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LGBTQ TA CENTER QUARTERLY newsletter

Summer 2024

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Pride Month Reflections: Honoring History & Shaping the Future

Happy Summer from the LGBTQ TA Center!

It's a warm June so far here in Northern California, and we're enjoying the longer days and slower pace that this time of year can bring. June is also a month filled with opportunities to come together to celebrate the beautiful spectrum of identities within the LGBTQ+ community.

Both Juneteenth and Pride Month honor historic acts of resistance. Juneteenth stands as one of the earliest observances marking the end of slavery in America and a time to reflect on the unfinished work of dismantling racism and discrimination. Pride Month recognizes a historic turning point in the fight for LGBTQ+ rights and it serves as a reminder that this fight is ongoing. Both observances offer moments to sit with and rally against the intersectional oppressions that members of our community still face, and an opportunity to send powerful messages of support, solidarity, and safety.

This month, we're feeling particularly inspired by the transformative work of the Center for Sexuality and Gender Diversity in Bakersfield, CA - an organization focusing on holistic and inclusive approaches to support the mental health and wellbeing of the LGBTQ+ community in Kern County. We had the opportunity to speak with them in May, and learn more about their approach to increasing connectedness, engagement, and a sense of community in Kern County.

In our last newsletter, we heard from Sara Seberger, Director of Mental Health at Gender Health Center, about the countless ways GHC's work uplifts voices of trans and gender expansive folks in the Sacramento community. In this edition, we'll continue the conversation with new opportunities for you to stay informed, expand your learning, and take action, this summer and beyond!

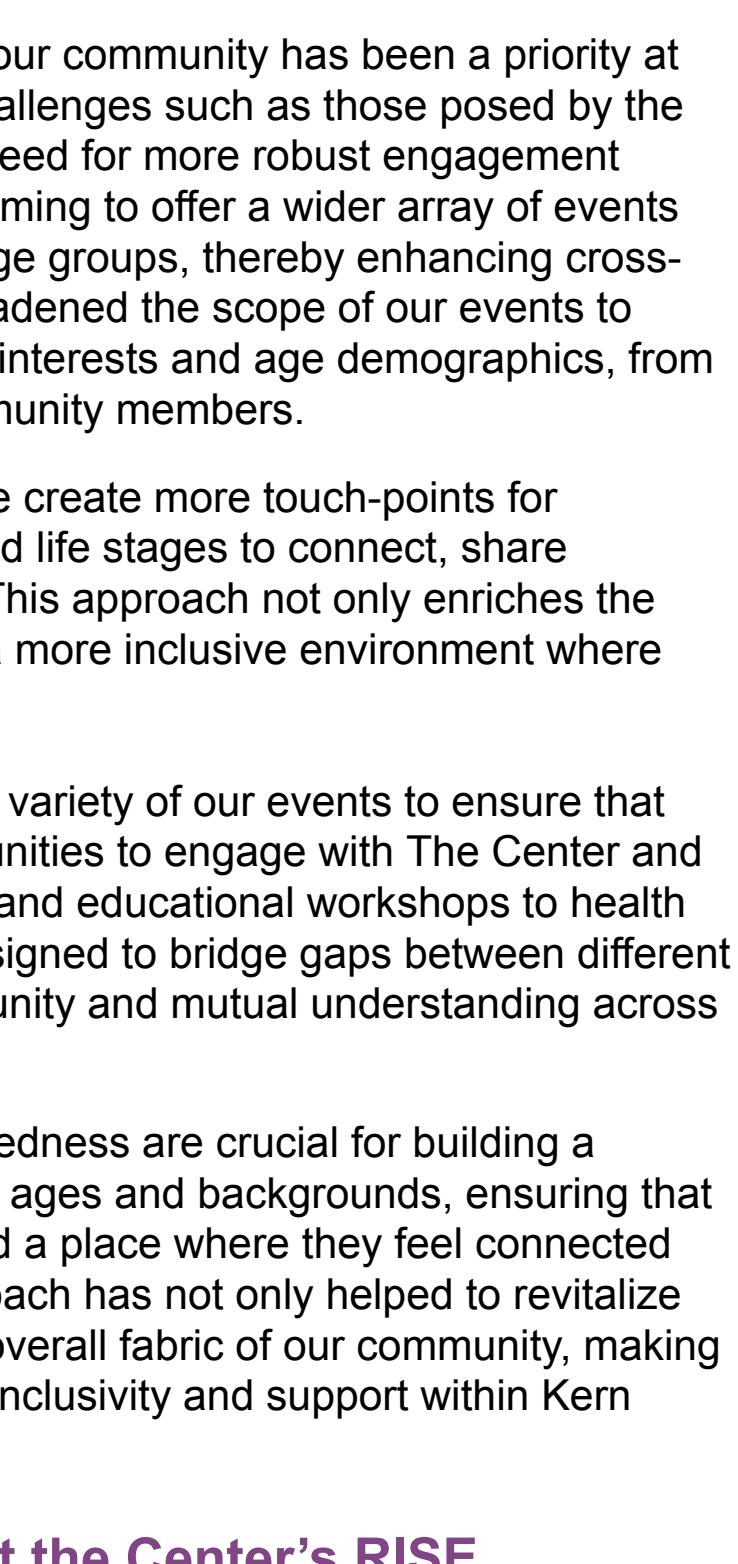
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Grantee Spotlight The Center for Sexuality and Gender Diversity

The LGBTQ TA Center provides no-cost technical assistance and training to seven organizations to support their phenomenal work with LGBTQ+ communities. We want to take this opportunity to showcase another one of our fantastic grantees!

The Center for Sexuality and Gender Diversity is a non-profit organization located in Bakersfield, CA dedicated to providing holistic and inclusive approaches to support the mental health and wellbeing of the 2SLGBTQIA+ community in Kern County.



How does The Center address the mental health and wellbeing of 2SLGBTQIA+ community members?

At The Center, we focus on holistic and inclusive approaches to support the mental health and wellbeing of the 2SLGBTQIA+ community in Kern County. We emphasize accessibility and cultural competency, ensuring that all programs are responsive to the specific needs of our community members. Our services include counseling, support groups, and wellness activities that are designed to reduce stigma and promote health and resilience.

What is The Center's approach to increasing social connectedness, engagement, and sense of community in Kern County?

Increasing social connectedness within our community has been a priority at The Center, particularly in the face of challenges such as those posed by the COVID-19 pandemic. Recognizing the need for more robust engagement strategies, we've expanded our programming to offer a wider array of events and opportunities that cater to diverse age groups, thereby enhancing cross-generational connectedness. We've broadened the scope of our events to include activities that appeal to different interests and age demographics, from youth and young adults to our 50+ community members.

By diversifying our program offerings, we create more touch-points for individuals from various backgrounds and life stages to connect, share experiences, and support one another. This approach not only enriches the community experience but also fosters a more inclusive environment where everyone feels valued and understood.

We've also increased the frequency and variety of our events to ensure that community members have more opportunities to engage with The Center and with each other. From social gatherings and educational workshops to health and wellness events, each activity is designed to bridge gaps between different segments of our community, promoting unity and mutual understanding across generations.

These efforts to enhance social connectedness are crucial for building a supportive network that spans across all ages and backgrounds, ensuring that every member of our community can find a place where they feel connected and at home. This comprehensive approach has not only helped to revitalize engagement but also strengthened the overall fabric of our community, making The Center a pivotal force in promoting inclusivity and support within Kern County.

Can you share a little bit about the Center's RISE prevention and early intervention program?

RISE provides various points of entry, including recreational activities, social support groups, one-on-one advocacy, and professional development for behavioral health providers. This variety ensures that there are multiple pathways for individuals to connect with the program, depending on their immediate needs and personal comfort levels.

For instance, someone might initially join a recreational activity to ease into the community atmosphere and, as they become more comfortable, decide to participate in more structured social support sessions. Conversely, others might start with the support groups and later explore the recreational activities offered.

This non-rigid, participant-focused approach allows individuals to navigate their own paths within the program without feeling boxed into a prescribed route or set of expectations. It acknowledges and respects the individuality of each participant, providing them with the autonomy to shape their engagement according to their personal growth and evolving needs. As participants' confidence and comfort levels increase, they find themselves exploring other facets of the program, which supports a continuous and organic form of engagement and growth.

What makes this program structure effective for the 2SLGBTQIA+ community in Kern County?

The RISE program at The Center is particularly effective because of its flexible and inclusive structure, which thoughtfully accommodates the diverse needs and comfort levels of our community members. This flexibility is a cornerstone of the program's design, allowing participants to engage in a manner that feels most comfortable to them, which significantly enhances their overall experience and outcomes.

The design of RISE to grow with participants, offering a dynamic range of activities and support options that evolve alongside them, is not only unique but deeply empowering. It ensures that the support they receive is always relevant and responsive to their current life context, which is crucial for their continued well-being and empowerment.

This flexibility and responsiveness make RISE an exceptionally effective model for community support, particularly valued in our efforts to create an empowering environment for all members of the 2SLGBTQIA+ community in Kern County.

Can you describe one of The Center's offerings that feels uniquely tailored to the local communities you serve?

At The Center, we constantly strive to develop services that resonate deeply with the specific needs of our local 2SLGBTQIA+ community. A prime example of this tailored approach is our newly launched "Emerge Workshop," a transformative 4-week program specifically designed for transgender, gender expansive, gender nonconforming, and questioning individuals in Kern County. This workshop represents our commitment to providing targeted support that addresses the unique challenges faced by the transgender community.

The "Emerge Workshop" is crafted to empower participants through a series of engaging discussions on resilience, the complexities of coming out, and essential self-care practices. Each session is designed to create a supportive and inclusive environment where participants can freely explore the resilience inherent within the transgender community, embrace the diversity of coming-out experiences, and develop personalized self-care routines that honor their unique identities.

How is The Center recognizing Pride Month this June?

Pride Month holds profound significance for us at The Center for Sexuality & Gender Diversity. Traditionally, it's a time to honor the history and resilience of our community. This year, we're taking a fresh approach to how we celebrate. We aim to use Pride as a catalyst to activate and unite our community around the vital work of The Center. Our focus is on expanding our outreach and emphasizing the importance of having a dedicated space that supports the diverse needs of our community in Kern County.

During Pride, we are not only celebrating but also building bridges across different segments of our community. We're planning to partner with various organizations to spotlight The Center's mission and the impactful services we provide, such as mental health support and community connectivity opportunities. Our goal is to showcase the different ways The Center fosters an inclusive and supportive environment for everyone.

Are there any Pride Month events you would like to highlight?

This year, our Youth and Young Adult Council is spearheading several exciting Pride initiatives. They are organizing a Pride event that will feature an open mic night, giving our young community members a platform to express themselves and share their stories. Additionally, they are collaborating with local businesses, like Orange Theory, to host fundraisers.

These events not only raise vital funds for our programs but also strengthen affirming and inclusive environments for LGBTQ+ youth at home, school, and in these celebrations and support our efforts to make a lasting impact in the lives of 2SLGBTQIA+ individuals and their allies throughout Kern County. For more details on our Pride Month events and how you can get involved, please [visit our website](#) or [follow us on social media](#).

Is there anything else you'd like to share about the work that the Center is doing?

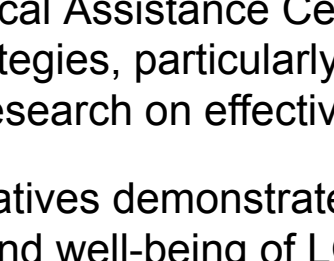
We are actively working to enhance our community engagement through various community-focused events. These events are designed to engage different community segments, creating multiple entry points into our programming. Focusing on social events that unite people, we aim to foster connections among those with diverse experiences and backgrounds.

We recognize the immense value in forming bonds and friendships with individuals who differ from us, as this diversity enriches our community and promotes a culture of respect and inclusion within the 2SLGBTQIA+ population. We are committed to leveraging the power of storytelling to share the narratives of our community members, which supports our ongoing rebranding efforts and helps articulate the impact of our work in the community.

Additionally, we have diligently engaged with previous and new funders to advance our mission and expand our impact. It has been incredibly rewarding to see the growing support from various organizations and individuals—some of whom are learning about us for the first time or are reconnecting to support us anew. These partnerships are vital as they help us broaden our reach and strengthen our ability to serve our community effectively.

Through these efforts, The Center continues to strive toward creating a welcoming and supportive environment where all members of the 2SLGBTQIA+ community can thrive. We are excited about the future and the opportunities that these new connections and resources will bring.

For more details on the Center for Sexuality and Gender Diversity's Pride Month events and to learn about how you can get involved, please [visit their website](#) and follow them on social media!

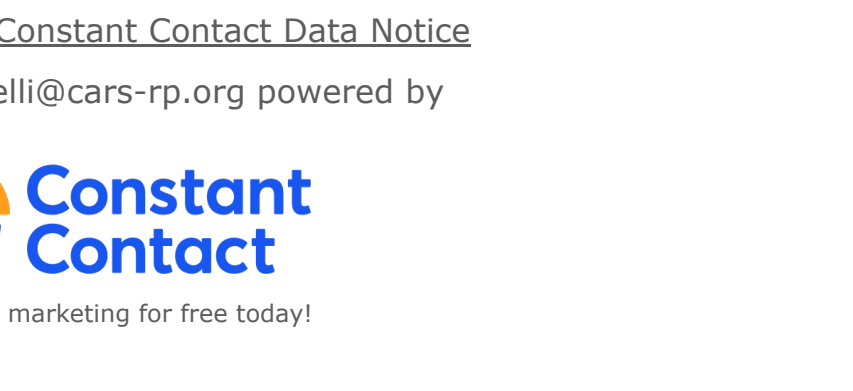


Community News

Grantee Organizations' Pride Month Events

Honoring Trans/Queer Ancestors at Gender Health Center

Sacramento, CA - The Gender Health Center is hosting a special event to honor the legacy of transgender and queer ancestors: "Honoring Trans/Queer Ancestors: Community Altar & Platica." This free event will be a space for the community to come together, share gratitude, and remember those who paved the way for LGBTQ+ rights and visibility.



RSVP by June 24th to secure your spot!

Here's the itinerary:
5:45 PM - 6:00 PM: Arrival + Placing items on altar
6:00 PM: Introductions/Opening meditation
6:15 PM: Experiential activity
6:50 PM: Break
7:00 PM: Platica, group conversation
7:45 PM: Closing meditation + Wrap up

They ask that you please arrive 10-15 minutes early to give yourself time to settle in. The event will begin promptly at 6:00 PM and will end at 7:45 PM. Doors will be locked at 6:00 PM.

Trans Activism, Joy, and Resistance: Intergenerational Dialogue at Openhouse

San Francisco, CA - Openhouse, the city's LGBTQ+ Senior Community Center, is hosting a special event this Pride month: "Trans Activism, Joy, and Resistance: Tales of the Past, Present, and Future." This intergenerational gathering provides a unique platform for the transgender, gender-nonconforming, and intersex (TGNIC) community to share their experiences and perspectives. The event aims to foster connection, inspire activism, and spark dialogue about the journey ahead. This event is open to all members of the TGNIC community.

To learn more or for questions, contact Lila Goehring at loehring@openhousesf.org. For more Openhouse events, check out their [events calendar](#).

Pride Events in California Map

Napa, CA - Napa Queer Leaders Coalition, LGBTQ Connection's coalition to uplift youth leaders, shared this excellent graphic with a map of Pride month events happening all over California.

New Insights from the Trevor Project's 2024 U.S. National Survey on the Mental Health of LGBTQ+ Young People

Focusing on the theme of "Joy," The Trevor Project's 2024 Survey highlights the resilience and strength of LGBTQ+ young people, while also calling for greater support and understanding to ensure their mental health and well-being. According to the survey, LGBTQ+ youth report high rates of anxiety, depression, and suicidal thoughts, significantly higher than their non-LGBTQ+ peers. They also note facing unique stressors related to their sexual orientation and gender identity, including discrimination, bullying, and rejection from family. Despite these challenges, LGBTQ+ youth also identify numerous sources of joy and resilience in their lives, including having a supportive community of friends and chosen family, exploring and expressing their identities through creative outlets, and engaging in LGBTQ+ activism and community events. The survey underscores the importance of providing affirming and inclusive environments for LGBTQ+ youth at home, school, and in their communities, including access to mental health resources and culturally-competent care.

[Check out all the insights from the 2024 Survey >](#)

SAMHSA Unveils New Resources for LGBTQ+ Support and Awareness During Pride Month

The Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) is bolstering its support for LGBTQ+ individuals and communities this Pride Month with a suite of new resources. The focus is on raising awareness and expanding access to mental health services through the 988 Suicide & Crisis Lifeline.

New Resources for Outreach and Engagement: The 988 Partner Toolkit, a valuable resource for organizations and individuals working to promote the Lifeline, has been enhanced with new materials specifically tailored to the LGBTQ+ community.

Social Media Graphics and Photos: These visual assets are designed to help spread the word about 988 services and showcase the diverse faces of the LGBTQ+ community.

Spanish-Language Educational Magnet: This bilingual resource aims to increase awareness of the Lifeline and its services in Spanish-speaking communities.

Highlighting the Lifeline's Reach: A powerful clip from the medical drama "Grey's Anatomy" has been released featuring a message about the 988 Lifeline. The clip, shared widely on social media, highlights the Lifeline's role as a vital resource for anyone experiencing a mental health crisis.

Accessing LGBTQ+ Specialized Services: SAMHSA is also emphasizing the accessibility of LGBTQ+ specialized services through the 988 Lifeline. Individuals can access these services by:

- Texting "PRIDE" to 988.
- Calling 988 and selecting option 3.
- Indicating LGBTQ+ in the pre-chat survey on 988lifeline.org.

Continued Focus on Crisis Response: SAMHSA is also hosting upcoming webinars through the Crisis Systems Response Training and Technical Assistance Center (CSRT TAC) to continue advancing crisis response strategies, particularly focusing on the coordination of 988 and 911 services and research on effective communication strategies.

These new resources and initiatives demonstrate SAMHSA's commitment to supporting the mental health and well-being of LGBTQ+ individuals and communities, during Pride Month and beyond.

[Access New SAMHSA Pride Month Resources >](#)

Contact Our Team:

<http://lgbtq-ta-center.org/>
[contact-us](#)

1-877-568-4227

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