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Serving the LGBTQA Community in Southwest Michigan

Some Tough News and Lots of Great News

Newsletter

March 2013

**Support the
OutCenter today!**

[Donate](#)

Your donation will help the OutCenter serve the LGBTQ community and its allies in Southwest Michigan.

All amounts count!
Please donate today!

Wish list:

- Gift cards to Staples for office supplies.
- Gift cards to Amazon for Library purchases.
- Coffee (decaf & reg), soda, bottled water for Youth and Adult support groups.

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Foundation Support



Tough News First: No Arcus Support for 2013

As many of you know the OutCenter has been fortunate to have received sustaining support from the Arcus Foundation for many years. This is not always the case in the nonprofit sector - to have a single foundation supporting the organization for multiple years and at amounts that represented up to and sometime more than half of the total annual operating budget.

All had hoped that Arcus would be able to provide general operating funds in 2013 during this most important year of transition. However, another common occurrence in the nonprofit sector is that foundations transition too: Arcus has a new strategic plan and funding priorities.

In light of this tough news, know that there are tremendous efforts afoot to step up to the challenge and persevere for good and great reasons as you will read below. It is the time for growing - it is Spring after all.

More and more people in the area are contacting the OutCenter for support.

There is a need - a great need - for this, the only organization of its type in Berrien County serving lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, questioning and allied persons and their families by providing support and advocacy that fosters respect and understanding of this community in Southwest Michigan.

Now for the Great News: Four New Board Members...

At the OutCenter's Annual Meeting in March, the Board voted on four new Board members that both expands the diversity of the Board's representation and leverages terrific perspective and expertise in service to the mission:

- Rick Andrich, Branch Manager, United Federal Credit Union
- Tracy Cleveland-Jennings, Community Outreach Educator, Planned Parenthood
- Sven Erickson, DDS, Dentist and Proprietor, Modern Dentistry Associates
- Margo Runkle, MS, JD, Family Therapist, Mediator and Attorney, Peace of Mind Counseling Center

Beyond their professional affiliations, these folks also share a history of commitment to the OutCenter, Southwest Michigan, and to other nonprofit organizations.

The Board and staff welcome them and look forward to celebrating the beginning of their tenure at the OutCenter!

The Board and staff also wish to express much gratitude and many thanks to two outgoing Board members: B Jo Ann Mundy and Stuart Macmillan provided great leadership, thoughtful deliberation on



organization and community issues, and a very deep and sincere commitment to social justice and the OutCenter mission.

...and News on Organizational Partnerships

As part of the OutCenter's long term strategy and as a way to expand mission-based impacts, much work has been done in the past three months to establish new and revitalize existing partnerships with other sister and brother agencies and organizations who are similarly committed to find a home for LGBTQ equality and rights in Southwest Michigan. Below is a sample listing of organizations who are committed to helping serve LGBTQ people and their families with respect and understanding:

- Help For Southwest Michigan Advocacy Center
- Child & Family Services of Southwest Michigan, Inc.
- PFLAG of Berrien County
- Emergency Shelter Services
- WMU-Southwest

More Great News: LGBTQ Potluck

Join us at the OutCenter for a Potluck Dinner!

- When: Sunday, May 19
- Where: OutCenter

Bring your favorite dish, meet new and long-time community members, provide your own news and listen to news from others. Mary Jo Schnell will also be on hand to give an update and listen to insights and ideas you have to share.

Even More Great News: Joined Utah Pride Center Amicus Filing Regarding DOMA and Prop 8

Yes we did. The OutCenter joined a multi-state LGBTQ Center effort in support of the Supreme Court cases on DOMA and Prop 8 to tell the U.S. Supreme Court justices that being second-class citizens any where in our great country will never be okay.



Yes, Even More: Andrews University's GSA Will Join ALIVE Youth at the Phoenix in April

ALIVE Youth will be meeting on April 13 and May 18 from 2 to 4 PM at the Phoenix. (We love you Liz!)

For the April meeting, Paco Ramos and others from Andrews University's GSA, All4One, will be on hand to talk about moving from high school to college, and how they established their GSA.

Stop by, bring a friend, meet new people, and just hang out with LGBTQ youth and allies in a wonderful and safe place.

Found: Social Media Maven!

Have you noticed more postings and activity on the OutCenter's facebook pages? We all have Paco Ramos to thank! A Master's candidate in Communications at Andrews, Paco is volunteering and helping to keep folks in the know on all things LGBTQ!

Thank you Paco!

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