



# OutCenter



Serving the LGBT Community in Southwest Michigan

## OUT & a "BOO!"ut

Newsletter

October 2014

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[2nd Year of Funding from Upton Foundation Received!](#)

[Help us meet the match and support Teen Pride Gay-Straight Alliance at the OutCenter!](#)



The OutCenter's Teen Pride Program has received a **matching grant of \$3,500** from **The Frederick S. Upton Foundation!**

Teen Pride is the only program of its kind in Berrien County: it provides a safe place for LGBTQ teens and their Allies to gather, visit, problem solve, and even help each other.

***We need to raise \$3,500 or more as soon as possible!***

[Donate today and double the value!](#)

### Teen Pride Program

**Save the Date: November 15**  
**West Michigan Gay Men's Chorus!**



November 15th *at* The Heritage Center  
Saint Joseph, Michigan



*It was so much fun last year so we're bringing them back!*

*If you were there last year, you know how much fun it was. Join us again!*

*If you missed it last year, be sure not to miss it again! Join the celebration and the movement!*

[Find out more information and buy your tickets now! We're expecting a sold out crowd!](#)

### LGBTQ Elder Care: What's happening to our leaders?

by Claire Postelli, Teen Journalist

Throughout its history, the queer community has gone through a variety of hardships. From the Stonewall Riots of the 60s to the AIDS epidemic begun in the 70s and 80s, it's easy to see the effects these hardships have had on



**UPDATE!**

During the September meeting, teens asked for a somewhat new focus: provide learning opportunities regarding the establishment of Gay-Straight Alliances.

We heard you loud and clear!

From this point forward, aside from continuing to provide a space of safety and well-being for LGBTQ teens and their allies, this program will now also include activities through the school year to support efforts to create a feeling of safety and well being for all...including LGBTQ students.

Join the GSA on November 15, 2-5 PM: Nita Nicholie, founder of St. Joe High School's GSA, will be the guest speaker.

And here's the updated schedule for the 2014/2015 School Year!

**"Berrien County Gay-Straight Alliance 2014/2015 meetings!"**



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

When?

- September 20, 2-6 PM
- October 25, 5-8 PM (Halloween Party @HSJHS)
- November 15, 2-6 PM
- December 13, 2-6 PM 2015
- January 24, 2-6 PM
- February 21, 2-6 PM
- March 21, 2-6 PM
- April 18, 2-6 PM
- May Teen Pride Prom! TBD

Stop by, too, for fun activities & hang out with amazing people.

Next door to the OutCenter @ The Phoenix Café (unless otherwise noted)  
126 Water Street, Benton Harbor, MI

269.925.8330   

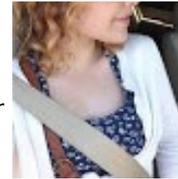
Keep up to date at the Teen Pride Facebook Page:



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

today's society both positive and negative.

But people all too often forget where those effects originated, where progress started. After all, who's asking about what happened to the queer people that survived those calamities? Film creators Stu Maddux, Joseph Applebaum, Catherine Cox, and Barrie J. Atkin asked that very question. And the answer wasn't pretty.



*Gen Silent: The LGBT Aging Film* follows the lives of six elderly LGBTQ people and their efforts to survive in a care system catered to heteronormative and cisgendered ideals. *Gen Silent* is described as, "A film that asks six LGBT seniors if they will hide their friends, their spouses their entire lives in order to survive in the care system."

Their decisions vary from individual to individual. The film follows these six people over the course of a year and watches as they fight to exist in a system that forgets, oppresses, and marginalizes them.

Todd Dockerty, who hosted the first-ever Teen Pride Prom at his loft this past May, saw *Gen Silent* through a series of conferences he attended in Washington D.C. Concerning the film, he said, "My viewpoint was probably different from most people's going into it because I am gay (...). However, I think it was very eye-opening to most people that were there because it's not a life they're living; it's not something they're aware of."

*Gen Silent* fights to bring that vary awareness. According to the website, "It puts a face on what experts in the film call an epidemic: gay, lesbian, bisexual or transgender older people so afraid of discrimination by caregivers or bullying by other seniors that many simply go back into the closet."



The people that helped us win many of the civil rights victories of the past century are now being closeted out of fear that their queerness will affect their care. The shocking fact is that they're right. LGBTQ people are dying prematurely simply because they don't identify in the spectrum deemed suitable by some of the healthcare system.

*Gen Silent* offers people a place to view the challenges that LGBTQ elders face, and through that viewing become aware of the need for more caring people in Medicare.

"There were quite a few people who showed up in the national viewing of the movie, and I think that the more people that see it, the more likely it is to change policy," said Mr. Dockerty.

*Gen Silent* has been screened at many universities and colleges and is available for home viewing. For more information please visit [http://stumaddux.com/GEN\\_SILENT.html](http://stumaddux.com/GEN_SILENT.html).

**LGBTQ Cultural Competency & Sensitivity Training Getting Great Reviews!**



Jen Hsu, the project's lead trainer and former OutCenter Executive Director, in action with attendees at the McKinney-Vento District

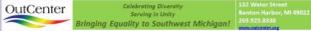
**Whole Lives Healthy Lives**  
**2014 thru 2015 Schedule**  
 Adult Support Group



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

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

(Stay tuned for updates during the Holidays.)



**Monday Evenings**  
**7-9 PM**  
 (Stay tuned for updates during the Holidays)

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!



By *Jerry Pfeiffle, Financial Services Professional*  
 (LifePoint Associates:  
 Serving West MI & Lakeshore)

**Ignorance is NOT Bliss!**

Just as we MUST become our own personal medical advocates when we have healthcare needs and frequent a medical doctor, it is imperative that we become our own financial advocates for our own financial well being. This is done through personal investigation, research, practical decision making and the guidance and mentoring from a reputable financial services professional.

Yes, you must begin making financial decisions on your own behalf rather than deferring those decisions to others who have no real vested interest.

The following are measures with which you must reckon in order to enhance your odds of financial success but there must be established a strategy or plan of attack and follow through for things to happen in your favor:

Do not procrastinate in your financial planning...if you snooze, you lose.

Don't make snap decisions or be influenced by your peers who may not be fully informed.

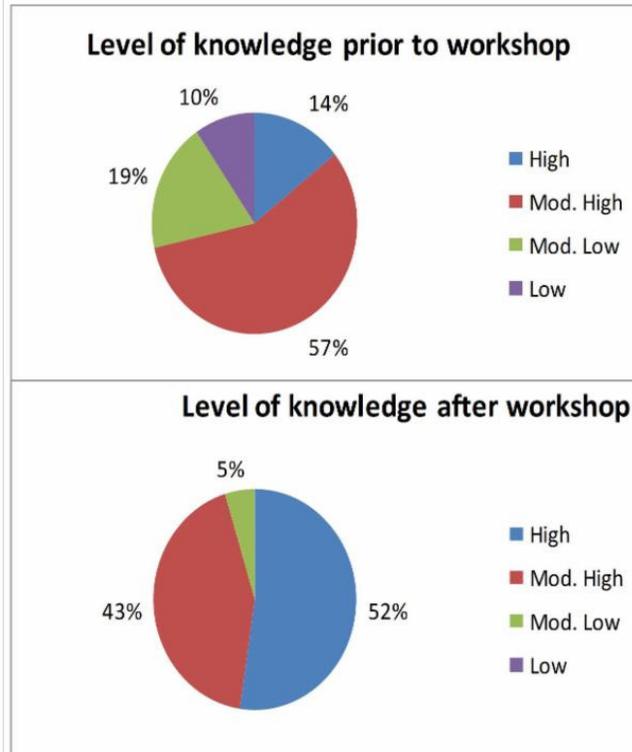
Concentrate more on how you're saving your money rather than

*Liaison Meeting at Southwestern Michigan College, October 21.*

Thanks to support from the Berrien Community Foundation, this program was launched in 2014 and the OutCenter's training team has already provided 3 trainings, with 2 more scheduled, and about 8 additional organizations voicing interest in bringing it to their organizations.

The OutCenter thanks Joyce Miller, Kelly Dargus for bringing the training to area school counselors and social workers!

Fifty-two people attended and here's a sample of evaluation results from attendees:



In addition, here are some great comments from participants:

- "Excellent, honest workshop!"
- "The Coming Out Stars activity really hit home. I look forward to using it in upcoming staff meetings."
- "Awesome!"
- "Thank you for presenting facts and strategies that I can share with my staff, students, and their families."

**School: Not Just A Place For Education**

By Leanne Chambers, OutCenter Volunteer

High school. Two simple words, but when used together these words can conjure up memories of early morning bus rides, Friday night football games, and staying late after school to work on group projects. For me, high school wasn't at all what I was expecting. Contrary to television shows and movies, the lunch room wasn't broken up into a social hierarchy; what you wore the first day of school did not predetermine your social life for the whole year; and sadly no one was as cool as John Bender from *The Breakfast Club*. Instead, my high school experience was full of countless hours studying, constant pressure to maintain my grade point average, joining all the extra-curricular activities that I could manage while somehow still trying find time to enjoy myself. And while most of the high school stereotypes are not true, unfortunately one is: bullying.

These days bullying can take many forms. One of these forms is verbal bullying which includes teasing, name calling, inappropriate sexual comments, taunting, or threatening to cause harm. Another form is social bullying in which the bully attempts to hurt someone's reputation or relationship. Social bullying can take the form of leaving someone out on purpose, telling other children not to be friends with someone, spreading rumors about someone, or embarrassing someone in public. The last form is physical bullying

investing it.

Establish a more practical balance between NEEDS and WANTS in your life and spend accordingly.

Pay greater attention...allocate the same scrutiny to your financial affairs as you do to vacations, type of cell phone to purchase, or what to buy with your income tax refund.

The first step to recovery from any form of addiction is the personal admission of such and taking ownership of irresponsible behavior. Likewise, the first step to financial recovery is the personal admission that we have been irresponsible and need to take ownership of our own destiny rather than expect others to guide our ship and trust that we get to the destination intended. We need to allocate more time and attention and, at the same time, avail ourselves reputable and unconventional guidance of a financial services professional.

## 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.](#)

OutCenter on Facebook:



which includes hitting, kicking, pinching, spitting, tripping, pushing, taking or breaking someone's things, or making mean hand gestures. Bullying can happen during or after school hours or on the internet-with cyber bullying on the rise. [i]

Those most effected by bullying are LGBT students. In fact, the statistics of LGBT bullying are shocking. The National School Climate Survey conducted in 2011 by the Gay, Lesbian & Straight Education Network found that 82% of LGBT students have experienced harassment at school because of their sexual orientation. 64% of LGBT students have felt unsafe at school. 44% of LGBT students have felt unsafe at school due to gender identification. And 32% of LGBT students have missed school because they didn't feel safe. [ii]

The affects of bullying run deeper than hurt feelings. LGBT youth are two to three times more likely to attempt suicide than straight students; and if a LGBT youth is from a family who does not accept them then they are eight times more likely to commit suicide than a straight student.

Besides being at a greater risk for attempted and successful suicide, according to a study published by the Centers for Disease Control, LGBT youth have a higher risk than the general population for alcohol and substance abuse-with LGBT youth who are rejected by their families three times more likely to develop substance abuse problems-engage in more risky behavior and are more likely to become runaways. [iii]

LGBT youth are also more likely to be homeless. Shockingly, up to 50% of the youth on the streets today are LGBT youth who live there because of their sexual orientation or gender identity. [iv]

Michigan does have anti-bullying laws in place to protect students from attacks. However, no specific groups are included in these laws; rather, the laws state that all students are protected and that all bullying is prohibited without regard to subject matter or motivation. Michigan school districts may choose to adopt the anti-bullying state model policy which does specifically protect students from bullying based on sexual orientation and gender identity and expression. [v]

However, these laws don't always protect LGBT students-or any students for that matter-from bullying. More needs to be done to make sure that LGBT students feel safe in school, and safe to be themselves. A good way to help ensure this is to get the conversation started between LGBT and straight students. Gay-Straight Alliances in schools have been a great tool for this. These clubs not only provide individuals with a safe place to talk and gather, but many Gay-Straight Alliances have played a crucial part in promoting anti-bullying policies within schools. Although bullying is a growing epidemic that disproportionately effects LGBT students, it is not to late to end this by speaking up and speaking out about bullying.

[i] "Bullying Definition ." stopbullying.gov. N.p., n.d. Web. 28 Oct. 2014. <<http://www.stopbullying.gov/what-is-bullying/definition/index.html>>.

[ii], [iii], [iv] "LGBT Bullying Statistics." NOBULLYING.com. N.p., n.d. Web. 28 Oct. 2014. <<http://nobullying.com/lgbt-bullying-statistics/>>.

[v] "Michigan Anti-Bullying Laws and Policies ." stopbullying.gov. N.p., n.d. Web. 28 Oct. 2014. <<http://www.stopbullying.gov/laws/michigan.html>>.

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OutCenter | 132 Water Street | Benton Harbor | MI | 49022