



THE SEVENTH ANNUAL
PENNSYLVANIA YOUTH ACTION CONFERENCE

***ALIVE TO THRIVE
ADVOCATING FOR
HEALTHIER COMMUNITIES***



CAPITAL AREA SCHOOL FOR THE ARTS
HARRISBURG, PA // APRIL 13 – 15, 2018





Welcome to the
Seventh Annual
Pennsylvania Youth
Action Conference!

***Alive to Thrive:
Advocating for Healthier Communities***

**Capital Area School for the Arts // Harrisburg, PA
April 13 – 15, 2018**

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Welcome from the Pennsylvania Youth Congress!

Dear Friends,

Welcome to the Seventh Annual Pennsylvania Youth Action Conference: *Alive to Thrive!* After months of planning, we excited to finally be in Harrisburg!

We have a fantastic weekend ahead. Together, we will be challenged and inspired through powerful workshops and plenary sessions. We deeply appreciate you and all of our speakers for participating.

We are sincerely grateful to the many individuals and organizations who have made this year's conference possible. Local and national organizations have come together as sponsors of the conference. The Capital Area School for the Arts has been a fabulous partner in hosting the YAC.

PYC staff have been approaching every decision of the conference with care and intentionality. We thank them for their invaluable guidance throughout the planning process.

While Pennsylvania has started to make some movement toward addressing LGBTQ youth healthcare, too many members of our community experience negative outcomes in taking care of themselves. We remain optimistic with our power to make a difference in this world that we can truly be alive to thrive.

We firmly believe that LGBTQ liberation will only come when those most impacted by systems of oppression are centered. At the YAC, we always aim to lift up the experiences of LGBTQ family members whose voices must be heard. We celebrate the strength and resilience of LGBTQ youth who are met with barriers and harm in trying access healthcare, and those who lack the opportunity to seek high quality health services.

This past fall we faced a very tough battle when state lawmakers attempted to strip away healthcare from transgender children and teens using the Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP). As young advocates, we helped lead the critical advocacy work that has held up that effort. It was only through the mobilization of our networks that we were able to reach out to every part of the state that was needed in order to push back. It is through our space here at the YAC that we not only learn important skills, share best practices from our regions, and build a strong, healing community space – but we also mobilize so that when efforts to harm us come about, we are stronger than ever before.

Pennsylvania will become a safer commonwealth because of our efforts. Thank you for your advocacy.



Jason Landau Goodman
Executive Director
Pennsylvania Youth Congress

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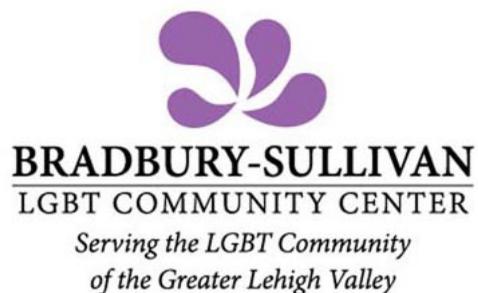
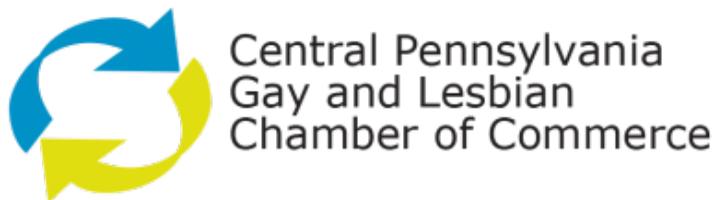


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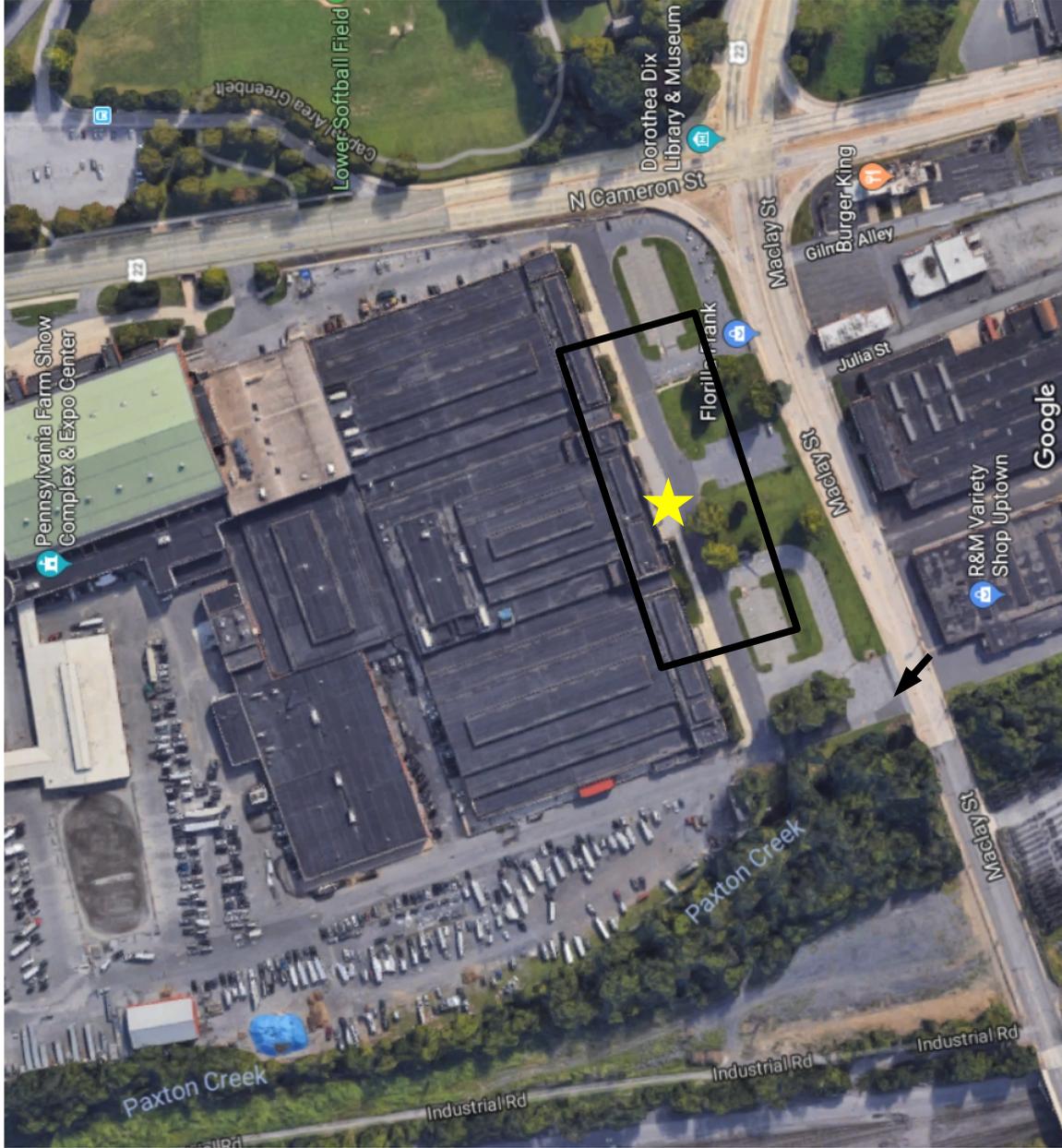
Silver





Map of Downtown Harrisburg

Capital Area School for the Arts (CASA): 150 Strawberry Street (Corner of North 3rd Street and Walnut Street)
Pennsylvania Youth Congress: 413 Walnut Street
Crowne Plaza Harrisburg-Hershey (Host Hotel): 23 South 2nd Street



Map of the Maclay Street Entrance at the Pennsylvania Farm Show

The Maclay Street Entrance to the Pennsylvania Farm Show Complex is located on Maclay Street, near the intersection of Maclay Street and North Cameron Street.

The Commonwealth Banquet will take place at the Keystone Conference Center which is most accessible from the Maclay Street Entrance. Parking in the Maclay Street Parking Lot is free.

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HEALTHCARE RESOURCES AT THE YAC

The YAC is a powerful space for us to share in community and delve into important advocacy work.

Through this weekend, we need to take care of each other and ourselves.

Please take breaks as needed. Please do what will help you be the most comfortable you can be throughout the weekend.

Licensed Professional Counselors

If you want to talk privately with a licensed professional counselor any day of the YAC, we invite you to do so. The Faculty Lounge in the center of CASA is reserved as a private and confidential space to talk with a licensed professional for free over the weekend, should you want to chat with someone.

This safe space will be open during the following times. If the door is closed, please wait outside and the counselor will be with you as soon as they are able.

Friday, April 13th from 7pm-10pm (Melinda Eash, MS)

Saturday, April 14th from 11am-3pm (Amy Keisling, LCSW)

Sunday, April 15th from 10am-12:15pm (Alexis Lake, LCSW)

Rapid HIV Testing

On Saturday, April 14th from 2:30pm-5pm we will welcome Hamilton Health Services at the YAC to provide private, free, and confidential HIV testing in the Music Room. Hamilton will be using the OraQuick test which uses oral fluid that provide results in 20 minutes. Please stop by for a visit!

Emergency Healthcare Needs

In case of emergency, there are several hospitals around Harrisburg, with the closest to the conference being UPMC Pinnacle, located at 111 South Front Street, Harrisburg.

ABOUT THE PENNSYLVANIA YOUTH ACTION CONFERENCE

The **Pennsylvania Youth Action Conference**, or Y-A-C, is an annual LGBTQ youth advocacy conference run by and for Pennsylvania youth. Convened by LGBTQ student organizations across the state, the YAC is held over three days to strengthen and grow a coordinated LGBTQ youth movement in Pennsylvania.

The vision of the conference each year is developed and executed by the Youth Action Conference Planning Committee, making the event completely youth-led.

The first YAC was held at the University of Pennsylvania, here in Philadelphia, in 2011. The second YAC, *May the Circle Remain Unbroken*, was held at the University of Pittsburgh in 2013. The third YAC, *Igniting a Pennsylvania Movement for Trans* Justice and Freedom*, was also held at the University of Pennsylvania in 2014. The YAC in 2015, *Cultivating New Possibilities for Rural LGBTQ Youth*, took place at Juniata College in Huntingdon, PA. In 2016, the YAC focused on *The Future of Community Safety and LGBTQ Pennsylvania* at the University of Pennsylvania, once more. In 2017, the YAC was modified into a retreat which was held in Harrisburg at PYC's state headquarters.

The conference is made possible by community sponsors, registration fees, and local fundraising efforts.

ABOUT HARRISBURG

Harrisburg is the state capital of Pennsylvania and a historic city with diverse neighborhoods, a vibrant culture, and a growing urban economy. As the ninth largest city in the commonwealth, Harrisburg has been the home of our State Capitol since 1812. Originally the home of the Susquehannock tribe, the Harrisburg area was known as Paxtang. The area was settled by European colonists as a trading post in the 1600s, and was formally settled by John Harris in 1719. The city began to grow and was incorporated in 1791.

Harrisburg is regarded as among the most LGBTQ-friendly cities in Pennsylvania. In 1983, Harrisburg became the first municipality in Pennsylvania to ban discrimination on the basis of gender identity in housing, employment, and public accommodations, and the second city in the state to ban discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation, behind Philadelphia. The city boasts many active LGBTQ community organizations, such as the LGBT Center of Central Pennsylvania, which has its home on North Third Street. Alder Health Services provides LGBTQ-friendly healthcare from Cameron Street. The Pride Festival of Central PA has been celebrating LGBTQ life from Harrisburg since 1992. There are three active LGBTQ-friendly nightclubs surrounding the State Capitol Complex: 704, Stallions, and the Brownstone Lounge.



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Enjoy Your Stay at One of the Best Harrisburg PA Hotels Nestled on the banks of the Susquehanna River, surrounded by historic architecture and modern buildings, is the bustling city of Harrisburg, PA. Our hotel's location is amid this capital city where science, art, business and culture combine to create an urban oasis.

Our hotel's downtown location also makes us the ideal place to stay for a fun vacation. Walk to the Capitol Complex and State Museum to learn about Pennsylvania's history, or enjoy a meal at an eatery on Restaurant Row, Harrisburg's eclectic culinary district. For some family fun, head to Riverfront Park and City Island to enjoy river recreation or ride a roller coaster and indulge in candy at Hershey park in nearby Hershey, PA.

Our hotel's the place to be in Harrisburg and offers great amenities such as an indoor pool, a Fitness Center with city views, and a chic restaurant, TwentyThree3. With all of this, you're bound to enjoy your stay at the Crowne Plaza® Harrisburg – Hershey hotel.

CONFERENCE COMMUNITY PRINCIPLES

Safe Space Principles

Safe Space Principles adapted from the National LGBTQ Task Force's Creating Change Etiquette Guide

The Pennsylvania Youth Action Conference is committed to being a safe and positive space for the LGBTQ youth community and its allies. We want everyone here to learn, meet fabulous new people from all over the state, and feel comfortable discussing important issues with each other as we build a stronger movement.

We want to remind everyone of these guiding principles that are essential to maintaining a respectful and safe space for each other.

There are two fundamental principles to The Pennsylvania Youth Action Conference: human rights and solidarity. Sexual harassment strikes at the heart of both. It creates feelings of uneasiness, humiliation and discomfort. It is an expression of perceived power and superiority by the harasser over another person.

Sexual Harassment is any unwanted attention of a sexual nature, such as remarks about appearance or personal life, offensive written or visual actions like graffiti or degrading pictures, physical contact of any kind or sexual demands. Harassment may include, but is not limited to, unwelcome behavior of a sexual nature.

The Pennsylvania Youth Action Conference is committed to creating an environment where all participants feel safe and comfortable. If you feel harassed or threatened, please contact the appropriate support or ask to speak with the Pennsylvania Youth Action Conference Planning Committee.

Photo Etiquette

Please do not take someone's photo that does not wish to be taken in one. If you would like to take a photo, please ask the permission of everyone in it before you do. Please respect the wishes of those individuals.

PYC will be taking pictures throughout the weekend for official purposes on our website and in our media. We will not photograph participants who have declined to give permission to be photographed or recorded.

Gender Etiquette

Authored by the 2014 Pennsylvania Youth Action Conference: Igniting a Pennsylvania Movement for Trans Justice and Freedom Advisory Committee

Pronouns

The best way to ensure that you respect a person's gender identity is by asking them which pronouns they use. While many people may use the pronouns "he/him/his" or "she/her/hers," not everyone does. Pronouns are often used to express how an individual identifies, so respect the pronoun they designate you use. If you have not asked someone about their pronouns before, it's pretty simple. When introducing yourself, says, "Hi, my name is [your name], and I use [your pronouns]." By sharing which pronouns you use, you can ensure that you are respecting the identities your fellow attendees. It is also important, that when you are asking about someone's pronouns, that you ask in a way that does not force them to answer if they do not want to. For example, you can ask: "If you're comfortable sharing, what are your pronouns?"

If you are unsure of a person's pronouns and are unable to ask them, try using that person's name or gender-neutral phrases like "the person in the red shirt," instead of "that woman or man." "They" is a very viable gender-neutral pronoun. When in doubt, you can use "they" in place of "he" or "she." However, "they" shouldn't be used instead of someone's preferred pronouns, but when you are unsure or can't remember them. Once you know someone's pronouns, use them. Additionally, pronouns do not only matter when the person you are referencing is in earshot. A person's pronouns should be used without hesitation at all times.

If you happen to use the wrong pronoun, apologize, correct yourself, and proceed with the conversation. However, do not apologize profusely as it may make the person uncomfortable. Thinking before you speak and being extra aware of how a person identifies can help you remember which pronoun to use.

Gender Expansive Identities

At the conference, you will meet people who may not strictly identify within the gender binary, meaning as cisgender men and women or transgender men and women. We are here to celebrate all identities, and to have meaningful discussions about the existence of diverse types of individuals within Pennsylvania. Gender is a spectrum, and it is important to be aware of this so that you may be respectful of people who fall somewhere in the middle of the spectrum, or even who identify off the spectrum. Avoid using terms like "ladies and gentlemen" or "he and she" as they are not inclusive of many non-binary identities. Use "everyone" or "they" instead.

Bathrooms

At this conference, you will notice that we have designated certain bathrooms as “all-gender bathrooms,” meaning that this is a restroom that anyone, regardless of their gender identity or expression, can use. Public accommodations like bathrooms can be an intimidating barrier to trans individuals because of the incidence of harassment faced in these spaces. Regardless of what bathroom you are in, be respectful of others. Each of us can decide for ourselves which bathroom to use.

This is a Safe Space

The Pennsylvania Youth Action Conference is a safe space, meaning that each and every participant can be their full and authentic selves here. We value the diversity of the participants in attendance and encourage those who are comfortable to share their lived experiences to do so. While this conference is a space where many people will be sharing their stories, not all attendees may be at a point in their activism to volunteer personal and, perhaps, triggering experiences that they have been through. Please listen to the experiences of those who volunteer them and do not pressure those who wish to refrain from sharing.

Keep in mind, some participants may not be out to everyone. Be aware of the space you are in and the people you are with. For example, a person may comfortable being out to their friends at the conference but not to their family at home. Make sure that you do not mistakenly or purposefully “out” people to those who may not know how they identify. Keep in mind that everyone at the conference has different comfort levels and that everyone is at a different point in their journeys.

Additionally, trans individuals are not walking dictionaries for your curiosity. Please respect the privacy and boundaries of other attendees by not asking unnecessary personal questions. Any question you would not want someone to ask you, you should not ask someone else. For example, questions about people’s genitals or any surgical histories are off-limits. If the information is volunteered by the person as part of a story, listen respectfully.



Wrap-Up

- Always ask politely if you are unsure of a person's pronouns. If you are comfortable, share your own pronouns. Remember to never assume what pronouns a person will use based on their appearance.
- "They" is a viable gender-neutral pronoun. Use "they" if you are unsure of a person's pronouns.
- Think before you speak. If people mess up, often times it is simply because binary pronouns (like "he/him/his" or "she/her/hers") are so ingrained in our everyday speech. Put the effort in to remembering and respecting the pronouns your fellow attendees.
- Some participants may not be out to everyone. Be aware of the space you are in.
- Be aware of non-binary gender identities.
- Apologize, correct yourself, and move on if you use incorrect pronouns, but do not apologize profusely.
- Be respectful using bathrooms. People know where they are going.

Disability Etiquette

Disability Etiquette adapted from the National LGBTQ Task Force's Creating Change Etiquette Guide

The Pennsylvania Youth Action Conference is welcoming and accessible for attendees with disabilities. In the spirit of learning how our communities can be inclusive of and accessible to all people, we have put together these guidelines for creating a community where people with disabilities are valued and respected.

If you have an accessibility need or concern, please inform a member of the Conference Planning Committee of any steps we can take to make the gathering accessible to you.

Words like "cripple," "defect," "spastic," "lame," "retard," "psychotic", "paranoid" and "crazy" have been used to bully and oppress people with disabilities for many decades. Don't use these words casually. You may hear people with disabilities calling each other "crip" or "gimp." This is "insider" language, akin to LGBTQ people calling each other queer. It's not appropriate language for others to use.

Understand that the lives of people with disabilities are neither inspirational nor pitiful by virtue of our disabilities. Rather our disabilities are ordinary and familiar parts of who we are.

Ask and wait for an answer before you try to help someone. What you assume is helpful may not be.

When you encounter someone using a service/assistance or guide dog, do not pet, offer food to, or interact with the animal in any way. Do not comment on the dog's presence i.e. "and who do we have here?" These animals are working hard; you are supporting the independence and autonomy they provide by not distracting them.

In order to be understood by as many people as possible, speak at a moderate volume and pace. Practice active listening by asking and responding to questions and giving both verbal and non-verbal cues that you are still engaged in the conversation.

When you are speaking to someone using an interpreter, address the person you are speaking with, not the interpreter.

Some youth here have disabilities that affect the ways that they learn, understand, and/or communicate. You can show respect for people by practicing patience with those who learn and/or communicate at a different pace or in a different way than you do. Don't make assumptions based on atypical speech patterns, body language, or eye contact. If you are having difficulty communicating with someone, try a different form of communication, like writing or demonstration instead of talking.

Please be prepared to move chairs to make room for people using wheelchairs, wherever they may wish to sit at a session.

In order to make it easier for everyone to move around the conference freely, please keep the aisles clear. Be aware of the people around you when navigating tight, crowded public spaces, and leave plenty of room for people to pass safely; and please hold inaccessible doors open for people.

If you smoke (or hang around people while they smoke) please do so only in the designated areas and away from entrances (as is required by law).

Challenge your assumptions. Some disabilities are less visible than others. Everyone has a right to use the accommodations they need without being criticized or questioned.

Please listen to the needs and stories of people with disabilities when they are volunteered; yet please respect people's privacy and boundaries by not asking unnecessarily intrusive questions.

Many people with disabilities deal with daily curiosity about our bodies and find it exhausting. Educate yourself through books and websites. Then, please join the many hardworking allies who are working to respond appropriately to situations.



TransCentralPA

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Save the Date!



The
Keystone Conference
A Celebration of Gender Diversity

March 19-24, 2019

Pronouns

	Subjective	Objective	Possessive Adjective	Possessive Pronoun	Reflexive
	She	Her	Her	Hers	Herself
	<i>She</i> loved	We called <i>her</i>	<i>Her</i> friends	That is <i>hers</i>	<i>She</i> drew <i>herself</i>
	He	Him	His	His	Himself
	<i>He</i> loved	We called <i>him</i>	<i>His</i> friends	That is <i>his</i>	<i>He</i> drew <i>himself</i>
Plural/Gender Neutral	They	Them	Their	Theirs	Themselves
	<i>They</i> loved	We called <i>them</i>	<i>Their</i> friends	That is <i>theirs</i>	<i>They</i> drew <i>themselves</i>
Gender Neutral*	Ze	Zir (or zim)	Zir	Zirs	Zirself
	<i>Ze</i> loved	We called <i>zir(zim)</i>	<i>Zir</i> friends	That is <i>zirs</i>	<i>Ze</i> drew <i>zirself</i>
	Zie	Hir	Hir	Hirs	Hirself
	<i>Zie</i> loved	We called <i>hir</i>	<i>Hir</i> friends	That is <i>hirs</i>	<i>Zie</i> drew <i>hirself</i>
	Ey (or E)	Em	Eir	Eirs	Eirself
	<i>Ey(E)</i> loved	We called <i>em</i>	<i>Eir</i> friends	That is <i>eirs</i>	<i>Ey</i> drew <i>eirself</i>
	Per	Per	Pers	Pers	Perself
	<i>Per</i> loved	We called <i>per</i>	<i>Pers</i> friends	That is <i>pers</i>	<i>Per</i> drew <i>perself</i>
	Ne	Nem	Nir	Nirs	Nemself
	<i>Ne</i> loved	We called <i>nem</i>	<i>Nir</i> friends	That is <i>nirs</i>	<i>Ne</i> drew <i>nemself</i>
	Ve	Vir	Vir	Vir	Virself
	<i>Ve</i> loved	We called <i>ver</i>	<i>Vir</i> friends	That is <i>vis</i>	<i>Ve</i> drew <i>virself</i>

*These are only some variations of gender neutral pronouns.

CONFERENCE SCHEDULE

Friday, April 13th

4:00 PM – 7:00 PM	Registration
7:00 PM – 7:30 PM	Welcome Reception
7:30 PM – 8:30 PM	Opening Plenary
8:30 PM – 10:00 PM	Screening of <i>Saturday Church</i>

Saturday, April 14th

8:30 AM – 9:30 AM	Breakfast
9:30 AM – 10:45 AM	Conference Welcome and Saturday Morning Plenary
11:00 AM – 12:15 PM	Session I
12:15 PM – 1:15 PM	Lunch
1:15 PM – 2:30 PM	Saturday Afternoon Plenary
2:45 PM – 4:00 PM	Session II
4:15 PM – 4:45 PM	Our Lives Plenary
4:45 PM – 5:45 PM	<i>Optional Gatherings</i>
7:00 PM – 12:00 AM	The Commonwealth Banquet

CONFERENCE SCHEDULE

Sunday, April 15th

9:30 AM - 10:00 AM	Breakfast
10:00 AM - 11:15 AM	Session IV
11:30 AM - 12:15 PM	Closing Plenary
12:15 PM	Departure



On October 27, 2015, PYC organized the inaugural *Pennsylvania Comes Out For Freedom* celebration, the first LGBTQ community event held inside our State Capitol

SESSION DESCRIPTIONS

Session Block I: Saturday, 11:00 AM – 12:15 PM

Advancing Freedom and Justice for LGBTQ Pennsylvanians

Preston Heldibridle and Jason Landau Goodman (The Pennsylvania Youth Congress)

Pennsylvania remains a difficult place for many to be openly LGBTQ under the law. Our state legislature has adopted no law currently in effect to ban anti-LGBTQ discrimination or violence in our schools and communities. To demand full equality under local and state laws, we must be strategic in all our efforts. This session will provide you with a clear understanding of LGBTQ civil rights in Pennsylvania – our histories, present, and future agendas from Harrisburg. Particularly, young transgender and gender-expansive Pennsylvanians have unique and often challenging experiences in affirming their gender under the law. Adopting effective policies, as well as ensuring their successful implementation, can be crucial for trans youth to have positive experiences in their schools and communities. Participants will gain valuable skills to use in their home communities in the push toward justice for young trans people.

LGBTQ Org 101/201

Ashe Helm-Hernández (Southeastern Regional Organizer, The GSA Network)

Session is focused on providing insights into building/ starting your own GSA club or Organization. Opportunity to hear from other folks who have started. Here about GSA Network's Southeastern regional partners. to collaborate, build together, and share best practices with their peers through skill shares, program development, and capacity building.

Public Engagement, the Art of Advocacy and Activism

Joanne Carroll (President, TransCentral PA)

Now more than ever, issues and their advancement are dominating the public stage. It comes down to finding what is doable in a climate of mixed feelings. We often describe politics as the heart of what is doable. That means that those of us in the LGBT community that are talking to people at different strata and in differing locales advancing an idea, a concept or a principle we are practicing politics at the grassroots level.

This workshop can only provide a glimpse into the process because each circumstance is different. However, we can apply some fundamentals to every situation.

Let's Talk Relationships for People with Disabilities

Kaye Lenkner (Operations Manager, Self Advocates United as 1)

Melia Lenkner (Media and Special Projects Manager, Self Advocates United as 1)

People with disabilities, particularly developmental disabilities, are often viewed as asexual beings with no need for, or understanding of intimate relationships. Many have little or no support for exploring and developing intimate relationships and may even be actively prevented from doing so. Self Advocates United as 1 (SAU1) will lead a facilitated discussion to explore barriers to, and strategies to promote, development of healthy intimate relationships for people with disabilities. Opportunities to continue this work across PA will be discussed.

Session Block II: Saturday, 2:45 PM – 4:00 PM

Living Proudly, Living Longer:

Tobacco, Alcohol, and Other Drugs and the LGBT Community

Adrian Shanker (Executive Director, Bradbury-Sullivan LGBT Community Center)

Atticus Ranck (Health Programs and Supportive Services Manager, Bradbury-Sullivan LGBT Community Center)

LGBT people deserve to live long, healthy lives. We've fought for this, we've fought for rights and freedoms for generations. But disparate rates of tobacco, alcohol, and other drug usage within our community is getting in the way. This workshop will discuss the prevalence of substance use within the LGBT community, some of the reasons for the disparities, and what we can do to intervene and support risk-aware decision making.

Session Block II: Saturday, 2:45 AM - 4:00 PM Cont.

Helping Each Other and Ourselves: Mental Health

Melinda Eash (Health + Public Service Department Chair, Harrisburg Area Community College)

As young LGBTQ people, many of us experience challenging times with mental health. What should we do when a friend reaches out for help in a crisis? What can I do when someone threatens themselves with harm? In this session, we will discuss the best strategies – what to do and what to avoid – as you work to help others in your community. Please note this session will be discussing issues of suicide and self-harm. In this space, we will share tools that will be helpful to you in being community leaders who care for the mental well-being of others, and in turn, ourselves. This session will primarily be a facilitated discussion on these issues – so please bring questions and ideas!

Together We Rise: 2018 and the Fight for LGBTQ Equality

Allison VanKuiken (Pennsylvania State Director, Human Rights Campaign)

We are everywhere - the streets, the classrooms, and in homes across America. We are the people and we are woke and ready to put this country back on a path to progress, inclusion, and opportunity. If 2017 was the year of resistance, 2018 will be our year of action and accountability.

In this workshop, participants will learn the story of us - where we have been, where we are, and where we are going. With so much of our progress on the line in 2018, it will take all of us leaning in, engaging, and leading within our communities to mobilize Pennsylvania's two million Equality Voters to create the change we seek.

Leading this workshop is Allison VanKuiken, a proud transgender woman with nearly two decades of campaign, organizing, and legislative experience under her belt. As the new State Director for HRC Rising, Allison will share her experiences to help participants better understand the nature of power building through organizing and mobilization.

Session Block II: Saturday, 4:15 PM – 5:30 PM Cont.

Sexual Violence and the LGBTQ Communities

Louie Marven (Training Specialist, National Sexual Violence Resource Center)

Jackie Strohm (Prevention & Resource Coordinator, Pennsylvania Coalition Against Rape)

Sexual violence affects everyone. How can we, as leaders, present correct information and support a culture of consent and healing in our communities? In this workshop, we'll work toward answering these questions and figuring out how LGBTQ people fit into the sexual violence movement. Participants will be able to describe sexual violence and how it impacts LGBTQ people, identify aspects of a healthy relationship, and practice helpful responses to disclosures of sexual violence.

Optional Caucus Blocks: Saturday, 4:50 PM – 5:50 PM

Trans/Queer Yoga

Karen Foley (MA, Licensed Professional Counselor, RYT)

Participants will explore self-care through yoga in dignified and courageous space. This class is appropriate for all levels, no experience necessary.

“Caring for myself is not self-indulgence, it is self-preservation, and that is an act of political warfare.”
-Audre Lorde.

Christian and Queer Q&A

Stephen Boyhont (Student, United Lutheran Seminary)

Being Christian and LGBTQ+ do not have to be at odds. Listen to one openly gay student's experience of growing up in faith, leaving the church, returning to it, and is now attending seminary to become a minister. People of all faiths and non-faiths are welcome to attend and ask questions.

Session Block III: Sunday, 10:00 AM – 11:15 AM

Protecting Our Selves: A plan for self-care

Tyler Titus (Licensed Professional Counselor)

This workshop will focus on how those in community leadership are impacted by their personal struggles, compassion fatigue, and vicarious trauma through the work they do, and how to create a safe space for themselves. The session will empower attendees with self-care tools and how to strengthen others to do the same. Tyler is a therapist who works with children placed in therapeutic foster care, who recently became the first openly transgender person elected to public office in Pennsylvania.

Building Training Skills: Change begins with You!

Vanessa Davis (Lead Consultant, Radically Inclusive Love)

Everyone of us has been asked to do it, train someone at our schools about LGBTQIA issues. Whether its students, community members, or staff, we are seen as experts, not just of our own experiences but as people who can teach others. In truth, it takes a LOT of work and building skills to train others, particularly on "sensitive" issues and ones that impact us so deeply. Join experienced trainer and facilitator, Vanessa Davis, to discuss your experiences, gain some valuable tips and tricks, and confront your own biases when you enter a room to train.

Navigating Romance and Sex:

From Healthy Poly Relationships to Hook Up Apps

Annie Wolfe (Board Member, Pennsylvania Youth Congress)

Hansen Bursic (Lead Media Coordinator, Pennsylvania Youth Congress)

It can be messy out there, finding the healthy romantic and sexual relationships we desire. While many of us are figuring things out as we go, we can learn from each other how to better navigate modern dating and sexual experiences. Join us for this discussion on the opportunities and challenges in today's modern world. We will go over ways we have found to embrace healthy romantic partnerships. Please note this session will welcome an open discussion on romance and sexual topics, and that no one is pressured to share anything at all.

Session Block IV: Sunday, 10:00 AM – 11:15 AM Cont.

What is Gender Anyway?:

Advocating for Culturally Competent Care

Karen Foley (MA, Licensed Professional Counselor, RYT)

Attendees will explore the complexities of identities and discuss what to advocate for in medical settings, school, work, and the community at large. We will dissect our biases and the overlapping “categories” of LGBTQ+ identity to explore how to advocate with a more inclusive approach. Attendees will discuss challenges faced in their environments and explore solutions toward ensuring culturally competent care.

KEYNOTE SPEAKER



Ericka Hart

Ericka Hart is a black queer femme, cancer-warrior, sexuality educator, and activist whose words have inspired young people around the world. Her work fighting for the liberation of black femmes, queer and trans people of color, and all those who are marginalized, has made her an icon in the movements for racial and economic justice.

Ericka is a kinky, poly, trainer, and performer who has taught sexuality education for elementary aged youth to adults across New York City for the past 10 years. Her work in sexuality education was catalyzed by her service as a Peace Corps HIV/AIDS volunteer in Ethiopia from 2008-2010. Ericka has a Masters of Education in Human Sexuality from Widener University, which is located in Chester, Pennsylvania. She is currently an adjunct professor at Columbia University's School of Social Work.

Diagnosed with bilateral breast cancer in May 2014 at the age of 28, she realized that neither her identity as a queer black woman, nor her sex life as a survivor, was featured prominently in her treatment.

Ericka is shifting ingrained cultural modes and attitudes on chronic illness and posits visibility as a sociopolitical stance, one vital to any radically inclusive progressive movement toward equity. From framing desire and pleasure as political to dismantling the ways that systemic patriarchy and anti-black standards of beauty affect our everyday lives, her work is part of a larger conversation on healing that forces us to see our institutions and systems of care as complicit in the perpetuation of illness in marginalized communities; unabashedly centering and sentient such that queer, trans black, brown and femme voices aren't lost among the drone of scholarly research less skilled than Ericka in bringing academia to the places it refuses to go.

FEATURED SPEAKER

Closing Plenary Session



Tyler Titus

Tyler Titus is a Licensed Professional Counselor, youth advocate, trauma specialist, community leader, public speaker, and elected school board director. He has served on the Board of Directors for the Crime Victim Center and for the Greater Erie Alliance for Equality (GEAE).

In addition, Tyler regularly presents at local and national conferences on the topics of trauma, suicide, and ways that communities can reach out to under-served populations. He uses his presence to speak for those who need a strong voice and engages others in conversations that lead to meaningful change.

Tyler is originally from Titusville, located in rural Crawford County. He is the father of two boys raising his family in Erie.

With his election to the Erie School Board in November 2017, Tyler became the first openly transgender person elected to public office in Pennsylvania.

THE 2018 COMMONWEALTH AWARDS

PYC is proud to honor the following individuals at the Commonwealth Banquet for their significant accomplishments in supporting young LGBTQ Pennsylvanians.

Award Recipients



Keystone Award: Dr. Rachel Levine
Pennsylvania Secretary of Health
Harrisburg, PA

The Keystone Award is given annually to an out government official who has demonstrated great courage, strength, and resilience in advancing freedom and justice for young LGBTQ Pennsylvanians.



Generations Award: Ciora Thomas
Founder and President, sisTers PGH
Founder, Peoples Pride March
Pittsburgh, PA

The Generations Award is presented annually to a Pennsylvanian who has made significant contributions to supporting young LGBTQ leadership. This recognition is given to an individual who demonstrates selfless community leadership and engages with youth as partners to advance meaningful advocacy efforts.



Altoona Award: Adam Rippon

***Olympic Champion and American Sweetheart
Clarks Summit, PA***

The Altoona Award is presented annually to a Pennsylvanian who has demonstrated great courage, strength, and resilience in advancing the visibility or welfare of LGBTQ youth in the commonwealth. This award is in tribute to Harvey Milk's famous reference to a youth who called him following his election, from Altoona, Pennsylvania, to thank him for giving hope to LGBTQ youth that there will be a better tomorrow.



Mara Keisling Leadership Award: Aidan DeStefano

***Boyertown Area Senior High School Alum
Trans Student Advocate
Pottstown, PA***

The Mara Keisling Leadership Award is presented annually to a transgender or gender expansive young Pennsylvanian who has completed substantial work to advocate for gender equality and inclusivity in the Keystone State. The award is named in honor of Mara Keisling, the founding Executive Director of the National Center for Transgender Equality and native Pennsylvanian.



The Brandon Bitner Memorial Award:

Cooper Toothman

***Student Advocate in the Central Fulton School District
McConnellsburg, PA***

The Brandon Bitner Memorial Award is given annually to a high school student for engaging in high-level advocacy for safer schools in Pennsylvania. The award is named in honor of Brandon Bitner, who at 14 years old, ended his life in Snyder County in 2010. One of Brandon's wishes as a result of his suicide was for others to look more seriously at the impact of bullying so more students would not experience similar harm. This award recognizes the hard work and courage of high school students who have brought about awareness and change in their high school and regional LGBTQ youth communities.



Allyson Robinson, previous Executive Director of OutServe-SLDN, delivered the Keynote Speech at the 2014 Commonwealth Banquet

OPENING PLENARY SPEAKERS

Intersectional Feminism



Meg Day, Ph.D.

Assistant Professor of English & Creative Writing, and Women's, and Gender & Sexuality Studies at Franklin & Marshall College
Lancaster, PA

Meg Day is the 2015-2016 recipient of the Amy Lowell Poetry Travelling Scholarship, a 2013 National Endowment for the Arts Fellowship in Poetry, and the author of *Last Psalm at Sea Level* (Barrow Street 2014), winner of the Publishing Triangle's Audre Lorde Award, and a finalist for the 2016 Kate Tufts Discovery Award from Claremont Graduate University. Day has also received awards and fellowships from the Association of Writers & Writing Programs, the Sewanee Writers' Conference, Lambda Literary Foundation, Hedgebrook, The Tyrone Guthrie Centre, Squaw Valley Writers, the Taft-Nicholson Center for Environmental Humanities, and the International Queer Arts Festival. In 2015, Day received a Ph.D. in Poetry & Disability Poetics from the University of Utah where Day was a Steffensen-Cannon Fellow and a United States Point Foundation Scholar. Day is Assistant Professor of English & Creative Writing and Women's, Gender & Sexuality Studies at Franklin & Marshall College.



Carla Christopher

Founder and Co-President, York EqualityFest
York, PA

Poet-Activist Carla Christopher is the Founder and Co-President of York County's Equality Fest, now in its fifth year. A previous LGBT Center of Central PA F.A.B. Award and York Revolution Pride M.V.P. recipient, Carla was the City of York's first out LGBTQA Poet Laureate and is a community advocate and cultural educator who frequently consults with libraries, school districts, police departments and more. She currently serves as Vicar at Union Lutheran Church in York, PA where she is director of Children, Youth, and Family Ministries.

OPENING PLENARY SPEAKERS

Intersectional Feminism



Ciora Thomas

Founder and President of sisTers PGH / Founder of People's Pride Pittsburgh
Pittsburgh, PA

Ciora has devoted years of service to the Pittsburgh transgender and gender expansive communities of color through establishing SisTers PGH. She has made it her mission to secure emergency and transitional housing for LGBTQ homeless youth in Pittsburgh. Ciora is the Residential Program Director of Proud Haven, having previously served as Vice-President of the Board. In her powerful work uplifting those who are marginalized and embracing radical inclusivity, she has led the efforts for the Pittsburgh People's Pride, an intersectional march of resistance and community. Ciora is also an inaugural member of the Pittsburgh Mayor's LGBTQIA Advisory Council.

Through her experience and many achievements, Ciora is geared to serve the greater LGBTQIA homeless and/or displaced communities of Pittsburgh. She helps shape a better life ahead for many transgender and nonbinary people who need permanence and independence; she stands up to injustices towards POC, CisWomen/transwomen, human rights, exploitation, gentrification, capitalism and bigotry; and she strives for inclusion with a basis of intersectionality. .



Plenary speakers at the 2015 Pennsylvania Youth Action Conference:
Cultivating New Possibilities for Rural LGBTQ Youth

SATURDAY MORNING PLENARY SPEAKERS

Advancing LGBTQ-inclusive Sexual Health Education in Pennsylvania



Al Vernacchio

High School Teacher and Sexual Health Educator
Philadelphia, PA

Vernacchio teaches at Friends' Central School in Wynnewood, PA. He is the N-12 Sexuality Education Coordinator and also the chair of the Upper School English department. In his work as Sexuality Education Coordinator, Al teaches classes, organizes sexuality-themed programs and assemblies, provides parent education on human sexuality topics, and is one of the faculty advisors for the Gender and Sexual Orientation Alliance (GSoA). A Human Sexuality educator and consultant for over 25 years, Al has lectured, published articles, and offered workshops throughout the country on sexuality topics. His work has been featured in "Teaching Good Sex", a November 20, 2011 cover story in The New York Times Magazine. Al has given four TED Talks, and has appeared on national programs such as NPR's "Morning Edition" and "1A". He is the author of *For Goodness Sex: Changing the Way We Talk to Young People About Sexuality, Values, and Health* published by Harper Wave, a division of Harper Collins. Al earned his BA in Theology from St. Joseph's University and his MEd in Human Sexuality Education from the University of Pennsylvania. He is a member of The Society for the Scientific Study of Sexuality (SSSS), The American Association of Sexuality Educators, Counselors, and Therapists (AASECT) and Advanced Sexuality Educators and Trainers (ASET). A native Philadelphian, Al and his husband, Michael, live in the Germantown section of the city.



Ja'Nae Tyler

HIV/AIDS Care + Prevention Advocate
Harrisburg, PA

Ja'Nae is currently the Data to Care Program Coordinator for the Pennsylvania Department of Health, and just happens to be a 30-year-old Trans* Woman of Color. At a tender age of 15, Ja'Nae, lost her mother to what she later found was "Complications of HIV". Determined to turn tragedy to triumph, she set out to educate herself on HIV. In 2010, Ja'Nae landed her first job in HIV prevention as an HIV test counselor. Fast forward seven years, Ja'Nae is now an HIV and Public Health champion. Holding several titles including being a Kiki House and Ballroom mother and leader, Executive Committee Member of HANC (HIV/AIDS Network Coordination), Global Advisory Board Member for HVTN (HIV Vaccine Trials Network), and former member of Philadelphia Mayor Jim Kenny's Commission on LGBT Affairs. Ja'Nae vows to do everything she can to see an AIDS-free generation.

SATURDAY MORNING PLENARY SPEAKERS

Advancing LGBTQ-inclusive Sexual Health Education in Pennsylvania



J. Sarah Kleintop

Sexual Health Educator, Planned Parenthood Keystone
Reading, PA

Jennie Sarah Kleintop is a sexuality educator and consultant. She holds a Master of Education in Human Sexuality from Widener University. With nearly a decade of experience working with young people, Sarah is committed to helping to provide children and adolescents with comprehensive and developmentally-appropriate sexuality education. As a Community Health Educator at Planned Parenthood, Sarah manages two LGBTQIA programs for youth ages 14-21 in Reading and York, PA. Additionally, she has successfully opened and maintained a Health Resource Center (HRC) offering sexuality education large group sessions, and one-on-one counseling

Additionally, Sarah specializes in helping to train and educate health care professionals about sexuality. In the past, she has served as co-director of the American Medical Student Association (AMSA) Sexual Health Leadership Course program, and she continues to present on topics relating to medical education and the integration of sexual health training. Her professional affiliations and duties include serving as current Chair of Exhibitors and Sponsors for the international sexuality organization, the Society for the Scientific Study of Sexuality (SSSS), where she works directly with both local and international organizations and businesses, academic institutions, reproductive health service providers, sexual health product providers, and more to create opportunities for support, networking, and visibility.



KC Miller

Founder and President of Keystone Coalition for Advancing Sex Education
(CASE)
West Chester, PA

KC Miller is a strong health and human rights advocate who is the Founder and Executive Director of Keystone Coalition for Advancing Sex Education (CASE). Miller has also created a successful campus initiative that provides free contraceptives and education to students called Sexual Health Awareness Educators. His advocacy to make sex education comprehensive and inclusive has gained significant national attention recently being awarded the 2017 Young Hero Award by the National Liberty Museum. In addition to his health advocacy, he has a passion for politics and has worked on dozens of political campaigns focusing on Youth Engagement. Originally from Montgomery County, Miller is a high school senior and Student Body President at the Westtown School, located in West Chester, PA.

SATURDAY AFTERNOON PLENARY SPEAKERS

Advocating for LGBTQ Youth Healthcare in Pennsylvania



Deputy Secretary of Health Sarah Boateng
Pennsylvania Department of Health
Harrisburg, PA

Sarah Newman Boateng is the Executive Deputy Secretary at the Pennsylvania Department of Health. In this role Ms. Boateng works closely on the state's response to the opioid and heroin crisis. Ms. Boateng has led the state's development of evidence-based, specialty specific prescribing guidelines. Ms. Boateng also contributed to the development of the PacMAT treatment model and Pennsylvania's warm-handoff protocol. Additionally, Ms. Boateng serves as a lead staffer on the Governor's LGBTQ Workgroup. Ms. Boateng has worked health policy on the federal, state and community level. Prior to joining the Department Ms. Boateng worked for Planned Parenthood Keystone, a network of 16 medical centers in Eastern PA and for U.S. Senator Robert P. Casey, Jr, focused on issues of health policy and as the Statewide LGBT Liaison. Originally from Pittsburgh, Ms. Boateng has an undergraduate degree from the University of Pittsburgh and a graduate certificate from Robert Morris University. Ms. Boateng will complete her Masters in Healthcare Administration in December 2018..



Dr. Gerald Montano (DO)
Pediatric Doctor at the Children's Hospital of Pittsburgh – UPMC
Clinical Instructor, Department of Pediatrics, University of Pittsburgh
School of Medicine
Pittsburgh, PA

Dr. Gerald Montano's training in pediatrics and adolescent medicine has provided him the expertise and skills in long-acting reversible contraception, mental health, eating disorders, and medical care for transgender and gender expansive youth.

The theme of his research is fostering the health and well-being of lesbian, gay, and bisexual (LGB) youth by improving parent-child relationships. The results of his studies on parent-child relationships in LGB youth suggest that parenting LGB youth may be different from parenting heterosexual youth. His hope is that through additional research, he can create interventions aimed at improving parent-child relationships in LGB youth that will help prevent the many adverse health outcomes this vulnerable population faces, such as anxiety, depression, and substance use.

SATURDAY AFTERNOON PLENARY SPEAKERS

Advocating for LGBTQ Youth Healthcare in Pennsylvania



Dr. Katie Dalke (MD)

**Assistant Professor of Psychiatry, Penn State College of Medicine
Attending Psychiatrist, Pennsylvania Psychiatric Institute
Hershey, PA**

Dr. Katie Dalke completed her undergraduate degree from Haverford College and her MD and MBE (Bioethics) from Perelman School of Medicine at the University of Pennsylvania. She completed her psychiatry residency and served as Chief Resident at the Hospital of the University of Pennsylvania (HUP). While at Perelman and HUP, she was the recipient of numerous awards and honors. She comes to Penn State Health from Perelman/Pennsylvania Hospital, having served as Assistant Professor of Clinical Psychiatry, Director for Sex and Gender Curriculum, Co-Director, Inpatient Mood Disorders and Geriatric Psychiatry Service, and Co-Director, Consultation/Liaison Service. She is interested in clinical services for transgender populations and in creating education programs in this area. As an intersex woman and a doctor, Dr. Dalke is an outspoken advocate on intersex issues, recently writing an editorial featured in The Nation.



***We look forward to welcoming
you to the Eighth Annual
Pennsylvania Youth
Action Conference in 2019!***





