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OutCenter Aprilish 2015 Newsletter

1 message

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Mon, May 4, 2015 at 6:33 PM



Serving the LGBT Community in Southwest Michigan

OUT & *about*

Newsletter

April 2015

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Hosting the 2nd Annual TEEN

PRIDE PROM!

@KraslArtCenter



Teen Pride Meetings through the Summer are listed below.

Donors Can Be Leaders, Too!

The OutCenter recently launched a new initiative to secure and grow a circle of annual donors that can help the organization succeed over the next few years.

Gaining support from donors as leaders has the largest growth potential for this organization, understanding that donors can be leaders, too, because of their very intentional commitment to growing and nurturing this one-of-a-kind organization in Berrien County, and only 1 of 7 such centers serving the entire State of Michigan.

And most are wanting to be a leadership donor because they want to be a part of solving the larger issues LGBT people and their families face in Southwest Michigan...at the least.

These folks are contributors to the OutCenter, certainly, but they also are helping spread the word about the great value and impact the OutCenter is having through its programs. And they want to spread that word to their families, friends, colleagues and the larger communities in which they are a part.

The OutCenter's Goal for this initiative in 2015: \$80,000!

Of that amount, 21 donors will contribute about \$37,000, and 260 donors will more than match that amount by donating \$43,000.

We've already launched the appeal for the first stage and have 11 of 21 donors committed.

Do you want to get involved in this initiative? [If so, send us an email and we'll connect with you!](#)

[Help support the OutCenter in 2015. Let's work together to make Southwest Michigan a whole community!](#)

It's Our Tomorrow!

We are EVERYWHERE and EVERYONE!
 Join the conversation. Especially if you haven't yet been served by
 or
 Share your hopes, fears and ideas for the future of our community.



**Berrien County
Gay-Straight Alliance
Summer 2015 meetings!**

LGBTQ teens & allies (ages 14-18)
Become a leader and be the change you want to see!

Stop by for fun activities & hang out with amazing people.
Find Teen Pride on Facebook for updates.

When?
 ○ June 20, 2-5 PM
 ○ July 18, 2-5 PM
 ○ August 15, 2-5 PM

@
The Phoenix Café (patrons oftenation notated)
 124 Walker Street
 Benton Harbor, MI

268.925.8330 OutCenter t f

Keep up to date at the Teen Pride Facebook Page:



**Whole Lives,
Healthy Lives:
Adult Support Group**

**Whole Lives Healthy Lives
2014 thru 2015 Schedule
Adult Support Group**



Weekly Monday Meetings Resume 7-9 PM
September 8, 2014 thru May 18, 2015

- 1st Monday of the month with Margo Runkle
- 2nd Monday with Ron Robinson
- 3rd Monday with Sandy/Larry Feldman
- 4th Monday with Ron Robinson

(Stay tuned for updates during the Holidays.)

OutCenter Celebrating diversity. Serving equality. Bringing Equality to Southeast Michigan! 121 West Howard Street, Benton Harbor, MI 49022 268.925.8330

**Monday Evenings
7-9 PM**

A great opportunity for adults to connect with others in a supportive and healthy environment. Attend and find out more about this great group of folks!

Foundation Support



Frederick S. Upton Foundation



**Quick Links
Our Website**

Can you help this site?

[Please contact us with any offers to fund or provide services for re-doing the OutCenter website.](#)



Our Tomorrow is a campaign to engage LGBTQ people across the country in a conversation to shape the future of a bigger, bolder movement that leaves no one behind.

It is supported by more than 90 LGBTQ organizations and foundations, both big and small. Partners range from national nonprofit organizations to local community centers in cities and towns across the country.

Why do we need Our Tomorrow?

Our community has made great progress on a lot of issues, like marriage equality, but there's a lot left to do. This is an opportunity to share your hopes and fears for the future-and your ideas for making tomorrow better for all of us.

How can I get involved?

It's simple: Join the conversation!

Just click [here](#) to get started.

The Parents Project: a first-of-its-kind digital presence dedicated exclusively toward helping parents understand their LGBTQ kids.

This great website includes videos, advice, and resources, *dedicated exclusively toward helping parents understand their LGBTQ kids.*

Co-founders Dannielle Owens-Reid and Kristin Russo began The Parents Project in November 2013 to answer the many questions they were receiving from parents whose children had recently come out to them.

The Parents Project sources voices from across the world to help answer these questions, including advice from Dannielle and Kristin themselves, parents, youth, and experts on a variety of topics related to sexuality and gender identity.

Dannielle and Kristin also authored, This is a Book for Parents of Gay Kids (Chronicle Books), which is a question & answer guide for parents whose kids have recently come out to them!



OutCenter as Participant in Holland is Ready

The OutCenter participated on a panel of LGBT Centers as part of a larger community conversation in Holland on Tuesday April 21.

The panel was organized by an alliance of Holland is Ready, PFLAG Holland/Lakeshore and Holland Area PRIDE. This alliance is in the planning stage of opening a resource center in Holland to serve the LGBT community.

OutCenter on Facebook:



Meeting with Representative Al Pscholka attended by 30; more work to do with elected officials



Representative Al Pscholka met with LGBT community members on April 13 to have a candid conversation about LGBT people and their families living and working in Southwest Michigan.

The conversation was facilitated by Brian Savage, outgoing Board Chair of the OutCenter, now holding the position as an OutCenter Ambassador.

Saying to a reporter afterward that it was "one of the most respectful, open and honest dialogues I have had," Pscholka did commit to supporting inclusion of LGBT people in Michigan's Elliot-Larsen Civil Rights Act. He added this provision, however: that he would also support the Religious Freedom Restoration Act (RFRA).

The OutCenter remains committed to bringing equality home to Southwest Michigan. Part of that work includes educating everyone including elected officials about how legislation such as RFRA negatively impacts the community we serve: LGBT people and their families living and working in Southwest Michigan.

RFRA is a law that would allow for religious exemptions. We understand that freedom of religion is important to many and is already protected in both the United States and Michigan Constitutions.

We believe RFRA in Michigan will provide people an opportunity to deny LGBT people and their families services. That is why the OutCenter wants everyone to know that RFRA is bad for LGBT people and their families in Southwest Michigan.

The OutCenter will continue to provide opportunities to have conversations with elected officials and others about these and other topics.



The purpose of this event was to seek advice on both organizational structure and programs, as well as discuss lessons learned in various stages of organizational development. Panelists included Jay Maddock, Executive Director, Kalamazoo Gay Lesbian Resource Center, Mira Krishnan, CEO, The Network, Matthew Downey, Program Director of Nonprofit Services, The Johnson Center for Philanthropy, Grand Valley State University (GSU), Colette Beighley, Director of the LGBT center at GVSU, and Mary Jo Schnell, Interim Executive Director of the OutCenter.

Moderators of the event were Jen Adams, co-chair of Holland is Ready and Tom Dula, chairman of Holland Area PRIDE.

The conversation was full of ideas and insights, and also provided a great opportunity for these organizations and efforts to establish an ongoing commitment to collaborate, learn from each other, and increase our overall capacity to serve Michiganders. It was truly a great conversation and many expressed a desire to have additional conversations, building larger and healthier whole communities where LGBT people and their families are welcomed and respected without discrimination.

Holland is Ready and so is Michigan!

Coloma UCC to Host Conversation with State Representative Jon Hoadley Monday, June 15, 6:30 PM

[Jon Hoadley](#) serves as the State Representative for Michigan's 60th District, representing Kalamazoo and Kalamazoo township.

At this Community Conversation, Hoadley will help us to better understand recent discussions in Lansing having to do with "religious freedom" bills, and the state of the Elliot-Larsen non-discrimination act.

Please join us for this special opportunity to learn more about these critical issues being discussed by our leaders in Lansing.

[Find out more here.](#)



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