

VISIONS OF EQUALITY



Onslow County LGBTQ+ Community Center

NEW TRAINING AVAILABLE

- **Transgender & Gender Nonbinary Issues**
- **Developing Policies and procedures for serving the LGBTQ Community**
- **Supporting Families with LGBT Children**
- **Providing services for LGBT Children in Foster Care**
- **Top Health Care issues for the LGBT Population**
- **Providers Introduction to Substance Abuse for the LGBT population**
- **Queer Think for the Straight Shrink**



*“My silences had not protected me. Your silence will not protect you.” – **Audre Lorde***

back and think. One coworker congratulated me after him and his wife watched it. He told me how he is proud of me for coming forward and speaking up on things that I am passionate about, especially knowing the area we all live in and how hateful it can be to our community. To be honest that never crossed my mind.

Being the Face of Change

Lilith Campos

I enjoy writing. That wasn't always the case for me though. In school it was seen as a chore and in my adult life it was just something I never really enjoyed. Part of that was due to my handwriting. For anyone unfortunate enough to have read my handwriting now or in the past I owe you an apology. The one exception was writing loved ones a letter. I never wrote many letters and yet I took pride in the few I did write. To me it was always a window to my soul when I would write someone a letter, it was something personal catered to that specific individual.

My love for writing really began 3.5 years ago in August of 2017. That was when I first met my therapist and began exploring my gender and questioning who I was. It started out simple enough. I was nervous and excited at what my future held and so much was going on in my life that I could hardly remember it all. So I would write little notes in my phone and date them. Maybe I came out to someone or maybe I thought of something I wanted to speak to my therapist about. Each session I would hand over my phone so she could read about my experiences over the previous 2 weeks.

It wasn't long before my feelings started making it into my notes for my therapist and it quickly turned into a diary. I would explore my feelings and emotions and it became a way to track my mental state. I was never really good at speaking, stumbling through words or mumbling and often having to repeat myself. It didn't matter if it was in front of friends or a class or even public speaking, I would just mess it up, I hated it and I hate(d) my voice. But I found that in writing, all those thoughts in my head that I struggled to get out of my mouth would flow freely on paper and it soon became its own form of therapy for me. It could be in the form of a quick note or a long essay. Either way, who I perceive myself to be in my head was able to finally be free on paper.

I say all this to say that even though I enjoy writing, it doesn't always come easy to me. In fact the topic today I needed help with. I had 2 suggestions for this article, 1 from my best friend, my sister from another mister Vashti and the other from another dear friend Heidi. While both are good topics, I chose the one for today because of recent events in this country. The other we will save for another day. So lets talk about leadership and being a role model. We recently had a positive change in leadership in this country which was a huge sigh of relief for the LGBTQ community, particularly transgender people. We can now openly serve in the military and we have some protections under the law now as well. We have a ways to go still, yet we are getting there.

I recently volunteered to do an interview with a news channel about what the impact of Dr Levine being confirmed by the senate meant for the transgender community. And while I really dislike public speaking and dislike even more seeing or hearing myself, I took a leap and did this interview. The feedback from my friends, family and coworkers was really positive and made me step

And yet when Heidi suggested I write about this, I was able to step back and look at this from other people's point of view. There are too many people to name but let's just say that all those little affirmations they have said finally clicked with me. I was able to relate it to something I hear at work often. How we are representatives of the company. Well, all of us here, everyone that reads this is also a representative. We represent our community. I can only speak for my experiences as a transgender woman here but I know that most of the people I know or meet have never known a transgender person before. So naturally they have questions, some may come across as insensitive or offensive. The dreaded 'Have you had THE surgery?' question comes to mind.

But also? By just existing and being myself, I know that people I have met that never knew a transgender person before now have someone they know that humanizes who we are to them. And that my dear friends is how we bring about change for the good. I've been told that by just listening to me and to my story can change people's opinions. That by knowing me before transition and after transition and how I've grown and my happiness has blossomed has really opened someone's eyes to what we go through and has changed their minds about the transgender community. That's a good thing right? I like to think so.

So my takeaway from all of this, and I hope your takeaway as well, is that we never know who's lives we may touch. I never wanted to be an advocate for the community. I just wanted to transition and stick to myself. But this community, it's filled with amazing people that helped me so much on my journey and as I have met people as they begin their journeys it's been really nice to help point them in the right direction. Stepping out of my comfort zone to do an interview was a big step for me. But knowing that maybe someone out there was able to watch that and think to themselves that they aren't alone or maybe they found the courage to come out, even to themselves is very rewarding. So I ask all of you, step out of your comfort zones. Be a leader. Be the face of our amazing community and do your part to make change for the community.

February Events

(Please check the community center face book page for more details on our events)

FEB 5TH PRIVATE TRAINING - The Safe Zone training is a two - three hour training that delves further into how to be an ally, terminology, and different types of hate, negativity, and -phobias. Individuals who complete a Safe Zone training will be able to mark their offices or work spaces with a Safe Zone sticker

FEB 7TH 4:00 PM - Our first of several celebrations of Black History Month will be a BET series "Black and Gay in America - Holler if you hear me Black and Gay in the Church"

FEB 8TH 7:00 PM – TRANS-FORMATIONS A community center and Peace Counseling Center facilitated group for youth who are considering gender transition, starting transition, in progress of transitioning or gender non-conforming.

FEB 10th, 1:00 PM – Training opportunity - Supporting Families with LGBT Children WEDNESDAY,

FEB 10th, 7:00 PM Onslow County PFLAG (Parents and Friends of Lesbians and Gays) Ally support

FEB 14 AT 12 PM – FEB 20 AT 3 PM Join in on Random Acts of Kindness Week

FEB 14, AT 5 PM Transgender Valentines Banquet

FEB 15TH 7:00 PM – TRANS-FORMATIONS A community center and Peace Counseling Center facilitated group for youth who are considering gender transition, starting transition, in progress of transitioning or gender non-conforming.

FEB 21, AT 4 PM Black Queer Town Hall Day - the history of black drag

FEB 22ND AT 5:00 PM - TRANS-FORMATIONS A community center facilitated group for youth who are considering gender transition, starting transition, in progress of transitioning or gender non-conforming

FEB 22ND AT 7:00 PM - TRANS-FORMATIONS A community center and Peace Counseling Center facilitated group for youth who are considering gender transition, starting transition, in progress of transitioning or gender non-conforming

FEB 28TH At 1:00 PM – OPEN TO THE PUBLIC The Safe Zone training is a two - three hour training that delves further into how to be an ally, terminology, and different types of hate, negativity, and -phobias. Individuals who complete a Safe Zone training will be able to mark their offices or work spaces with a Safe Zone sticker

FEB 28TH DRAG SHOW with Raven E Sanchez – @ Josephine's Eatery 720 Court St. Jacksonville.

March 1ST AT 7:00 PM - TRANS-FORMATIONS A community center and Peace Counseling Center facilitated group for youth who are considering gender transition, starting transition, in progress of transitioning or gender non-conforming

March 6TH AT 1:00 PM – Transgender and Non Binary issues, In order to provide a safe, inclusive and welcoming environment for all, it is important to discuss transgender, gender non-conforming and non-binary identities and topics

Parent's Corner

Joe Coffey, M.Ed.

Children and teens have access to online platforms now more than ever before. As parents and caregivers we need to be aware of the dangers of the internet including cyberbullying, scams, child abuse and inappropriate content. Follow this link for information on these issues and tips on how to protect the children in your life.

Online Safety - [Online Safety - CyberInsureOne](#)

What Dangers Can Your Child Encounter Online?

Some of the dangers that your child can encounter online might be obvious. However, as the internet evolves, so do those who intend to do harm to everyone, including children and teens.

- **1**
Cyberbullying
In 2016, the Cyberbullying Research Center sampled 4,500 children to find out how many of them had experienced bullying while using the internet. 36% of teenage girls and 31% of teenage boys said that they had been bullied online at some point in their lives, with 17% of each gender saying that they had been bullied within the last 30 days. The effects of cyberbullying on your child can be extreme and very dangerous. Cyberbullying very often escalates or includes in-person bullying. In 2014, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention conducted a nationwide survey and found that 16% of all students have seriously considered suicide. Cyberbullying, sadly, is one primary reason for children and teens to feel insecure and desperate. Much of this bullying happens on social networks like Facebook, Instagram, and Snapchat. Connecting with your child regularly to ensure that they aren't being bullied in person or over the internet is very important and can help either stop or prevent them from being negatively affected by this type of destructive peer-based abuse.
- **2**
Scams
While you might not think that children or teens would be the target of online scams, a small percentage of scammers do target this age group. Common scams include identity theft and running up subscription costs through cellular phone bills. Both scams require that the child or teen share some of their private information. In these attacks, scammers take advantage of a child's trusting nature and optimism. Ads within social media games that are designed with children in mind can sometimes lead to nefarious websites that ask the child for their private information and trick them into signing up for services like a recurring cellular subscription service. These ads often include taglines such as, "Sign up now to get a free iPad" or "Free Justin Bieber concert tickets!" In some cases, these services only require that the child provide his or her phone number and click an "I Agree" button to approve the charge. The true nature of what the child or teen is signing up for, of course, is hidden inside the obligatory legal documentation on the website. However, it's unlikely that a child will notice those details. Be sure to speak with your children and teens about these potential scams, emphasizing that they should never share private information like their Social Security Number, address, and phone number with anyone online. Also be sure to review your cellular subscription fees and credit card and debit card records to be sure that no illegitimate services have been applied to your accounts.
- **3**
Child Abuse
Sadly, the internet is a common place for pedophiles and physical abusers to locate and groom children for their sick purposes. These adults often look for children in chat rooms and communities that are designed for children. For that reason, it's very important that you regularly review your child's communications online (or even block them entirely from communicating with strangers). Set up parental controls on all of your children's devices and set aside a recurring time to discuss internet safety and strangers. Making sure that your child feels comfortable having these discussions with you will help you both in the future when and if they encounter questionable behavior from a friend, family member, or stranger online.

- **4**
Inappropriate Content
The internet is a very open place, and it's quite easy to find adult-oriented content. Parental control software is designed to block pornographic sites, to prevent unsafe searches that could display sexual and violent videos and websites, and to generally stay on top of blocking content that is inappropriate for children. However, as with the risks of child abuse and scams, make sure to regularly discuss these topics with your children and teens.

Community center survey participants needed!

Please log on to [Onslow County LGBTQ Community Center — by Feedier \(fdier.co\)](#)

Spiritual Leader Caitie Smith Gawne reminds us that the Lenten season is upon us, join Lenten 2021 at [\(2\) Casa de Cristo Church And Apostolic Center | Facebook](#)

Report: North Carolina underperforms in LGBTQ rights

North Carolina is among the 27 lowest-ranked states in regards to codified LGBTQ rights.

This is according to the Human Right's Council and the Equality Federation Institute's annual report, which grades states and other entities on their inclusivity and LGBTQ protections.

"The ... comprehensive report ... details statewide laws and policies that affect LGBTQ people and their families and assesses how well states are protecting LGBTQ people from discrimination," reads a news release detailing information about the index.

The index largely exists because there are limited LGBTQ protections at the federal level. This means the discrimination someone within the LGBTQ community has the potential to face is largely contingent on the state they live in.

"In 27 states, LGBTQ people remain at risk of being fired, evicted or denied services because of who they are," reads the press release. "There are 18 states and Washington, D.C., that have robust LGBTQ non-discrimination laws covering employment, housing and public accommodations."

Around 83% of Americans are in favor of LGBTQ non-discrimination laws, according to a recent survey by the Public Religion Research Institute.

"Substantial majorities in every major religious group favor nondiscrimination laws that protect LGBTQ people, ranging from 59% among white evangelical Protestants to 92% among religiously unaffiliated Americans," reads PRRI's report.

ONSLOW COUNTY LGBTQ+ COMMUNITY CENTER

337 Steller Road
Jacksonville NC 28540