



# youth outright

Summer  
2014

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*A word from Jim...*

Youth OUTright has been very busy.

Like many, if not most of you, I never had the opportunity to attend my high school prom as my authentic self. One hundred and one youth – LGBTQ and straight allies – attended *It's YO Prom* and were able to celebrate this right-of-passage without concerns for their safety, their well-being, or whether they would be accepted for who they are, who they love and how they identify.

They were true to themselves. That may sound small and inconsequential to some but for our youth and their friends it was tremendously liberating. It was their night of joy! We're grateful to Toy Boat, Food Experience, Mountain Xpress and DJ Abu Disarray for this awesome experience.

To better serve our youth we are introducing new age parameters (14 – 20) for our weekly support meetings, and are developing a new youth leadership program that will also provide social and support opportunities for youth ages 21 – 23. These new initiatives, which have been developed through a collaborative effort that included youth, the Board of Directors, facilitators and staff, will be introduced this fall.

Mark your calendars! Thursday, September 11 YO will present a free community event at the Jewish Community Center of Asheville. It will be a wonderful evening with a complimentary beer and wine bar, hors d'oeuvres and several spoken word performances. We will introduce an exciting performance development collaboration with the UNCA Drama Department, *Queer Youth Theatre/Young Voices*, which will be one of the few LGBTQ youth performance programs in the South.

The Cathedral of All Souls has awarded YO a grant to help us improve relations and communications with the gay-straight alliances (GSAs) in Asheville and Buncombe County. We are also working with some interested parties to do the same with the GSAs in Henderson County. By working more closely with the GSAs, YO can help expand the opportunities for our LGBTQ youth to find support, safe places and welcoming individuals.

We have great friends, and some of them are in very powerful positions. One example is the ACLU of North Carolina, which recently motivated three WNC counties to come into compliance with NC's 2009 School Violence Prevention Act (SVPA). The SVPA added sexual orientation, gender identification and gender expression to the list of categories protected from bullying, discrimination and harassment to state education policies – and which each school board in the state was obligated to add to their policies. YO had identified the non-complying school boards; the ACLU made the magic happen!

We continue to make a difference in the lives of LGBTQ youth in WNC. Your support impacts our mission to empower Braden, Candace, Jesse, Tyler, Tucker, Kirsten and many other LGBTQ youth and their straight youth allies to be confident and vital members of the WNC community.

Thank you.

**Jim Faucett, Executive Director**





***It's YO Prom: Be Fabulous!***

Over 100 youth from 19 different schools attended on May 24!!!



“The message for our prom is that this is a prom for you,” Harvey said. “A lot of kids can’t take the date they want to prom or dress the way that feels comfortable to them, so this is a place where they can have that great experience but still be who they are.”

— Braden Harvey, youth and YO Board of Directors.  
Excerpt from an article in the *CITIZEN TIMES*, May 3, 2014

**We offer special thanks to:**  
**Mountain Xpress**  
**Fuddruckers**                      **Food Experience**  
**Toy Boat Community Art Space**  
**Boomboxes, Etc.**  
**Ryan Bumgarner Photography**  
**Our amazing board and volunteers**  
 ...for making our prom possible!



**The National Conference on LGBT Equality**  
*Creating Change*  
 The largest annual gathering of activists, organizers, and leaders in the LGBT movement

**National Gay and Lesbian Task Force**  
 ACTION IS HOT  
 Prouder is sexier  
[www.CreatingChange.org](http://www.CreatingChange.org)

**Creating Change: The National Conference on LGBT Equality**

Two youth and staff from Youth Outright attended Creating Change in Houston from January 29-February 2, 2014. Thanks to the Amy Mandel-Katina Rodis Fund and Alliance for Full Acceptance for making this experience possible!



**ASPYRE Leadership Camp:**

A Safer Place for Youth to Reach for Excellence

*By Tommy McFee II*

I would give anything to help LGBTQ+ youth. This past April, I had the fabulous opportunity to go to ASPYRE Leadership Camp (organized by the LGBT Center of Raleigh). The people who went to the camp were queer youth from around NC. Most were from the Triangle. I was the only one from the mountains. It was an amazing place where queer youth could finally express themselves. We learned several useful things, such as ways to act out our goals. That helped me a lot. This makes you think of the team or the group of people needed to make your goal happen, the resources needed in order to make it happen, then the actions that are need to make your goal a reality. We also learned a little bit of self-defense. It was one of the best parts about the camp.

Not only did I learn important things to help me as an activist, I also experienced some pretty major self-growth while I was there. At the end of the second day, we were all sitting around in a circle holding hands and I was able to come out as genderqueer. It was one of the best moments of my life. The icing on top of the cake was when 30-something people gave me a hug and told me how strong I was. I finally had a safe place to be truly who I was. I no longer had to suppress my feelings. I am out to my family as a gay male and I don't believe that they would understand me being genderqueer, but that's okay. I'm happy that they accept the fact that I'm gay. This experience is something that has changed me in more ways than one. My friends said that, on the days afterwards, my eyes shined brightly.

I am thankful for Youth Outright for providing me with the chance to go. I am looking forward to hopefully going back next year as a youth counselor, as the camp is right next door to my college!

*Tommy starts at UNC Greensboro in the Fall.*



## Announcements and Upcoming Events

### **Youth Outright Programs 2014**

*Al Murray, Youth Programs Manager*

YO continues to grow and evolve in 2014. As we prepare for our next facilitator orientation and plan our annual facilitator retreat (July 8), we have so many new developments to discuss!

YO has partnered with Wolf Creek Adventures again and is planning a river canoe trip for the end of the summer. This summer, YO offers lots of opportunities for youth (and adults) to have fun in the sun!

Our Sunday youth meetings have included exciting speakers from local and national organizations: Our VOICE, Planned Parenthood, WNCAP, SisterCare...and even the FBI! In addition to guest speakers, weekly meetings continue to include special outings, movie nights, expressive arts activities, and plenty of fun and games.

YO youth raised a whopping \$1103 toward *It's YO Prom: Be Fabulous*--and the night was fantastic! Youth have also done a tremendous job serving as community ambassadors this year. Their attendance at Creating Change, WCU's TRANSaction Day, ASPYRE, as panelists at UNCA, and presenting at local GSAs (to name a few) has helped us connect YO with allies across North Carolina and nationally.

We are excited to focus our youth programming more specifically on the unique needs and capabilities of youth within our 14-23 age range. During 2014, we will create more opportunities for young adult leaders (ages 21-23) to take an active role in YO's present and future. YO will also continue to offer discussion topics relevant to youth ages 14-20, with specific attention to their concerns and life experiences. With this transition, we are thrilled to commit to peer leadership and the myriad of ways this model benefits YO youth.



Grayson Bruce (of 'My Little Pony' backpack fame) visited YO in May!

#### **August 2**

**12:00-4:00 p.m., Fletcher Community Park**

#### ***1<sup>st</sup> Annual Hendersonville Queer Youth Picnic***

Youth from Henderson County GSAs (Gay-Straight Alliances) will take on YO staff, board and facilitators in a rousing game of kickball. Enjoy hot dogs, snacks and beverages. Event is free to youth!

#### **August 9**

**11:00 a.m.-2:00 p.m., YO meeting room @ FCUCC (20 Oak Street)**  
***Facilitator Orientation***

If you are interested in becoming a YO volunteer facilitator, let us know! This orientation covers the role and responsibilities of our adult facilitators. Contact us for a volunteer application if you'd like to attend!

#### **September 11**

**7:30 p.m.-9:00 p.m. @ the Jewish Community Center**

#### ***Young Voices***

This free community event will introduce a new collaboration with the UNCA Theatre department—Queer Youth Theatre/Young Voices. Expect an invitation, but mark your calendars now!

#### **October 16**

**5:30 p.m.-7:30 p.m. @ HandMade in America**

#### ***Visit & Venture***

YO has been selected to be the beneficiary of [Visit & Venture](#)'s monthly Third Thursday event.

#### ***Five new members joined the YO Board of Directors in May:***

Brenda Clark, Jasmin Martinez, Laurie Pitts, Anneliese Schombs-Fish, and William Stanhope. Visit our [website](#) to see the full roster of our committed and hard-working Board.

**This September, [Metro Wines](#), 169 Charlotte Street in Asheville, will donate 10% of the sales of three selected wines to Youth Outright.** See our website and Facebook page for updates!

Over the next few months you'll notice some changes at YO. Cristo, who designed all the materials for last year's THE DANCE is giving us a complete branding makeover (pro bono) which will include our website and social media! Stay tuned!!

For more information on announcements and events, please visit [www.youthoutright.org](http://www.youthoutright.org), email [info@youthoutright.org](mailto:info@youthoutright.org) or call 828.785.3621

**Youth Outright is dedicated to empowering lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and questioning youth to be confident and vital members of our community.**

**YO holds weekly support meetings each Sunday from 4-6 pm at the FCUCC, 20 Oak Street in downtown Asheville.**

YO went canoeing on Lake Julian  
(thanks to Wolf Creek Adventures)!



Prom Photos... for more, see our  
website: [Youth Outright.org](http://Youth Outright.org)



Thanks to Fuddruckers on Charlotte Street for hosting  
our car wash fundraiser for prom!

