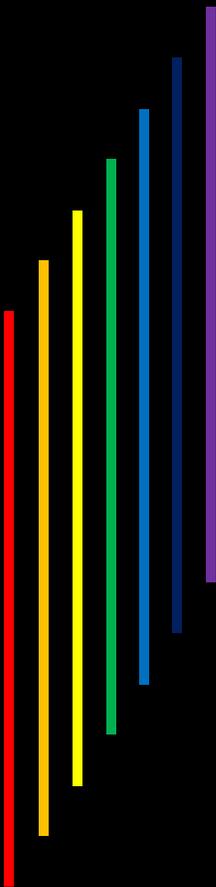




Together,
We Stay Strong.

Building
Equality

Spring
2020



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Letter from the Chair

Charles Oldham

For all of us, I know that 2020 has begun with a heavy sense of concern. We can't help it. From everyday disruptions that Covid-19 brings to our lives and frightening new headlines to our screens, the world seems to have become a much scarier, and for no one is that truer than us in the LGBTQ+ community. Yet, this is the moment where our community knows its strength.



I am proud to say that Sandhills PRIDE is doing far more than just weather the storm. We are thriving and expanding, despite the limits placed on everyone's social activities. Sandhills PRIDE has achieved its goal with its leadership campaign with the hiring of Executive Director, Michael Bleggi, who is working hard to build our build our network and spread our message. In the fifth year of our scholarship program, we have presented another \$10,000 in funds to four exceptional young people for a total of almost \$50,000 given in scholarships. In the coming year, we are planning for our Safe Zone program to be physically present in schools beyond Moore County for the first time.

It goes without saying, but I will say it anyway. None of this would be possible without the generous support of those in the community like you, who value equality, and know that it takes hard work to achieve in challenging circumstances. We thank you all from the bottom of our hearts and ask you to continue your support as Sandhills PRIDE moves to greater heights!



With kind regards,
Charles M. Oldham, III

Please Support Sandhills PRIDE!

Your time and support help drive LGBTQ+ equality in the Sandhills through our programming and outreach. You can make a donation at www.sandhillspride.org and click the "Donate Now!" button. Your support means the world to us. Thank you!

PRIDE in Our Community



Sandhills PRIDE walked and spoke in solidarity at the MLK Jr. Day March in Southern Pines.



Executive Director Michael Bleggi presented our Safe Zone Program to education and government officials from 11 counties on Feb. 12.

Next Generation Leaders of Equality

Congratulations Scholarship Winners!

Spanning the Sandhills from Cumberland to Montgomery, we are proud to announce our 2020 Scholarship Winners. While we are not having our annual banquet this year in an effort to prioritize the safety of our community, we will be sharing interviews with our candidates in the near future, so keep an eye out!

And the winners are...



Mattie Beeson
Montgomery Co. Early College – Montgomery

Mattie shared her aspiration to develop a LGBTQ headquarters in Montgomery County and work in the field of LGBTQ+ rights. Her teachers noticed her work ethic: "...She has worked full-time hours on her 'part-time' job. She never complains."

Alex Ingram
Fayetteville Academy – Cumberland

Alex described his founding of the Eagle Pride Club. Through this organization, he has developed a safe space, organized student volunteering at pride events, and has aimed to include every kind of sexuality and gender, including allies.



Madeline Litty
Scotland High School – Scotland

Madeline received an A+ in almost a third of her courses. She has made it her mission to support others through "small acts of kindness." Her future career goal is to develop space and solace for the LGBTQ+ community through film and television.

Emily VonCannon
Pinecrest High School – Moore

Emily aims to work in a career of diplomacy or analytics. Her success as founder and president of her school's Mock Trial Team showed as she powerfully defended women's rights against individuals who derided the Women's March.



Memorable Quotes

 "I plan to, in my adulthood, work on making the world a more LGBTQ friendly world." - *Mattie Beeson*

 "Her example is the most effective form of advocacy." - *Rec. for Beeson*

 "I want to help ensure the future of equality for so many more underrepresented communities who don't get their voices heard." - *Alex Ingram*

 "Alex is one of the beautifully brave people who is undaunted by the unknown..." - *Rec. for Ingram*

 "I believe it is my role to ensure future LGBT members aren't forced to scavenge for their representation, for their history." - *Madeline Litty*

 "In fact, so many students mention her in their own 'coming out' stories...She is an example of pride and acceptance..." - *Rec. for Litty*

 "I sought to use my allyship to the LGBTQ+ community to reach across aisles and stand up for those who could not." - *Emily Voncannon*

 "...as I age, she is the kind of student I would like to see take over and run the world." - *Rec. for VonCannon*

To the Volunteers & Community Who Make It Possible

Thank you to our outstanding volunteer program directors!
Together, you and our team of dedicated volunteers help make equality in the Sandhills a reality.



Angie Averitte
Activities



Loretta Aldridge
Scholarship



Jules Latham
Safe Zone

Program Spotlight! Safe Zone

This upcoming July, Sandhills PRIDE has been asked to present our Safe Zone training to roughly 50 school principals and other administrators spanning 11 counties. Working in partnership with the Sandhills Center and the School Mental Health Initiative, which addresses mental health in our home community, we believe our programming will help empower schools to affirm LGBTQ+ students and staff. This work will contribute to greater LGBTQ+ visibility in schools, and by extension, we believe it can help save young lives.

Upcoming Activities

Sandhills PRIDE has virtualized its events! You can find more details on at www.sandhillspide.org/events and our Facebook page!

-  **Virtual Game Night**
Every Other Thursday at 7:00 p.m., starting May 7th
-  **Interest Topic Series**
Every Other Wednesday at 7:00 p.m., starting May 13th
First Topic: How to Deal with Social Distancing for Teens
-  **Virtual Happy Hour**
Every Other Thursday at 7:00 p.m., starting May 14th

