

OutCenter

Celebrating
10
Years Proud



Serving the LGBT Community in Southwest Michigan

OUT & abOUT

Newsletter

September 2013

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Individual donations amount to over 70% of all donations to nonprofits!

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Help the OutCenter become more sustainable today!

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

All amounts count!
Please donate today!

Quick Links

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Programs & Services
Resources

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Berrien County Gay

If You Know Someone ...

...who is young and having trouble being positive and affirming about their identity as an LGBTQ person, please listen, support and assist that amazing person in getting the help they need. **The Trevor Project** has a great approach for all of us to learn from: Y-CARE.



Everyone has stress in their lives. Stress can be attributed to any situation or thought that makes you feel frustrated, angry, nervous or anxious. Be sure to take some time to yourself if you are feeling overwhelmed or stressed. It will help you relax and improve your health in general. Try practicing some of the follow activities:

- Talk to a friend or family member about your feelings.
- Exercise or find a way to release negative energy.
- Start a journal. Writing down your feelings can help.
- Listen to music! Dance! Sing!
- Create art that expresses your emotions (paint, writing sketch).
- Volunteer. Find a cause that you believe in and lend a hand.
- Participate in an after-school club or community activity.

And locally, the OutCenter can provide referrals to some amazing therapists if you call Tuesday through Friday, noon to 5 PM or Saturdays, 10 AM to 2 PM. The OutCenter also works in partnership with another great resource in Berrien County: Child & Family Services of Southwestern Michigan, Inc. Their Link Crisis Intervention Center for Youth can be reached at 269-927-1422.



CHILD & FAMILY SERVICES
of Southwestern Michigan, Inc.

Thoughts on a Berrien County Gay Straight Alliance for Youth

By Claire Postelli and MacKenzie Carlock

The MerriamWebster Dictionary defines alive as, "continuing to exist." Recently, the OutCenter has decided that the title of their Gay Straight Alliance (GSA), ALIVE, shouldn't simply "continue to exist."

In our opinion, among other things, ALIVE tiptoed around the fact that it was a Gay Straight Alliance. Its identity could mean a million different

Straight Alliance reminder

Saturday, Sept. 21

The Phoenix, 124 Water Street
(next door)
2-4 PM

For LGBTQ youth, friends and allies, age 14-18.

Text BCGSA to 69301 to be added to the text messaging list.

Additional Saturdays: Oct. 19, Nov. 16, and Dec. 14.

Plus, the OutCenter will be open for the ARToberfest that day in the Arts District from noon until 9 PM! All-in-all a great time to stop by to visit and celebrate community.



Whole Lives, Healthy Lives Adult Support Group

New Day: Thursdays, 7-9 PM in the OutCenter's Conference Room

Room

A support process developed by the program's founder and lead volunteer facilitator, Ron Robinson, this program is now in its tenth year of providing to the LGBT adult community; it helps attendees and participants support each other in healthy ways through active listening and caring feedback. Through this process, the group members gathers insight on how to be true to who they are and understand they are also navigating through un-supportive and often hostile environments they are working and living in - making this group a much-needed safe place for LGBT adults to gather and talk about the concerns in their lives.

OutGirls update

OutGirls, A women's group, will meet Friday, October 18 at 7 PM at The Library in Benton Harbor for dinner. This is the same evening as the Art Hop in October. It promises to be a fun-filled evening in the Arts District and a great time for LGBTQ women and their allies to get together. If you'd like to hear more about this or get involved, **please call Gloria Weberg at 269.982.1702.**

things: People may have even mistaken it to be a church-related program.

This is what a Gay Straight Alliance really is, according to the amazing GLSEN, Gay, Lesbian & Straight Education Network: **Gay-Straight Alliances (GSAs) are clubs made up of students - gay and straight - who think that anti-LGBT bullying, harassment, and discrimination is wrong. Members work together to make sure their school is a safe, supportive environment for ALL students.** (<http://glsen.org/participate/gsa/about-gsas>)

GLSEN also has some amazing help on line on how to build and activate a GSA here (<http://glsen.org/jumpstart>). We are using this as a resource.

So, the name of Berrien County's GSA is under construction! What will be the new title? **That's where you can help.** The OutCenter would love to hear any ideas you have on what to call Berrien County's very own out of school GSA.

If you have any ideas please stop by this **Saturday at the GSA from 2-4 PM at The Phoenix Café** or email us at: clairepostelli@gmail.com, mackenziecarlock@yahoo.com, or maryjoschnell@outcenter.org.

Also, the revamping of the OutCenter's Gay Straight Alliance doesn't stop there. A new agenda is being put in place, which essentially means more partnerships, communication and fun activities to do! At this month's meeting, Saturday, September 21 from 2-4 PM at The Phoenix Café in Benton Harbor's Arts District we'll be there waiting for you! Bring your beYOUtiful self, and your friends to relax from school and be with understanding people.

Overall, we're attempting to build up the OutCenter's Gay Straight Alliance to be a fun and productive place for people to feel safe and help make a difference in our community.



Success at West Shore Aware (WSA) White Party

OutCenter to receive funds as a result

West Shore Aware is a philanthropic organization of gay men and women and their allies living in

Saugatuck/Douglas and the greater West Lakeshore community. The organization is dedicated to increasing the positive influence and public awareness of the contribution that gay men and women make to

the community in which they belong. Each year, West Shore Aware organizes an amazing fundraiser and selects nonprofit organizations as recipients to the funds they raise. This year was their 10th annual event and it was a **terrific success.**



The event sold out. Oliver Songlingco, OutCenter board member, was on hand to represent the organization.



Next week, OutCenter representatives will travel to Saugatuck to graciously receive a grant from West Shore Aware. Please help us thank West Shore Aware for their amazing work and support!



Affirming Clergy update

info@outcenter.org
269.925.8330

Foundation Support



West Shore Aware



Frederick S. Upton Foundation

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

The Affirming Clergy group had a good initial meeting where three attended, and another eight or so are interested. This bodes very well for our work. We are now following up on finalizing a potential speaker's schedule for a one-day clergy event. We will continue providing these updates. If you are a member of the clergy or are in a congregation and want your clergy person to know more about Affirming Clergy, please send me an email at dsjscheid@gmail.com.



(The Rev.) Dan Scheid
St. Augustine's Episcopal Church - Benton Harbor