



2017 Annual Report



Dear Friends,

It has been an incredible year of growth for Brave Trails! Looking back at 2017, Kayla and I are amazed at all of the support we have gotten and how far Brave Trails has come. Working with the queer leaders of tomorrow is the most rewarding experience we have ever had. I am honored to be able to witness the campers' growth. We now have some campers that have been with us since day one and are now graduating from high school and going off to college!

We held camp in Wrightwood CA for our third year and we added another session to our summer. We grew to 3 weeks of camp (a 2 week session and a 1 week session). We were able to have 114 campers at camp that came from all over the country and world. We welcomed campers from 21 different states and 3 countries and we continue to have a waitlist of campers. We still have almost entirely volunteer staff, however we made the choice to pay our medical staff this year due to the difficulty in finding camp nurses. Brave Space, our monthly meetup group, is going strong. In January, we were able to hire a full-time development manager, which helped with securing funds for camp and our year-round programs. We are also very excited to announce that Kayla and Jessica were able to start to work full-time for Brave Trails in May.

Our Unicorn Justice League (UJL) is on fire! The "UJLs" are a group of older campers who are counselors in training. They take on a lot of responsibilities at camp, including running workshops for younger campers, serving as role models, and planning and executing some evening programs. Participation in the UJL program is "Invite Only" and based on past performance at camp as well as an interview process. Our UJLs have done some incredible work and we are very proud of them!



We have big plans for next year! We will be growing to 6 weeks of camp next summer and we will serve 220 campers. We have been planning more year-round programs such as weekly workshops and a mentor program in addition to continuing our monthly Brave Space program. We will be implementing these new programs in 2018. We are hoping to eliminate the wait-list next year. Lastly, in order to build our programming we will bring on a new full-time Assistant Director.

Lastly, we are truly grateful to our supporters and funders. You made it possible, with your generosity, to be able 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

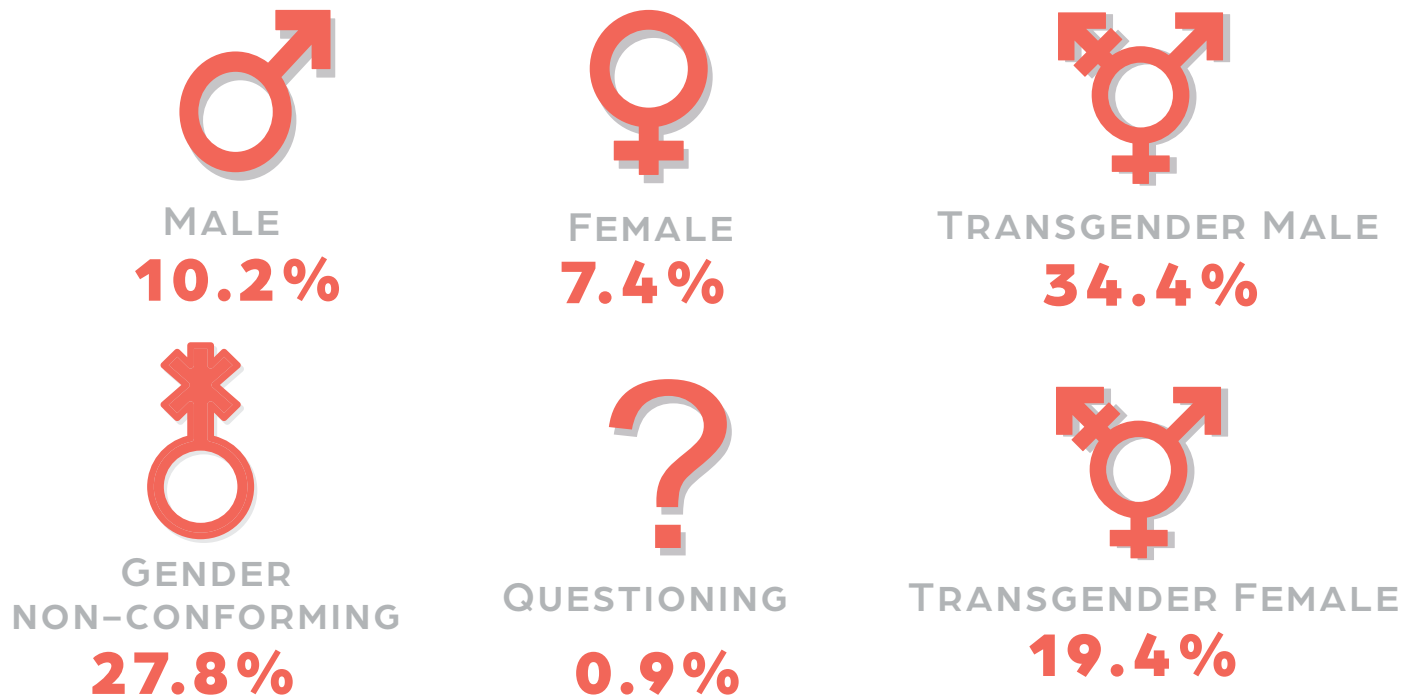
The mission of Brave Trails is transforming LGBTQ youth and families into leaders through summer camp and innovative programming. Brave Trails is more than just your average summer camp. While we have a lot of elements of a typical camp, our main focus is helping our campers grow in to the brave leaders 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

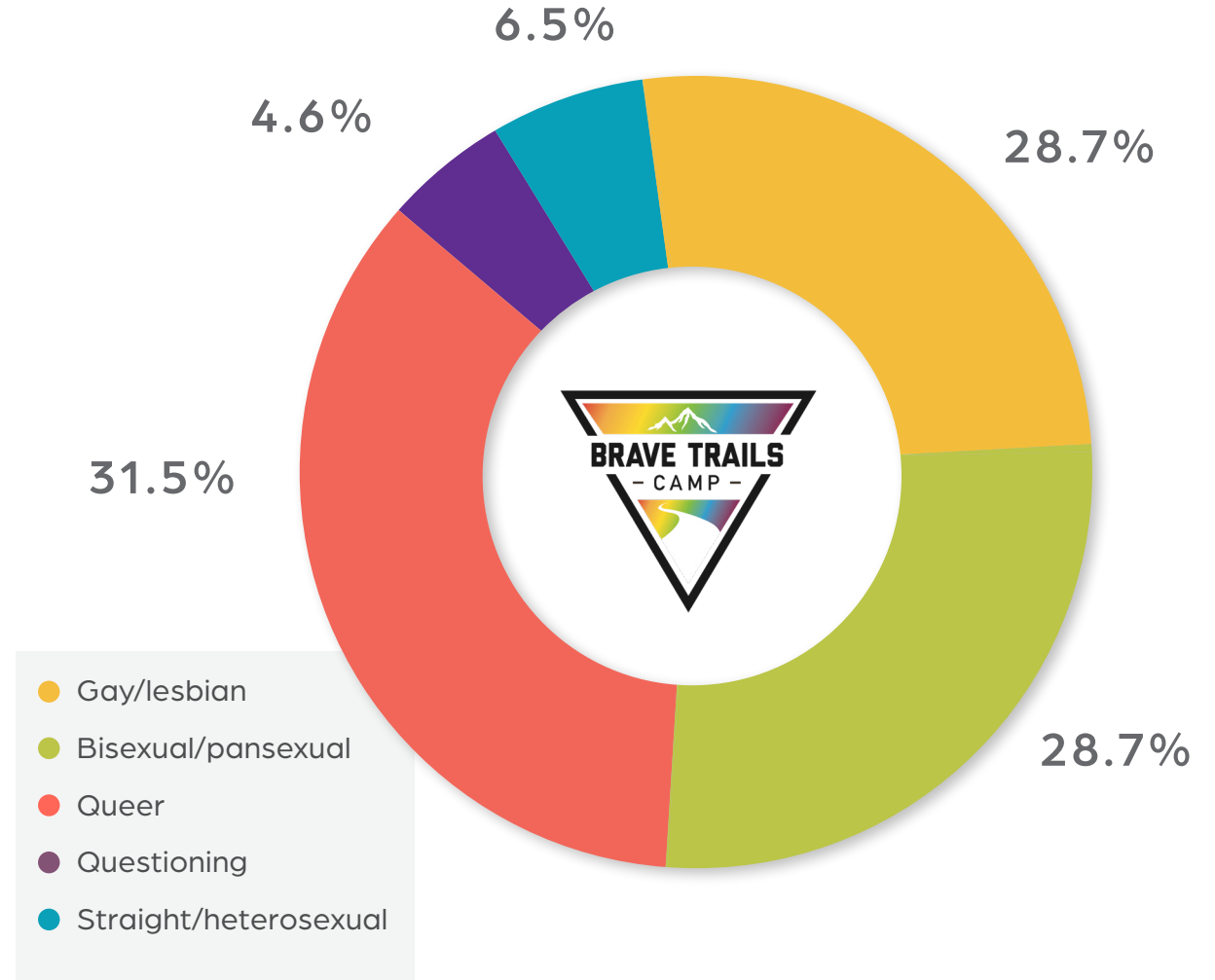
Brave Trails was formed to respond to the needs of the large and growing population of LGBTQ youth in the greater Los Angeles area, nationally and internationally. There is not a summer camp which specifically serves LGBTQ youth in leadership. We believe camp provides a unique outlet to build leadership and community while exploring the outdoors and just having some good old 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

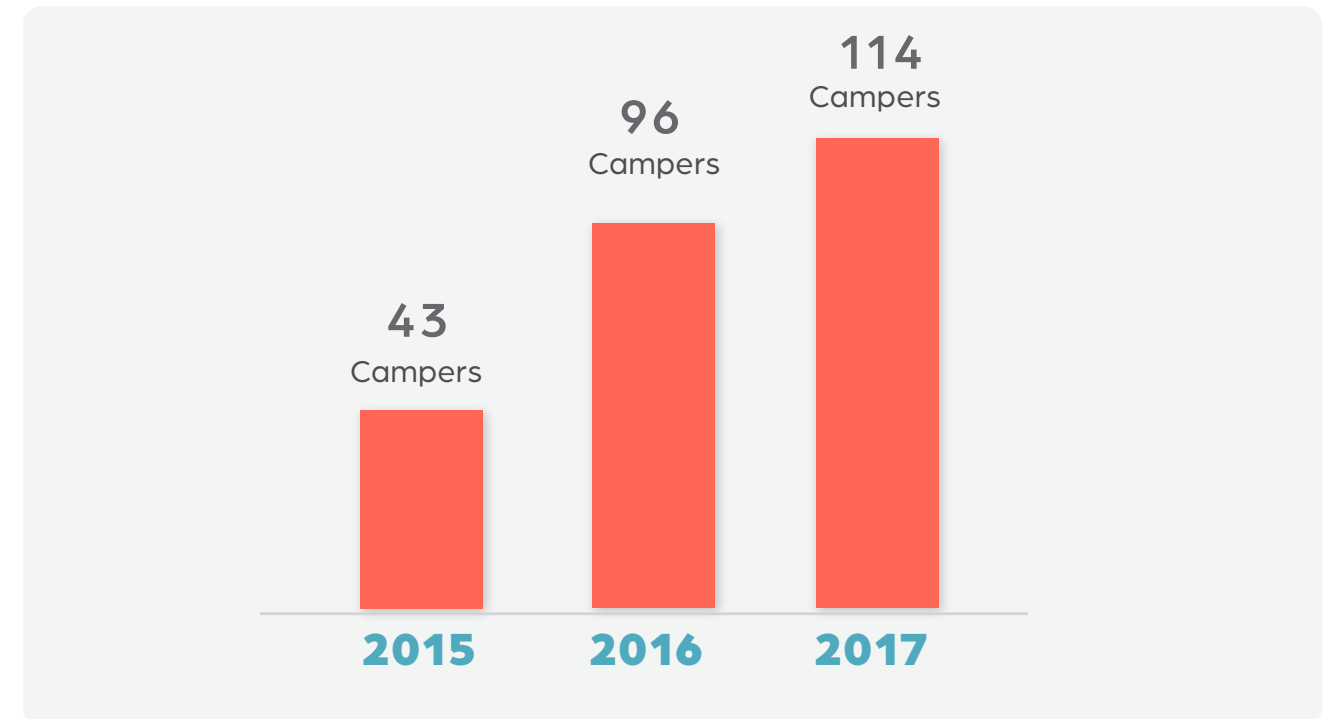
Gender Identity



Sexual Orientation



Growth

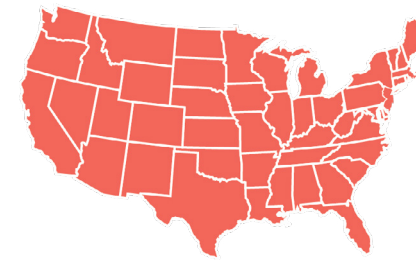


CAMP WRIGHTWOOD

Brave Trails has been fortunate to be able to call Camp Wrightwood home for the last 3 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.



3 Countries



US



POLAND



CANADA

WORKSHOP HIGHLIGHT

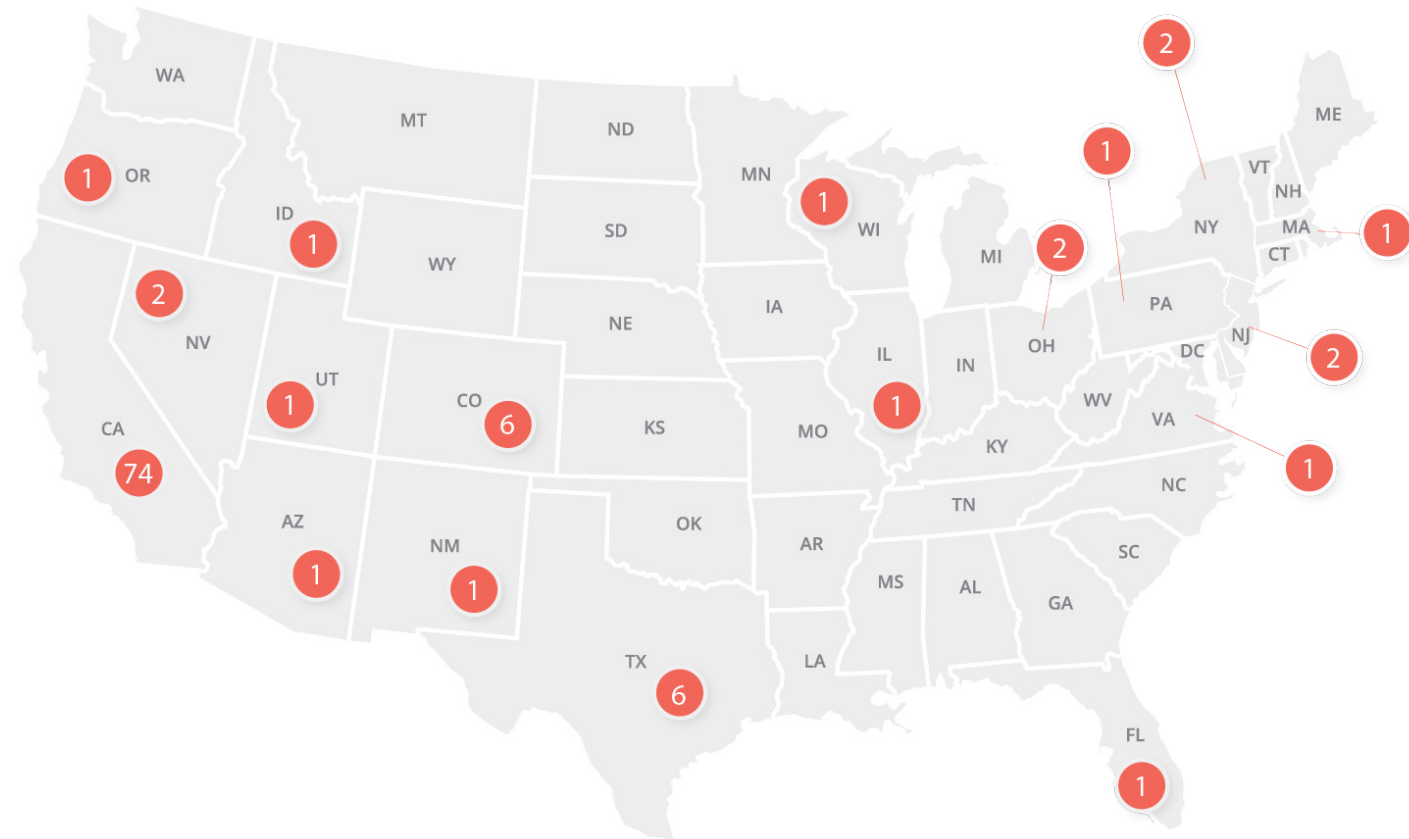
As a leadership camp, we invite community members to come to camp and facilitate leadership workshops for the campers. The campers have 5 workshops to pick from a day and we had a total of 63 workshops for our campers to choose from throughout the summer. Here are a few highlights from this summer!

"IT GETS BETTER": USING SOCIAL MEDIA TO CREATE SOCIAL CHANGE

Justin Tindall from the "It Gets Better Project" came to camp to teach our campers how to use social media to create social change. The campers learned about how the "It Gets Better Project" started and became one of the most successful social media campaigns for social change of all time. The workshop was hands-on and the campers not only were able to learn how about the project but also were able to learn how to create change through social media in their own communities.

WHERE OUR CAMPERS ARE COMING FROM

19 states



#BEAUTIFUL -- An Exploration of what is beauty and what makes us all beautiful

Brave Trails had the pleasure to have Kelsey Rose Weber facilitate a workshop on body positivity. Kelsey Rose Weber has worked as a plus size model for 4 years and works at BuzzFeed as one of their main plus size talents. In the workshop they discussed topics surrounding people's perceptions of beauty and how these ideas affect us and those around us. Kelsey and other plus size models discussed their journeys to self-love and how they navigate an ever-changing landscape of "beauty". They explored how beauty has changed and what tools they can use to practice self-love, tolerance and acceptance of what makes each of us truly unique.



CAMPER IMPACT STORIES

MAX RICHARDSON

We have had the pleasure of having Max at camp for two years now and they have grown so much in those two years. When Max arrived at camp they were very closed off, but in the past two years they have opened up so much. Max and a group of campers felt that our pool policy was unfair, because at the time the female-bodied campers had to wear a top whereas the male-bodied campers did not. Max and this group of campers took the leadership skills they had learned at camp thus far and approached the directors to explain how this was an unfair policy. They had some very valid points and because they spoke up for their rights they were able to make change and Brave Trails now has a different pool policy that is fair for everyone. The fact that Brave Trails changed a policy after they spoke up really showed the campers that they are able to go back to their communities and make change in them.



ALINA KLEPIKOVA

Alina is originally from Russia. She attended underground LGBTQ rallies and protests and was working toward making real change in her life and country. Her mother felt it was unsafe for her and her daughter to remain in Russia because of how outspoken Alina was about being LGBTQ and demanding her rights. They eventually moved to the US to seek asylum. It has been amazing to hear Alina's stories of activism and change in Russia and Brave Trails is helping her to continue making change here in the US.



STAFF HIGHLIGHT

SAUNTERRE IRISH

Brave Trails had the honor of having Saunterre be a counselor this summer at camp. Saunterre is a 68 year old trans man and he volunteered as a cabin counselor this summer. Saunterre brought a wisdom to camp that we have never had and was amazing with the campers. Many of our campers that identify as trans told the directors they were excited to meet Saunterre because, in everyday life and media, many of them don't have the opportunity to meet older trans role models. Saunterre was such a role model for our young trans campers and gave his everything to camp (even dressed in drag and performed in front of the whole camp). We know how important role models are for our campers but, we were blown away by the inspiration Saunterre provided our campers. The Brave Trails family is so lucky to have Saunterre in it.



TRACI GILLIG

Traci is a PH.D student at University of Southern California and she has been volunteering with Brave Trails since day one by doing research on Brave Trails for us. Traci has dedicated her dissertation to helping Brave Trails become a better program and validate what we do. Traci works endlessly on surveying the campers and analyzing all the data so we can use it to apply for grants and more importantly make our programs the best they can be. Through her research, we have been able to find ways to advance our programming and show folks the importance of our impact. Traci has been able to identify how role models and our programming is affecting our campers for the better. She has presented at many national conferences about Brave Trails and has published a study in an academic journal as well as been hands-on at camp as a staff member. We are so lucky to have such a highly active member on our staff! This year Traci not only did our research, she volunteered a week of her time to work on our admin team. She helped us with the back end logistics of camp and we were blown away by her organization and ability to help us create a successful program for our campers. We look forward to many more years of Traci!



FINANCIAL: YEAR-ENDED DECEMBER 2017

Revenue and Support

Program Service Revenue: **\$179,898**

Grants and Contributions: **\$79,801**

Fundraiser Revenue: **\$85,598**

Earnings from Investment: **\$29,604**

Total **\$374,901**

Expenses

Program Services: **\$311,216**

Management & Administrative: **\$19,964**

Fundraising: **\$61,234**

Total: **\$392,414**

OUR 2017 DONORS

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