Jonathan Eisenberg
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Brandon Kiley
Dr. Marissa Magsino
Natalie Marach
Valerie Mardle
Millers Ale House
Mojo Man
Mark Niccum
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James G. Shepp
Tako Cheena
Tap Room @ Dubsdread
Target Corporation
Tito's Vodka
Christian Walters
Marilyn Williams & Shane Williams
Willow Tree
Julie Wright
Your Cause



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

Ways to donate:

1. Make an online gift.

Log onto

<http://www.orlandoyouthalliance.org/Donate.aspx>

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

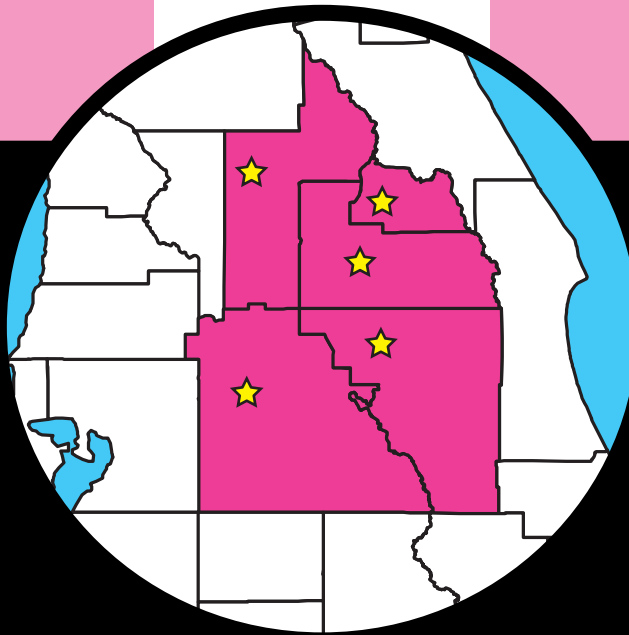
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