



7 Rivers LGBTQ Connection

together.

2016

Annual Breakfast

and

Membership Meeting

Our 2016 Business Sponsors

Thank you to our current 2016 business sponsors! Our directory of LGBTQ owned and LGBTQ welcoming businesses is not only helpful for our local and regional community members, but it also becomes an invaluable resource for tourists and new residents moving to our area for school or professional opportunities. Members listed below have either supported our work with a financial sponsorship or a substantial in kind donation to support our mission.

To be a 2016 Business Sponsor please visit: <http://7riverslgbtq.org/get-involved/supporting-business-member/>

Corporate Membership

Absolutely Therapeutic! LLC
Al's Autobody
Altra Federal Credit Union
Breidenbach Family & Sports Chiropractic, Dr. Shanti Beard
Builders and Remodelers of Winona
Castle Realty LLC
CBS Graphics
Christina Mae Olson, CFP
Coulee Bank
Courtesy Car Care
Cowboy David's Cookies and Cakes
Eagle Eye Property Solutions
Fun Fur Pets
Gallery La Crosse
GECU, The Friendly Credit Union
Gracie's Gyros and Wraps
Hanson & Associates
Kickapoo Valley Ranch Guest Cabins
LiveWell Chiropractic & Wellness
Mark Jewellers
Mark McD Design
Mikat Public Relations, Inc.
Mississippi Valley Mayhem
My Place Bar
Off Center Designs LLC
Pearl Street Books
Peoples Food Coop
Photography Without Borders
Physicians Weight Loss and Body Sculpting
Pride Institute

QTH.com, Inc.
Ralph's Pretty Good Organic Meat
Supreme Graphics
Viroqua Food Cooperative
Wettstein's Appliance and Lighting
Willows Center for Renewal

Corporate Educator

O'Flaherty, Heim, Egan and Birnbaum
Players Bar
Ship Shape Car Wash
Taco Johns (Jackson & Monitor Street)
The UPS Store

Corporate Advocate

O'Neil Law Firm
Re/Max First Choice – Michael Peterson, ABR
Reliant Real Estate Services

Corporate Builder

Cavalier Theater and Lounge
Radisson Hotel La Crosse

Corporate Friend

DigiSage, Inc.

Corporate Leader

Midwest Family Broadcasting

Corporate Benefactor

Vendi Advertising

2015 Executive Director Report

From Jackson Jantzen

2015 Highlights

Operations:

- The Center was open and available to the public for 2,018.5 hours (an average of 168 hours per month) thanks to more than 23 volunteers and staff. This was a slight increase from 2,015 hours in 2014.
- Our partners at the Women's Resource Center in Winona continued to donate space in their facility allowing us to have a presence in Winona for hosting meetings and events. They also assisted us in hosting the One Voice Mixed Chorus concert in November 2015.

Funding:

- We received a grant from the Gamma Mu Foundation totaling \$8,800.
- The La Crosse Community Foundation extended our fundraising window for meeting the matching grant endowment. We have raised \$20,800 and have the rest of 2016 to raise the last \$14,000. Once this goal is achieved, it will be matched and draw a 4.5% annual return!
- I was awarded a Centerlink Executive Director Boot Camp Leadership Training Scholarship. They flew me to a 3 day boot camp to learn from a handful of non-profit experts from a variety of areas of non-profit management. During GiveOUT Day, a 24-hour day of giving, we raised \$5,600. This is more than five times what we raised in 2014!

Programming (* New to The Center in 2015):

- AA Group- LGBTQ Welcoming
- Andromeda (18-25 years old)
- Galaxy (13-20 years old)
- GFPN (Gay Friendly Professional Network on hiatus)
- InQueery (Learning and Education Programing)
- Mindfulness and Meditation Group
- PANDA (Parents and Allies)
- Transgender Support Group
- The Center Social *

Important Outreach Success Stories:

- We worked with students in 2 high schools to improve support and awareness for the LGBTQ student population.
- Our speaking, education and outreach event opportunities increased 300% this year, presenting at major employers, higher education, K-12 settings, law enforcement environments, health care systems, etc.
- 2015 was our first year operating with a full time Executive Director to provide 100% focus on outreach, education and the health future of the organization.
- Law Enforcement – We trained 4 classes of La Crosse Sheriff's officers in January 2015 and just completed two 4-hour training sessions with the Jackson County Sherriff's department.

- Employment – In December we gave a presentation on LGBTQ inclusive work environments to over 70 Human Resource Representatives from across the area. It was an important opportunity not only to educate, but also to introduce employers to our organization who might require support in the future.
- Health Care – This year we worked with Gundersen leadership to further build an LGBTQ-welcoming directory of health care providers. We also conducted a LGBTQ specific training at Mayo with the potential of future trainings.
- Galaxy – In addition to our regular Galaxy programming, we also created a road trip opportunity for Galaxy members to travel to Mankato, MN to hear Laverne Cox speak.

2016 Focus:

- REACH (Rural Education Advancing Community Health) will offer workshops to educate and build alliances outside of La Crosse County by offering LGBTQ Summits targeting government agencies, non-profits, schools and other organizations that serve as a frontline for LGBTQ populations.
- Continue to be responsive to the programming needs connected to our mission.
- Continue to develop new relationships for our LGBTQ-friendly and welcoming directories.
- Build individual and business sponsorship support.
- Fundraise to reach our goal for the matching grant campaign.
- Enhance volunteering and intern opportunities.
- Enhance community building efforts through events like The Center Social and La Crosse Pride

2016 Partnerships and Presence in the Community:

- Serving on the Great Rivers 211 Advisory Committee
- Served on the La Crosse Area Health Initiative
- Served on the La Crosse Medical Health Science Consortium
- Served on the La Crosse Foundation Grant Advisory Committee
- Member of the Downtown Rotary
- La Crosse Mentoring Collaborative
- Teen Service Providers Network

Ongoing Outreach Partnerships

- Gundersen Health System
- Mayo Health System
- Essential Health Clinic
- AIDS Resource Center of Wisconsin (ARCW)
- Big Brothers Big Sisters
- YMCA Teen Center
- Family and Children's Center
- Independent Living Resources (ILR)
- New Horizons
- Bluff Country Family Resources
- Winona Women's Resource Center
- La Crosse County (Health departments and Education)
- Higher Education (UW-L, Viterbo, WTC, Globe and WSU)

President's Report 2015

Niki Pohnl

I love meaningful quotes. "BE the change you wish to SEE in the world," comes to mind for me concerning the work we strive to do through The Center. From raising awareness through events we sponsor in the community to taking every opportunity to educate in businesses and schools to answering that one email or phone call that comes in to help individuals through difficult situations. Seeing such positive changes in our community and through the individuals that walk through our door every day make our organization stronger and we should be proud of the progress we have made and the work we continue to do.

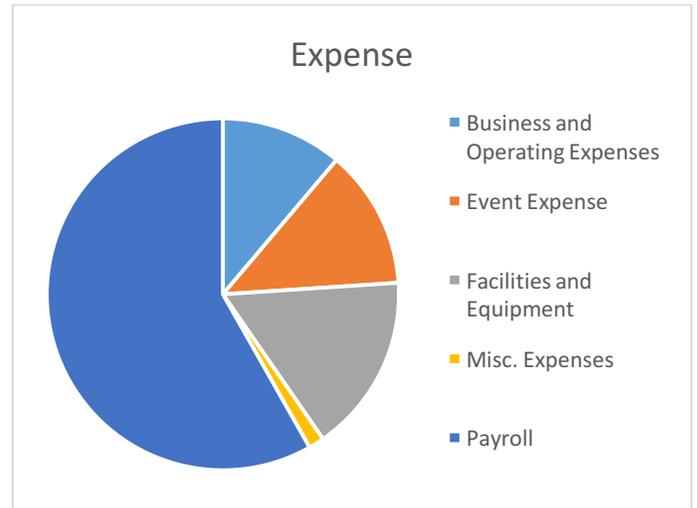
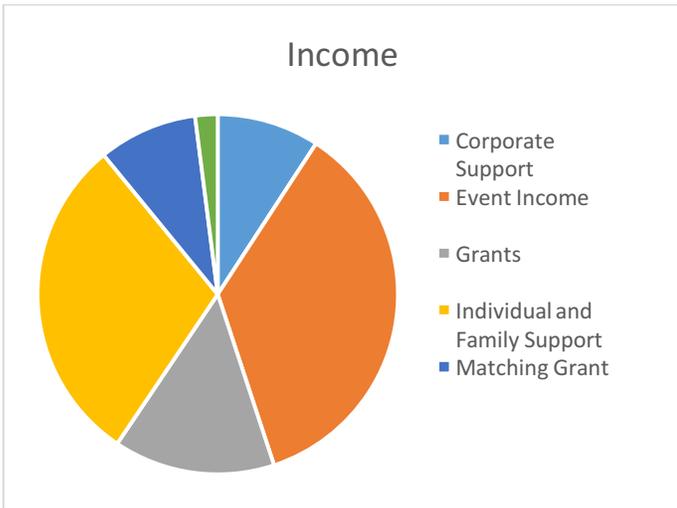
This has been an outstanding year for The Center: 7 Rivers LGBTQ Connection. The Center continues to provide a safe and welcoming environment due to the generosity of people and organizations within the community. I want to thank our donors and especially our wonderful volunteers for the passion and hard work they put in serving the LGBTQ and ally community. I am so proud to be part of this group of people and part of a Board of Directors committed to our mission, our vision, our Center, and wholeness of our community.

The Center has been doing great work for years, but we are not resting on our achievements. We are, in fact, creating and delivering innovative programming and education that address the needs and challenges of the LGBTQ community today and in the future. When we look back on the year, we wonder, "Did we make a difference?" or "Is this really worth our time?" We have so much to be thankful for and so much to look forward to because of the strides we are making in empowering people to lead healthy, successful lives.

We have several goals and opportunities ahead of us in 2016, and we look forward to growing our presence in the La Crosse community, alongside our many supporters and allies. It has been my pleasure to serve a Board Member (and most recently in the President position) and as the facilitator of PANDA (Parents AND Allies). Thank you everyone who supported The Center and life-giving programs and education we are able to provide for our community.

Last, but not least, I would like to thank our Executive Director, Jackson Jantzen, and previous Board President, Bob Lindner (January-September 2015) for their leadership shown throughout this entire year. We are fortunate to have them as they worked tirelessly this entire year on several projects, events and initiatives for The Center. Thank you, Jackson and Bob, for everything you have done and continue to do!

2105 Financial Report



Income

Individual and Family Support	\$19,544
Corporate Support	\$6,059
Grants	\$9,550
Matching Grant	\$5,865
Event Income	\$23,749
Misc. Income	\$1,330

Total

\$66,098

Expenses

Event Expense	\$10,123
Business and Operating Expenses	\$8,851
Payroll	\$46,097
Facilities and Equipment	\$13,003
Misc. Expenses	\$1,136

Total

\$79,210

2015 Net Income \$(13,112)

*Financials are available upon request to finances@7riverslgbtq.org

Grants Committee

During the 2015 fiscal year, the grant committee focused on developing infrastructure and procedures for seeking ongoing funding. This included developing funding request priorities, templates that include The Center's program information as well as statistics on pertinent LGBTQ issues. We also put together procedures for sharing information and decision-making among the grant committee members. We believe that these efforts will help The Center develop a long range funding strategy. Although we fell short of our budgeted goals for the year, we have positive highlights to share.

We received \$8,800 from the Gamma Mu Foundation for a project we call REACH (Rural Education Advancing Community Health). The focus of this new initiative is to have a larger presence in the eleven counties The Center serves by developing relationships and delivering training on a variety of topics including LGBTQ Cultural Proficiency, LGBTQ and Law Enforcement, LGBTQ Barriers to Health Care, and Creating Safe Schools. Lastly, we are continuing our work with the Elder Network to provide LGBTQ elder training to care providers and residential care environments.

We made substantial progress toward raising our goal for the matching endowment grant. This is a \$34,800 endowment offered by the La Crosse Community Foundation. Dick Record generously offered a \$10,000 pledge; and with the other funding we received, we have a total of \$20,800 toward our goal.

Outreach Committee

2015 was a huge year of growth for the Outreach and Events Committee.

On Saturday, September 12, we had a full day of Pride festivities with Pride in the Park and So You Think You Can Drag?!. We kicked off the morning of Pride at Wettstein's, a major sponsor of Pride, with a breakfast event on their showroom floor.

Following breakfast, we welcomed everyone to Pride in the Park at the Riverside Park Bandshell. This free event offered music by SheShe, Sexy Ester, Oh My Love and Annabel Lee. Their talent brightened an already beautiful, sunny day. We brought in 54 vendors to Pride in the Park, more than doubling the number of vendors from 2014. Attendance was also better than ever - we had an estimated 1,000 – 1,200 people attend throughout the day!

2015 marked the 2nd year of So You Think You Can Drag?!, emceed by Nicoli Clyne and Tammy Why-Nott Breeze. We are pleased to announce it was a sold out event for the 2nd year in a row. Unfortunately, we had to turn away people at the door that didn't have tickets to the event. We have learned our lesson though and are moving the show to North Hall in the La Crosse Center to accommodate more people in 2016!

We are very grateful to this year's king and queen, Caleb Clyne and Isabella Richards. They took the fundraising component of the competition seriously and reached out to their fan base early and often to ensure support and success for this event. Thank you King Clyne and Queen Richards!

In October, we hosted the Halloween Gala at the Concordia Ballroom offering a dinner and dance. It was not only a fun event for folks, but those in attendance helped us raise \$5,800 toward our matching endowment goal!

Lastly, in November we hosted the One Voice Mixed Chorus in Winona at Winona State University's Somsen Auditorium. Through the generosity of One Voice and a partnership with WSU's Women's Gender and Sexuality Department, we were able to deliver this concert to the community for free. Special thanks to Winona Women's Resource Center and First Congregational Winona for their special support of the event. We couldn't have done it without them!

Introduction of Board Candidates

Mikel Hampel

My name is Mikel Hampel. I am married with three daughters and two stepdaughters. We have one grandson. I am a local person. I was born in Black River Falls, grew up in Cataract, a small unincorporated village and attended Sparta High School. I am a graduate from WTC (1979) and UWL (1985). I had lived in Wisconsin all my life until 2014, when we moved to La Crescent, Minnesota. My husband Daniel Lintin and I were married on July 4, 2014, 15 years after the day we met. We are members of Our Saviors Lutheran Church in La Crosse and our pastor performed the ceremony on the deck at our home. I am the Controller at the Radisson La Crosse Hotel and Dan is a Communications Professor at Winona State University. We both have been active in our church and The Center. Dan is one of the founding board members of the 7 Rivers LGBT Resource Center. I am a past board member serving a 4-year term and had been involved with Pride Along the Mississippi for 7 years. I have seen the evolution of The Center throughout the years and look forward to the opportunity of being on the board once again, as The Center continues to grow and change to service the LGBTQ community in our area.

Cindy Killion

Cindy has been an activist on behalf of LGBT issues since arriving at Winona State University 23 years ago as an instructor. At WSU, she established a student LGBT group as well as a faculty LGBT group. She was recognized for her efforts to improve the lives of LGBT people in the MnSCU system by the Inter-Faculty Organization. She is a founding mother of The Center, has served on the board of directors and has served as president twice. She is married to Beth Cherne, and they live in La Crosse.

James Parlow

Jim grew up in rural central WI. He moved to La Crosse when he was 19 to begin working for the La Crosse Police Department. He became an officer and worked as a street cop for 15 years. He retired in 1994 and began an academic career, obtaining first a Bachelor of Science degree in Sociology/Criminal Justice Law Enforcement from Winona State and a Masters in Criminal Justice from St. Cloud State. He is now employed at Winona State as an Assistant Professor teaching Law Enforcement in the Sociology Criminal Justice Department. He is also the Coordinator of the Minnesota Peace Officer Standards and Training Professional Peace Officer Education Program at Winona State.

Jim is the father of two daughters and married to his wife Laurie. He enjoys volunteering for a multitude of agencies and events. He plays golf and enjoys fishing. He also is a trainer for law enforcement agencies on working with the transgender community.

Jessica Taylor

Jess is 25 years old and has lived in La Crosse for the past 4 years. She is a graduate of Western Technical College, completing a program in Massage Therapy. Jess volunteers at The Center as a youth group facilitator for GALAXY; she joined the Outreach Committee and has taken a leading role helping to coordinate Pride festivities.

Jess is originally from Wilton and Tomah, WI and graduated from Brookwood High School, Class of 2008. Jess has been with her partner, Nathan, for almost 4 years. She has 2 cats, Sally and Jack, and 6 younger siblings (Todd, Lexi, Aden, Chase, Ashton, and Abby). When Jess is not working or researching, you'll find her making jewelry at the Root Note, playing video games at home, or watching Netflix with Nathan. Her favorite color is green.

2015 Board of Directors

President

Niki Pohnl

Vice President

Alesha Schandelmeier

Treasurer

Bob Lindner

Secretary

Willem Van Roosenbeek

Alli Berry

Chelsea Elsberry

Janelle Cooper, MD

Jay Palmer

Lynn Weiland *

Fai DeMark *

Galaxy Non-Voting Board Member

Vacant

(*) Board member partial year

2015 Lifetime Achievement Recognition Recipient

Marilyn Levin

The culture we experience today is due to the work done by so many who came before us. This Lifetime Achievement Award affords us a special opportunity to acknowledge the work of one individual who has shown a lifetime commitment to this endeavor.

The committee chose Marilyn Levin as the 2015 recipient. In honor of the 20th anniversary of GALAXY approaching in 2016 and lasting positive impact it has had on the 7 Rivers community, we dedicate this year's award to Marilyn. We invite an individual to reflect on the impact of the awardee's contributions, legacy and tireless dedication to the LGBTQ community. Providing this year's response is GALAXY alumni, Amanda Eckhardt.

Two years before Ellen would come out to America, Marilyn Levin had already begun the work of supporting LGBTQ youth in lives that were never going to see the cover of Time magazine or grace the screens of a major television show. She has committed her life to supporting and empowering people for her entire adult life. As GALAXY turns 20 in 2016 it is hard to imagine the La Crosse area without Marilyn.

From her work with the YWCA to her mission today to make a globally sustainable economy, she has touched the lives of thousands of people. While I can only speak for one of these people, myself, I can tell you that she has profoundly impacted me. As a 16 year old in a small community in Wisconsin I came out at a very early age. I carry with me the social activism that she lives by and teaches every day. Without a doubt she helped me not only survive adolescence but thrive. I am a healthy, mostly well-adjusted adult because of the experiences she fostered.

One such event I will share with you is the LGBT prom. There are few events growing up as memorable as prom. As an LGBTQ individual it can be rare to experience positive events that are celebrated in regards to one's sexuality or gender expression. Making my love for another human being normal and celebrated cannot be overlooked as a profoundly important experience for a teenager trying to find healthy relationships.

We have come a long way since Ellen came out and suffered the loss of advertisers such as JC Penney, but the hard work wasn't done on television or in the glamor of lights and cameras. People like Marilyn have been doing the hard work for decades, and the communities they serve have benefitted greatly from their personal and professional sacrifices.

La Crosse has come a long way in 20 years. There is now an independently-run center, The Center: 7 Rivers LGBTQ Connection, Gay Straight Alliances (GSA) in schools, and a community looking for ways to reach out and educate the greater community through trainings. I want to personally thank Marilyn for all she has done in my life and the lives of so many others.

I can't imagine that when she held the first GALAXY meeting in a small basement that 20 years later we would have made the progress we have, and I know that she looks forward to the next 20 years where we can make even more needed movement for equality and justice in the world.

Previous recipients recognized:

2014: Mary O'Sullivan

2013: Peggy Heinz

2012: Mike Hansen