



# 2016 ANNUAL REPORT





## Dear friends,

It has been an amazing year! Looking back at 2016, Kayla and I think about how much Brave Trails has grown in just one year. We are so honored that we are able to work with the queer leaders of tomorrow. We are continually inspired by what our campers have to offer not only to the Brave Trails community but also to the world at large.

This year has been one of unbelievable growth. We held camp in Wrightwood CA for our second year and we doubled our program from one week to two weeks. We were able to bring camp to 96 campers and we had a waitlist of 67 campers. We also increased our volunteer staff to 30 people that very generously took their vacation from their full-time jobs to join us at camp. We doubled the amount of volunteers that led leadership workshops for our campers. We implemented "Brave Space," a program which is a monthly meetup group for local campers. Brave Space participants got to join in many different activities including cake decorating, museum visits, and a beach party! With our success, we were able to bring on our first paid employee- Kayla was able to work part-time for Brave Trails. We also now have our very own office in Culver City!

We are continuing to grow and are planning for Brave Trails' future. As I mentioned before we had a waitlist of 67 campers, which shows us that there is more need for the safe, leadership-driven space we have created. We plan on offering 3 weeks total of camp next summer, a one-week program, and a two-week program! We plan to double the number of campers to accommodate the waitlist. We are also going to continue to expand and improve Brave Space.

Lastly, we are truly grateful to our supporters and funders. Your generosity made it possible to bring Brave Trails to life. We (and our LGBTQ+ campers) are forever grateful. Please accept our heartfelt thanks for supporting our incredible journey. We look forward to growing together as we expand our mission and vision to empower the next generation of LGBTQ youth leaders and changemakers.

Sincerely,

Jessica & Kayla Weissbuch

**Founders**



## Mission & What we do

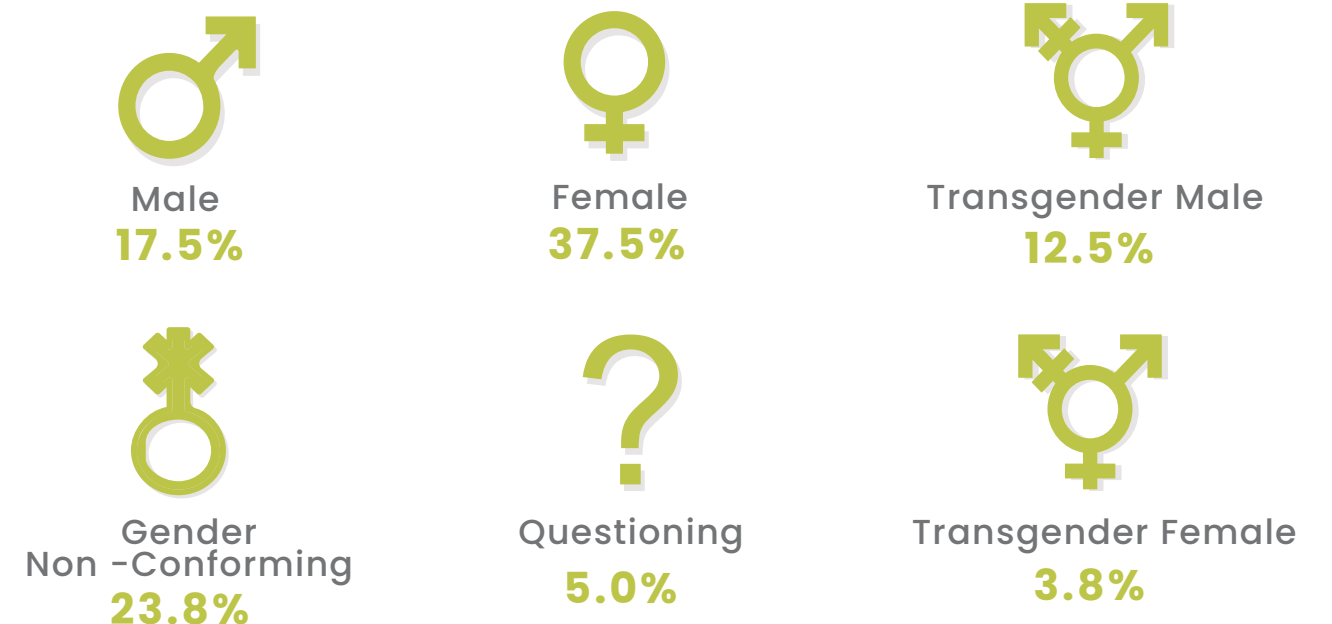
The mission of Brave Trails is transforming LGBTQ youth and families into leaders through summer camp and innovative programming. Brave Trails is more than just your average summer camp. While we have a lot of elements of a typical camp, our main focus is helping our campers grow into the brave leaders they are destined to be. Our program focuses on four key elements: Leadership, Community Building, Self Realization, and Service. We use workshops, adventure and artistic programming, service projects, peer connections, and positive role models to create a safe space where youth can thrive. With the skills learned at camp, our campers will be primed to thrive in their schools, workplace, and personal life. In addition, our campers will have the knowledge and confidence to be more impactful leaders and implement innovative social change in their communities.

## The Need for Brave Trails

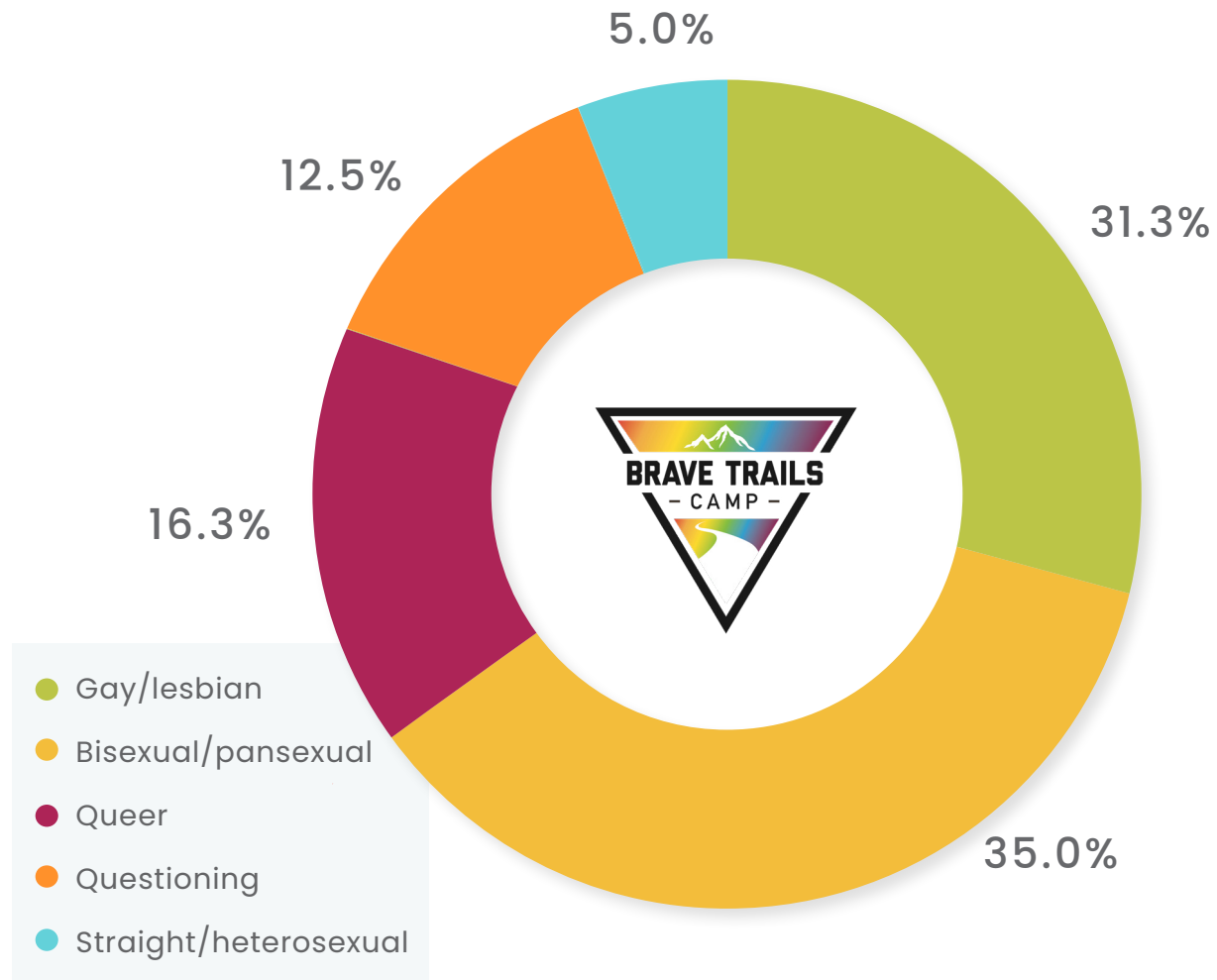
Brave Trails was formed to respond to the needs of the large and growing population of LGBTQ youth in the greater Los Angeles area and the nation. There is not an LGBTQ summer camp anywhere in our target area, which specifically serves LGBTQ youth. We believe camp provides a unique outlet to build leadership and community while exploring the outdoors and just having some good old-fashioned fun! Given the current climate of inequality in our world, there is a need to empower the next generation of LGBTQ leaders and give them the tools to continue in the quest for justice and civil rights for all.

## Demographics

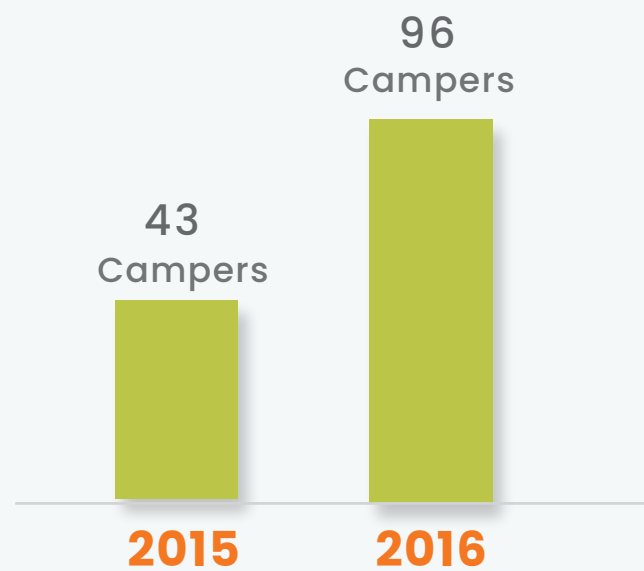
### GENDER IDENTITY



## SEXUAL ORIENTATION



## GROWTH



## Camp Wrightwood

Brave Trails has been fortunate to be able to call Camp Wrightwood home for the last 2 summers. Camp Wrightwood is located 2.5 hours outside of Los Angeles and is what you imagine camp to be: mountains, trees and all the s'mores you can eat! The Camp Wrightwood directors created a safe and welcoming space for our LGBTQ+ campers and staff.

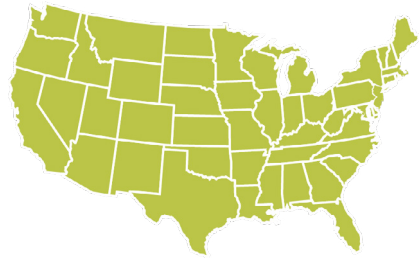


## Where are campers are coming from





### 3 COUNTRIES



USA



POLAND



CANADA

## Social Entrepreneurship Highlight

As a leadership camp, gratitude and service are important values to our community. At camp all of the campers participate in a program called Social Entrepreneurship. During this program the campers learn about being of service to their community. The campers learn how to take a project from an idea to a finished product. This year the campers wanted to focus on body positivity and created an amazing mural that showed different body types and then added empowering statements. This mural has been on display at different events throughout the Los Angeles area.



## Camper Impact Stories

### MASON

Mason is in high school and is working with the student senate to create a gender neutral uniform and working on creating more gender neutral bathrooms within his school. Mason has acted as a Youth Advisor for a social justice internship hosted by The Center in downtown Manhattan. This year Mason is also acting as a member of his Model United Nations club's secretariat, which entails him being the Under Secretary General of Public Relations.





## KEVIN BOULDIN

Kevin lives in a very conservative area of Utah and is one of the only out people at his high school. Kevin is on the football team and he has always had a dream to run out on the field with a rainbow flag before a game started. It took a lot of hard work and courage, but his senior year of high school he was able to make that dream a reality. He ran out on his high school football field with all of his team members waving a rainbow flag proudly and was supported by his team and school.



## NICK YEAROUT

Nick is an amazing leader in his community. Nick is a very soft spoken person, but when he speaks his words are very powerful. His mother said that she sent a kid who hardly spoke to camp and got a different kid back! After attending camp for one summer he went back to his community and joined forces with an LGBTQ speaker bureau and speaks to small and large audiences about his journey of being a trans boy and his coming out story. He came to Brave Trails with a partial scholarship which helped him and his family alot but they still had to fundraise the remaining tuition. Nick teamed up with his sister who helped him sew handmade stuffed animals and he sold them at school to his classmates to raise the funds to be able to come to camp. His drive and will are a perfect example of the amazing campers at Brave Trails!





## Staff Highlight

### SEAN KEARNS

We are so honored to have Sean Kearns as one of our amazing medical volunteers at camp! He comes all the way from Ireland and heard about Brave Trails through a previous camper. He takes time out of his full-time work in Ireland to take a vacation to the US to volunteer for us. Many LGBT folks have a history of receiving not so great care from healthcare providers but that's not the case with Sean! Sean has a way of making our campers feel safe and calm in his presence. Sean is not only an amazing nurse, but he is an amazing youth worker. Sean goes above and beyond to make every camper and staff feel special at Brave Trails. He is the type of person who can make anyone smile, a great quality for a role model. When he is not tending to someone medically, Sean can be found leading camp songs and games with our campers. He is well-loved by our community and such an asset to our team and our success.



### AL BROOKOVER

Al Brookover joined us for their second year as a cabin counselor and program lead at Brave Trails. They are a full-time Social Sciences student in San Diego and took time out of their studies to volunteer for Brave Trails for two weeks. They are an amazing artist and bring their skills to camp and help the campers make some unbelievable art. At Brave Trails, we like to put a leadership lens on every activity we do and Al made that happen this year with our Arts & Crafts programming. Al tailored all of their programs to be activist-driven. Campers created art projects of empowerment. One of the projects we really loved was that campers were given the opportunity to create patches for their clothing. With Al's guidance, campers made patches with sayings like: "Protect Trans Youth," "We are the future," "Proud to be Trans," "Genderqueer," etc. They inspire the campers to be the best they can be as well as help them tune into their own creative selves. On top of being an amazing arts lead, Al was an exceptional cabin counselor. They are the type of person who focuses on providing a fun experience with safety always in mind. Our campers are truly inspired by Al and we are so fortunate to have them on our volunteer team!



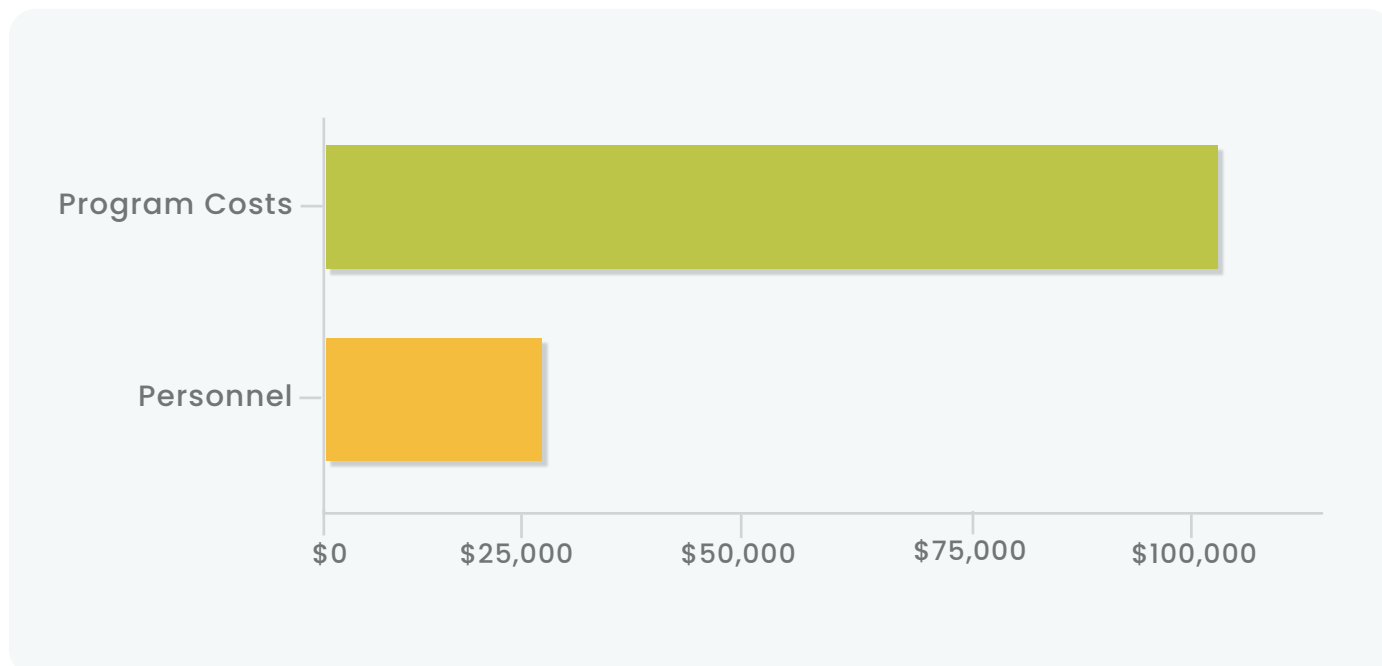
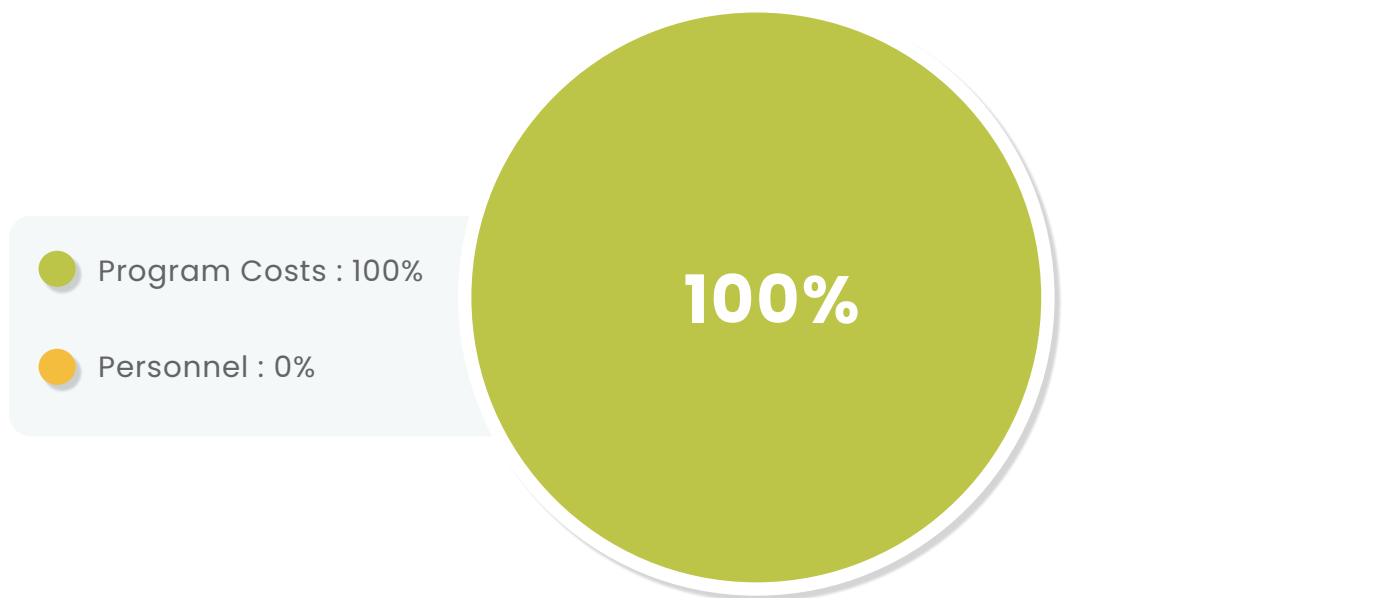


## Financial

**TOTAL BUDGET AMOUNT = \$148,004**

**Personnel - \$27,500**

**Program Costs - \$110,133**



## Our 2016 Donors

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