A NOTE FROM OUR EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR:
Erin Upchurch, MSSA, LISW-S (She/Her)

“I don’t need you to praise me for my resilience. I need you to stop creating spaces of trauma, where being resilient is all I’m allowed to be...”
- Dr. Omolara Uwemedimo

In 2022, the lives and bodies of LGBTQIA+ youth and young adults are hot topics; trending for all of the wrong reasons. Last year, we saw over 250 anti-LGBTQIA+ bills introduced to state legislatures; several being in our own state of Ohio. These ill-informed, biased, fear-based, and egregious attempts at governing, are forcing public discourse on the private lives, bodies, and ultimately, humanity, of our youth. Enough is enough.

KYC stands for the humanity, dignity, and belonging of each and every young person in Ohio and beyond; we are committed to disrupting that which causes harm. The continuation of public conversation centered on the validity of the existence of any individual or community is irresponsible and a form of violence.

Queer youth and young adults are people. They are artists, musicians, students, siblings, parents, leaders, and friends. They dream, cry, laugh, and create. One of the most beautiful opportunities of being human is the journey of knowing ourselves for ourselves, and then living as radiantly and boldly as possible. Our young people deserve more.

We must be non-negotiable and unapologetic in our stand for our youth. A powerful aspect of being queer is refusing to dance with the status quo. Representative, daring, and unapologetic leadership is necessary. We must no longer tolerate and engage in dehumanizing conversations to justify the validity of queer lives. Let us stop creating and perpetuating environments of trauma and harm. Let us speak up. Write or call your representatives; volunteer, donate to orgs doing the work; and perhaps most importantly, love and support a young person.

It will forever remain our collective charge to create a world in which our young people no longer need to be resilient. It will forever be our vision to see queer youth thriving.

“There are so few places for LGBTQIA+ youth to feel a sense of community. Especially for queer youth in urban communities. KYC offers this sense of community and resources.”
- Fredrick, 16 (Any Pronoun)
The Drop-in Center at KYC is open weekdays for youth ages 12 - 20 as a safer and affirming in-person and virtual space for LGBTQIA+ youth and their allies. Our Programming primarily focuses on social activities/discussions, leadership development, life-skills, mutual support, as well as health and wellness education.

At the center, youth have access to Community Based Wellness programs offered by KYC, which include a food pantry, mental health services, and housing assistance.

"It has been very helpful and exciting to talk to other trans youth about their experiences! It’s also heartening to just bond with other trans youth about everyday things, since sometimes it’s easy to forget you aren’t alone.”
- Lucien, 21 (He/It/Dae) - Community Advisory Board Member

Our Education & Professional Development programs aims to cultivate affirming spaces outside of the Drop-in Center. We provide professional development workshops, consultation, advocacy, and support to youth-serving professionals, school staff, and organizations with an interest in learning more about gender and sexuality, youth experiences, and best practices for affirming LGBTQIA+ youth and adults.

KYC also provides anti-racism training opportunities through an intersectional lens, as well as, CEU opportunities for certain professions.

As for 2022, online courses are also available!
**MISSION:**
To Serve and Support LGBTQIA+ young people.

**VALUES:**
KYC is informed by the practices of restorative and transformational justice, intersectionality, anti-oppression, racial justice, and trauma informed/healing engaged care.

We are committed to providing supportive and collaborative services that acknowledge that people are the experts in their own lives.

**YOUTH LEADERSHIP**
The KYC Community Advisory Board (CAB) is a group of leaders, ages 12-24, working together to help inform KYC programming and special events; advocate for LGBTQIA+ youth in the community; and provide a youth voice in the ongoing leadership and development of KYC.

**CIVIC ENGAGEMENT**
KYC works closely with groups like Equality Ohio to [advocate for LGBTQIA+ state legislation](#), uplifting youth voices in public conversation, and fighting against anti-trans bills that continue to be introduced in Ohio.
IMPROVING LIVES

The Community Based Wellness (CBW) program improves the lives of transitional-aged LGBTQIA+ youth, 16 - 24, identifying the health conditions and environmental factors in a young person’s life that are associated with barriers to wellness.

We provide coordinated, direct access to wraparound services and housing support through a variety of community partnerships.

MENTAL HEALTH & WELLNESS

In 2021, KYC launched a NEW mental health and wellness initiative to address the emerging mental health needs of youth.

For the first time in KYC’s history, we hired a Behavioral Health Practitioner that provides individual and group therapeutic sessions, free of charge.

In 2021, KYC DOUBLED the number of young people connected to vital services

KVC added emergency rental assistance to our housing programs in 2021!

“My school Isn't as supportive as it could be.... Having somewhere to go and socialize, as well as talk openly about certain topic with people who are understanding and can relate with my experiences, is a lifeline.”
Ace, 15 (He/They)

SUPPORTING SCHOOL COMMUNITIES

As a member of the National Association of GSA Networks, KYC is the state hub for Ohio GSA (Genders & Sexualities Alliance) Network. We provide technical and resource support to GSAs throughout the state, empowering and training youth leaders and staff advocates in communities that lack support.

COLUMBUS CITY SCHOOLS

In 2021, KYC officially partnered with CCS, providing professional development training, support for student leaders and GSA growth, and future collaboration around policy to improve school climates for ALL students.

30 GSA clubs across OHIO

RACIAL JUSTICE

We are committed to advocacy for racial justice and equity; and visibility through participation in events such as the National GSA Network Day for Racial Justice.
FINANCIALS

Revenue
Grants (Private/Foundation) $306,557
Direct Contributions $256,828
Grants (Corporate) $236,900
Grants (Government) $197,035
3rd Party Fundraising $90,036
KYC Event Income $48,210
Earned Income $17,859

Total Revenue $1,153,425
Total Expenses $924,731
Net Income $228,695

KYC UNITY CIRCLE SUPPORTERS

The KYC Unity Circle is our recurring donor program. Supporters of the Unity Circle are directly contributing to the longevity of KYC and our mission to serve and support LGBTQIA+ young people. KYC can do more and plan ahead for the future more successfully with the security of knowing that YOUR generous gift is coming every month to support our young people.

All Unity Circle supporters receive a monthly e-newsletter, swag, and special recognition at our annual fall fundraiser!

Sign-up to become a Unity Circle supporter at: kycoho.org/unitycircle

THANK YOU TO OUR 2021 COMMUNITY PARTNERS AND SPONSORS!

Support from businesses, organizations, and major supporters help us connect vital services to LGBTQIA+ youth in our community!

Bath & Body Works

Edward Jones
Tom W. Davis
2022 STAFF

Erin Upchurch, MSSA, LISW - S (She/Her)  Executive Director
Savannah Carlstrom, MSW, LSW (She/They)  Behavioral Health Practitioner
Cole Campos, MSW, LSW (They/Them)  Community Wellness Provider
Rhonda Cumberbatch, MA, MAE, LSW (She/He)  Director of Community Based Wellness
Julie Day (She/Her)  Director of Finance & Grants Management
Amanda Erickson (She/Her)  Director of Education & Outreach
Liam Gallagher (They/He)  Director of Center Based Programs
Sin Guanci, A.B.D. (She/They/He)  Ohio GSA Network Manager
Jennifer Kuhn (She/Her)  Director of Community Partnerships & External Relations
Leo Perdomo Blanco (They/Them)  Center Based Program Manager
Lane Shirrell (They/Them)  Community Education & Research Manager
James Westfall (He/Him)  Director of Operations & Facilities Management

2022 BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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Brent Fisher (They/Them)  Treasurer
  Pathways Financial Credit Union

CONTACT US!
Youth ages 12 - 20, can drop-in to KYC
Tuesday - Friday beginning at 3:30pm

VISIT US
Kaleidoscope Youth Center
603 East Town St.
Columbus, OH 43215

MAIL US
Kaleidoscope Youth Center
PO Box 8104
Columbus, OH 43201

CALL US
614-294-5437 (10am - 6pm)

EMAIL US
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