

# Central Valley Pride

Engage □ Impact □ Empower







# Our Mission

Serving the Central Valley's LGBTQ+ community with authenticity, integrity, and pride.

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# Our History

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For the past 3 years, Central Valley Pride has offered:

- Peer-led support groups for youth (17 and under and parents/caregivers)
- Game nights
- Movie events
- Family picnic days
- Social and skill development opportunities in art, writing, job training, community building, volunteering

In addition, CVP has also assisted with:

- Gender-affirming clothing
- Resources for education
- Resources in the community
- Resources in housing options



CVP has partnered with GLSEN (Gay, Lesbian, and Straight Education Network) to offer:

- Professional development to schools, business, and organizations
- Youth LGBTQIA+ library book donations
- Pride Prom
- Art workshops with Tonia Hemme
- Family Fitness day with Wooten Personal Training
- Roller-skate parties at Roll-r-land

In recent months, GLSEN Merced has officially joined CVP and transitioned into Central Valley Pride Youth Initiatives (CVPYI), a new branch in our programming.

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# Community Impact

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- Provide and create safe spaces for all youth to be able to grow, thrive, and feel a meaningful connection to their surrounding community.
- CVP and CVPYI's diverse and inclusive programming at the McNamara Youth Center will benefit the unique and diverse population surrounding the location, and all of Merced.
- The LGBTQIA+ community can be found and seen in every single area of our Merced community. We exist in every gender expression, generation, race, ethnicity, culture, neighborhood, school, and profession. We are parents, caregivers, grandparents, siblings, children, friends, and loved ones. We offer valuable services and activities of interest to all those around us- LGBTQIA+ identifying and allies.

- All residents within the area of McNamara Park will benefit from our organized, well-thought-out, and intentional programming- but especially the youth community, and for some, their lives will depend on it. In 2022, 45% of all LGBTQIA+ youth across our nation seriously considered committing suicide.
- Visibility for our youth through an organization such as ours is truly life-saving, and by always including allies and those with the desire to learn and share love only brings our community together and builds a stronger Merced.



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# Our Team

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- CVP's staff and volunteer team consist of multi-generational individuals with a wide range of experience and expertise. Our team includes folks such as UC Merced, Merced College, and Stan State students (one of which is the newest UC Student Regent), former Planned Parenthood staff, medical field professionals, former local high school GSA presidents and officers, parents, and dedicated community members.
- CVP will have a minimum of 2 staff on-site during open hours to the public. More staff will be present depending on the number of participants for various events and activities. Our core group currently consists:





Jennifer McQueen (CEO):

Is a parent with 20+ years of experience in youth work including swim instruction, Site Director of RSRPD After School Programs, owner of a youth Enrichment company, and Director of a K-12 Learning Center. She also has California Early Childhood teaching certification and is contracted to complete work on Merced County Office of Education high school campuses for the next 3 school years.



## Jesse Cruz (Director of Events):

Has a background in social services, fitness, and the wellness fields. He is a long-lived resident of Merced County for 30 years. He's been involved with the local LGBTQ+ community since 2016. He has also been a Member of the Merced Active 20/30 club which improves the lives of children. As a director of CVP, he has engaged in many youth activities, such as, family art and picnic days and many community social events. He also has experience with job training & onboarding both youth & transitional youth. Jesse also currently works for the County of Merced in Social Services, having a passion to give back to the community.





Eric Olson-Diehl (Peer Advocacy Director):

Is a compassionate professional with a diverse background in social services and education, He has a strong commitment and genuine desire to uplift and support the LGBTQIA+ community and has dedicated his career to empowering individuals and fostering inclusivity.

From his work with Therapeutic Behavioral Services to his role as a Program Supervisor in children's mental health he has shown his commitment to fostering inclusive environments and providing compassionate care since 1991.



Peter Gillis (Peer Advocacy Director):

Is pursuing a college degree in Studio Arts with intentions of continuing his education and obtaining a Teaching Credential. He is currently entering his fourth year with California Teaching Fellows Foundation working to empower youth and provide a safe and supportive learning environment. He was born in Merced County and has been active with the LGBTQIA+ community since 2017. He has three years experience leading peer-led support groups for LGBTQIA+ youth and provides support and mentorship to current group facilitators.



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# Operations

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- CVP currently operates on Wednesday-Saturday from 2pm-6pm to align with the hours and our agreement at the Merced Multicultural Arts Center but would like to adjust and expand those hours as we grow into the McNamara Youth Center to better accommodate after-school hours, and longer hours on Saturday.
- Our staff during open hours consists of volunteers and employees provided through the Merced Youth Jobs program. We have always been able to adequately and consistently cover our open hours, and when necessary, our core Director Team steps in to cover where needed.



- Historically we have offered all of our services for free to all youth, and plan to continue to do so.
- Approximately 2x/year we plan fundraising events that are typically geared towards 18+ and occur off-site.
- All of our services and events on and off-site for youth are offered free of charge.





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# Projected Youth Served

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- Our general open operating hours during the week and weekend will run as a drop-in center style, and all will be welcome.
- Our support groups also are open to any applicable participants who would like to join and do not have a maximum capacity.

- All of our other programming such as social events and workshops will be based on building/room capacity to dictate the maximum number of participants.
- Off-site programming (such as Roller Skating and Bowling Parties) will be dictated by venue capacity.
- Groups would only have a smaller capacity when conducted onsite at the Center if it was applicable to the activity such as an Art Workshop with a teacher based on materials, a book club so that it could operate smoothly, etc. However, it has been common practice for CVP to add multiple sessions or opportunities for these activities to accommodate larger groups.



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# Funding

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- We have been fortunate to receive an impressive and enormous amount of community support for funding from individuals, families, businesses, other organizations, and even our own staff and volunteers.
- We also are continuously applying for grants and outside funding, and have been very successful in securing these opportunities to allow us to pay stipends to volunteers and offer all of our programming for free.



- Recent grant awards to support our programming and operational costs have come from MCOE, Equality California, Legal Aid and Work, and the Merced County Public Health Department.
- CVPYI also has a consistent stream of professional development and educational workshops all throughout Merced County and the state of California (most recently the Sierra Plumas School District and the Valley Crisis Center), as well as regular clients such as Stan State and MCOE that bring in a healthy amount of funding each year.



- Currently, we have been invited to apply for a Youth Development Grant for 1M over the next 3 years to cover programming and operational costs for the exact population we will be serving at the McNamara Youth Center.
- We also have been encouraged to apply for a Merced City funding opportunity in March 2024.



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# Determining Success

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We plan on tracking the growth of our programs through the following:

- Community participation and attendance for programs are typically tracked by collecting SOGIE data
- Pre-registration to events when applicable
- Sign-in logs for walk-ins during drop-by hours
- Roundtable discussions and focus groups with the community
- Customer Satisfaction Surveys
- Retention rates



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- Questions -

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# Thank You

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