



from the EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

A month ago, I couldn't have imagined the content of this newsletter. Our plans were so different then—focused intently on our second Staunton Pride which we were planning

to celebrate at the end of this month. Within a week, and with multiple conversations with city officials, the date had been changed to the end of July. We continue to hope and plan for that to be a reality. We know that when we do get to celebrate Pride together, it's going to be huge and emotional in more ways than we could have dreamed. For now, mark your calendars for July 24-26 and stay tuned to www.stauntonpride.org for updates!

A month ago, we were eagerly planning the continuation of our Friday night film series twice a month, featuring documentaries and lighthearted films around LGBTQ themes. We were planning potlucks and scheduling support groups and meeting with local GSAs at middle and high schools. We were answering requests from local agencies for cultural competency trainings to help providers and families better support LGBTQ employees and youth.

Now as we face a quarantine that will last another two months, our focus has shifted. Through intensive online meetings and webinars, we've learned about ways we can continue to create community and provide support remotely. We've purchased HIPAA-compliant Zoom software to allow us to continue to hold confidential meetings through online video chat or voice call. We are rolling out a digital chat space to keep our community connected throughout these long days and weeks. And we've begun weekly group video chat check-ins as well as individual text and phone check-ins on several of our most vulnerable community members.

The silver lining in all of this is that these adaptations are services that we can and should continue far beyond the duration of our current circumstances. As a rural LGBTQ center, we serve three counties that are geographically widespread and remote. Many of our most vulnerable LGBTQ folx lack access to transportation that would help them visit the Center in person. Our LGBTQ youth who live in unsupportive homes often can't reach us either. Online solutions reach many of these folx and can make it easier for them to get the support and encouragement and connection they need.

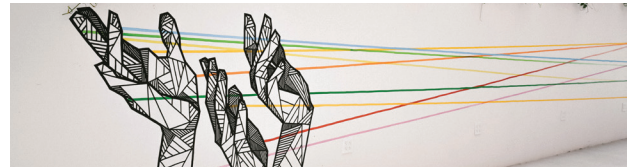
If you're stuck at home looking for ways you can help, I encourage you to read through this month's newsletter for suggestions for getting involved. Whether it's giving time, money, expertise, or just a lot of love, we need you.

—Emily Sproul



COMMUNITY NEEDS ASSESSMENT

In these rapidly changing times we are working hard to keep abreast of what our community of LGBTQ Valley residents needs most. Please take a moment (less than five minutes!) to [fill out our community needs assessment](#) so we can best use the resources we have to help you.



WEEKLY ONLINE VIDEO CHAT CHECK-IN

Our Saturday afternoon check-ins have been going for a couple of weeks now and are drawing an average of eight people each time. We have plenty of room for more and would love to see you! This 3 p.m. casual chat is a chance to see each other (and some different faces from the ones we may be stuck in the house with!) We exchange stories, news, cute pet introductions, and more. We're even thinking creatively about some improv style games we might play to spice things up! To join us, all you need to do is fill out a [FREE registration form](#) on our website and we will send you a link to the Zoom chat each week.

PEER-TO-PEER SUPPORT GROUPS CONTINUE

Our popular peer-to-peer support groups are continuing to meet, but now are online! This means you need to register for each group meeting so we can send you the link. Our partners at The ARROW Project are hosting these groups on their tele-health video platform so that you can be assured that your privacy is protected. To register, please visit the [Support Groups page](#) on our website.

These groups are provided free of charge to participants, but the Center still pays our ARROW partners for their work. Therefore, we need a minimum of three participants for a group to meet for any given session. Please encourage others to join you in signing up so we can continue to offer this vital resource. This is an ideal space for folx to work through the added stress and anxiety of being in quarantine and/or continuing to work as an essential employee during difficult times.

SHENANDOAH LGBTQ CENTER **SPRING NEWS**

JOIN THE CONVERSATION

The Shenandoah LGBTQ Center is rolling out its own Discord server! For those of you unfamiliar with the format, it's a chat room style app that's been used by gamers for years now. It includes the opportunity to participate either through text, voice, or video and is a great way to "hang out" online with friends, similar to how our drop-in hours at the Center work. We are currently in a soft-rollout stage of making sure we have all the quirks and settings worked out for a seamless experience. This chat room will be available 24/7 with a general use chat room, a trans chat room, and a private access youth channel. Other channels will be added as users create discussions around particular topics. If you are already a Discord user or even if you've never tried a chat room before, we encourage you to sign up to join our channel! [Click here to fill out the form](#) to let us know you're interested and receive a link to the server.



DONATE

Like every organization, we are working hard to adapt to changing conditions. This means budgets must adapt as well, accommodating fees for new technology services and other unexpected expenses. It also means that our income from major events has been disrupted with the postponement of Pride and questions about our second annual Gayla. We continue to pay rent for our Center space and office space at the Masonic building, even though we can't use them at this time. We have a close, positive relationship with the building's owners, they take good care of us, and we know that they have bills to pay as well. We feel this is the right thing to do in continuing to support our local economy as much as we are able.

The leadership of the Center has been very fiscally responsible with the funds we've raised in the 18 months since we started, allowing us a cushion of ten months of operating and payroll expenses. But we still need your help to secure our future and ensure that we can continue to provide resources and support to our LGBTQ community here in the Valley.

If you are in a position to give, please [visit our website](#) today and consider becoming a member of any of our giving clubs. Monthly giving starts at just \$5 per month and makes a big difference in our budget planning. Thank you for whatever you can give to help.



TRAILHEAD
\$5-24/mo



BASE CAMP
\$25-49/mo



SUMMIT
\$50-\$99/mo



ONLINE PROGRAMS TO INSPIRE AND PASS THE TIME

Our awesome programming staff wants to keep you engaged during these long days and is offering to host virtual movie nights and a book club for those who may be interested. Both will be hosted online, with the movies streamed through a group platform, and the book club held like a regular video conference. If you are interested in participating in either of these, please click on the links to the surveys below and let us know your preferences for meetings!

[Movie Night Survey](#)
[Book Club Survey](#)



COMING IN MAY – VIRTUAL POTLUCK!

We are taking a break from our potluck this month as we plan for our first VIRTUAL potluck in May. The theme will be "Pandemic Recipes" and will encourage participants to focus on economical yet delicious recipes to change up our boring meal routines on a budget. Keep an eye on our Facebook page for an invitation to the event and use the event page to post your recipes ahead of the potluck night. We'll video chat over our dinner and continue to share ideas around meal planning on a budget.



www.shenlgbtqcenter.org
hello@shenlgbtqcenter.org
13 W. Beverley St., 5th Floor
Staunton, VA 24401
540.466.3320