

# SHENANDOAH LGBTQ CENTER SEPTEMBER NEWS

## COVID, FUNDRAISING, AND THE IMPORTANCE OF GIVING CLUBS

The COVID pandemic has wreaked havoc on the non-profit community, and LGBTQIA+ organizations are no exception. With Pride celebrations canceled around the world and fall fundraising events still uncertain, many centers are facing major budget shortfalls.

Through careful planning and limited spending, the Center is proud to have nearly ten months of expenses saved to weather this crisis. But without Pride and Gayla income at expected levels, we are looking elsewhere in search of funds to sustain our programming and operations. In addition to pursuing various grants and seeking advertising dollars to underwrite our podcast series, we are also turning to you, our community, for support.

One of the best ways you can support the Center is to enroll in one of our giving clubs. Our Founders Circle, made up of donors who pledge \$100 per month for 24 months, has become the financial bedrock of our organization. We are actively working to expand membership at that level, but if that's not within your reach, we have opportunities for you to pledge at any level. While we are acutely aware that many people are facing reduced hours and unemployment due to the pandemic, we urge those who are able to make a monthly pledge in any amount - \$5, \$25, or \$50 per month multiplied by hundreds of dedicated community members will help us recover the funds we are losing from our events this year. Please [visit our website](#) for more information and consider joining one of our giving clubs to help us continue providing critical services and support to our rural LGBTQIA+ community.

**JOIN**

**TRAILHEAD**  
\$5-24/mo

**BASE CAMP**  
\$25-49/mo

**SUMMIT**  
\$50-\$99/mo

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# NEWS

## SHENANDOAH LGBTQ CENTER

SEPTEMBER 2020



### from the EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

As summer slowly fades to fall, I find myself reinvigorated at the prospect of new partnerships and programs for Shenandoah LGBTQ Center. Within the last few months we have established a Trans Health Fund and a Kitchen Improvement Fund to support our growing services. We've begun a delivery service for safer sex materials. And we are expanding our Walk & Picnic events to Harrisonburg in September and look forward to connecting with new folks in the area. Check back with our Resources webpage regularly, as we continue to add new resources for mental health, primary and specialty health care, and transgender support.

We've also established a fund for legal support aimed at improving access to legal resources for LGBTQ individuals. I'm reaching out to local law firms to get a better understanding of the legal landscape for our community in the Valley so that we can best use those funds to improve access and outcomes for LGBTQ people within the legal system. For now, you can access LGBTQ specific legal resources on our [Resources webpage](#).

In addition, I'm engaging in conversations with health care providers and administrators around LGBTQ access to affirming care. Many of you have shared your health care experiences with us, noting interactions, forms, and procedures that felt awkward or alienating. We are dedicated to helping providers ensure that your health care is taken seriously and is provided in a dignified and affirming way.

Lastly, I'm particularly excited as a former educator to begin the work of improving support for trans students in our local public schools. With new legislation to bolster us, we will be doing our best to hold local school districts accountable for creating and upholding policies that protect and affirm our trans youth.

It's been a challenging year as we have adapted to different models of serving you, but I'm grateful for the many ways that our community has showed up for each other. I'm eager to continue that innovation as the Center grows in its reach and breadth of support.

*In Solidarity and Resilience,  
Emily Sproul*



### WELCOMING A NEW BOARD MEMBER



We are thrilled to welcome Phil Floyd to the Board of Directors for the Shenandoah LGBTQ Center. Phil has devoted his career to psychiatric rehabilitation serving as a counselor and administrator with Rockbridge Area Community Services for over thirty years. He now is Center Director for SaVida Health, overseeing treatment centers in Staunton, Abingdon, and Culpeper that support people in recovery from addiction.

Phil is a servant leader, volunteering his time with Valley Community Services Board as a board member from 2013-2020 and recent past president for two years. He has also held numerous leadership roles on a national level, including Chair of the United States Psychiatric Rehabilitation Association from 2006-2008 and various positions within the International Association of Psychosocial Rehabilitation Services. Phil also brings experience in training mental health and recovery professionals in Safe Zone best practices.

As Founders Circle members, Phil and his husband, John Ong, have demonstrated passionate commitment to the mission of the Shenandoah LGBTQ Center. We are grateful for his investment of time and professional experience as a board member overseeing this incredible period of growth for the Center.

### ANNUAL GAYLA CANCELLED

Ongoing concerns about the COVID-19 pandemic have led us to the difficult decision that we will not hold our annual Gayla this fall. We do not wish to put people at risk of contracting the virus, and know that holding an in-person fundraiser this year will not likely have the desired outcomes.

Instead, we will be focusing on our monthly giving clubs throughout October, highlighting the ways in which your continued support allows us to provide high-quality programming and individualized care for our LGBTQIA+ community. Keep an eye on your inbox and social media for more information on how you can participate.



## TRANS HEALTH FUND OF THE SHENANDOAH LGBTQ CENTER

### TRANS HEALTH FUND BACK TO SCHOOL FUNDRAISER

Trans people experiencing dysphoria can benefit from non-medical materials that help alter their gender presentation. These products don't come cheaply, and for many transgender people, especially youth, the price means they don't have access to these aids that are critical to their mental and emotional health. As a Center, we are committed to providing transgender people with safe, quality items to reduce their dysphoria.

Youth attending classes feel more confident when they can present as their true selves. Whether students are back on campus, or attending via online video conferencing, visibility amongst their fellow students and instructors is an area of concern for trans and non-binary scholars. We want to get these students off to a great start in a challenging year.

Working with child case managers at Valley Community Services Board, through counseling departments and GSA advisors in area schools, and targeted campaigns at area colleges and universities, we are spreading the word to those who may need help affording these affirming products. Already we have had two youth apply and receive products in time for the school year.

Most awards from the Trans Health Fund are between \$50-90, so **we have a goal of raising \$2,000** in September to provide at least 20 people with binders, packers, tucking supplies, prosthetics and more to boost their self-image and their mental health.

Please consider a donation to the Trans Health Fund today to help us reach our goal! Visit [www.shenlgbtqcenter.org/trans-health-fund](http://www.shenlgbtqcenter.org/trans-health-fund) to learn more.

### TRANSPARENT SUPPORT GROUP

As the youth peer support group has grown, parents of these youth have expressed interest in creating a support group for parents of trans, non-binary, and gender non-conforming youth.

Beginning Thursday September 3, we will be meeting weekly online at 7 p.m. over Zoom to create space for each other to share challenges, ask questions, and offer support. The group is open to any parents or family members of trans, non-binary, and gender non-conforming youth. Please email us at [hello@shenlgbtqcenter.org](mailto:hello@shenlgbtqcenter.org) if you would like to join.



### VDOE WORKGROUP CREATES MODEL POLICIES TO SUPPORT TRANSGENDER STUDENTS

Over the summer, Executive Director Emily Sproul participated in a workgroup organized by the Virginia Department of Education. The group focused on developing model policies that public school districts can use as they establish their district policies to support and affirm transgender students. The work is in response to legislation passed by the Virginia General Assembly this year that mandates these policies be in place by the 2021-22 school year.

The Shenandoah LGBTQ Center is pursuing funding to offer Safe Zone training to area school districts to help teachers, staff, and administrators understand best practices for supporting LGBGQIA+ students as they work to develop and implement these new policies. It is our hope to reach schools in Augusta, Rockingham, and Rockbridge Counties so all the students in our service area can be supported.



### LET THE OUTDOOR FUN CONTINUE!

Our walks and picnics in local parks will continue into the fall as weather allows. August was particularly challenging in Staunton with rainy Saturdays and flooding, but we are looking forward to getting back on track and even expanding our reach to Harrisonburg. Stay tuned to our webpage and social media for updates and announcements!

Walks and picnics have helped take the place of our usual drop-in hours at the Center, providing space for people to safely gather for socialization and support. It also allows Center staff to informally connect with individuals to assess any mental health or other needs that may prompt a referral to other services. We are grateful to the Augusta Health Community Outreach grant for supporting these events as part of our mental health initiatives.

### CLOTHES CLOSET OPEN BY APPOINTMENT

As the seasons change you may find yourself in need of a wardrobe refresh. Thinking of trying out a new style? Why not check out the Center's FREE clothes closet? We offer gently used seasonal clothing, shoes, accessories, and more in an easy, private shopping environment. For an appointment to check out all the latest styles, please contact Kirby at [assistant@shenlgbtqcenter.org](mailto:assistant@shenlgbtqcenter.org).



### TIES GOES VIRTUAL!

For the past six years, transgender and non-binary Virginians have come together in Richmond with friends, family members, and allies for the Transgender Information & Empowerment Summit (TIES). This year, the 7th Annual TIES is going digital to protect the health and safety of everyone who loves TIES. We are excited for the new possibilities and greater access this format presents, including the first time TIES has occurred over the course of multiple days! This year, the conference takes place from **Wednesday, October 14 through Saturday, October 17**. We can't wait for you to join us to be a part of this year's re-imagined TIES. **Register today!**

**La página de registro** en español para la séptima Conferencia Anual de Información y Empoderamiento Transgénero (TIES por sus siglas en inglés). To register with the Spanish language form, **click here**.

During one of the most transformative years of our lifetime, highlighted by the COVID-19 pandemic and nationwide uprisings for Black lives, we believe the power of community has never been more clear. TIES offers an opportunity to foster that community by learning from and with each other in a safe and welcoming space. TIES exists to connect and empower transgender, non-binary, and gender nonconforming Virginians of all ages as well as family members, partners, and allies to strengthen the trans community across Virginia!



### TIES HAS A LOT TO OFFER

No matter what you're looking for, there is something at TIES for you:

- **Community** social events and **opportunities to connect** one-on-one.
- **Dozens of workshops** that cover a range of topics from health insurance to racial justice to voting rights, and so much more.
- **Name and Gender Marker Change Clinic** with free legal assistance for that process. Registration will be available closer to the conference.
- **Free wellness center** where you can talk with a trans-affirming mental health or medical provider to ask questions and find resources. Registration will be available closer to the conference.
- Programming for trans and gender expansive **youth, family members, partners, and allies**.
- **Interpretation in Spanish and American Sign Language (ASL)** available upon request.