

# ANNUAL REPORT

# 2018



# DEAR FRIENDS,

Wow, it has been an amazing year of learning and growth for Brave Trails. Looking back at 2018, we are amazed at all that happened and all the support we received! It has been an incredible journey so far and we were so excited to welcome some of our previous campers as staff members this year for the first time!

We moved and grew! This summer we held camp at a beautiful new site in the Angeles National Forest in Southern California. This allowed us to expand to five weeks. Also, Brave Trails piloted our first ever satellite location on the East Coast in Maryland for one week. In total we ran six weeks of camp and it was amazing! We were able to grow from 114 campers last year to 214 campers. This included campers from 28 different states and 10 countries. We continue to have Brave Space, our monthly meetup group, on both the West and East Coasts. Brave Trails has also started a mentor program where we match staff members up with campers in a year long mentorship. In this program the mentors and mentees work on life skills, social skills and a large leadership project that they will present to the directors. Brave Trails is very happy to announce that in April, we were able to hire a full-time assistant director.

Next year we will be focusing on growing our existing programs and building our East Coast community. We will also be working on expanding our year round support for campers by accepting more campers into our mentor program and having more workshops and Brave Space activities. We will be growing our capacity for our campers and aim to serve over 250 campers in 2019.

Five years ago this camp started out as a dream. It's grown from 43 campers and one week to hundreds of LGBTQ youth, six weeks, and two coasts! 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



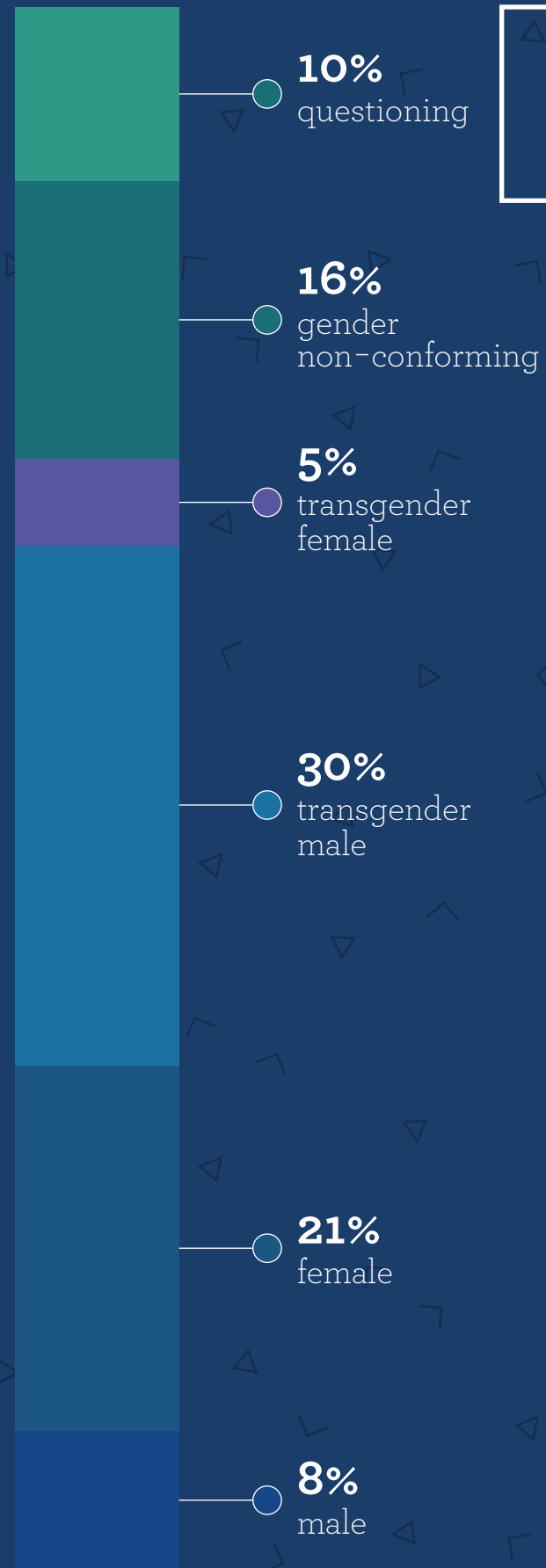
## MISSION & WHAT WE DO

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.

## 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.

### GENDER IDENTITY



6% questioning

15% queer

38% bisexual / pansexual

### SEXUAL ORIENTATION

30% gay / lesbian

9% other

2% straight / heterosexual

214

### GROWTH IN NUMBER OF CAMPERS

43

96

114

2015

2016

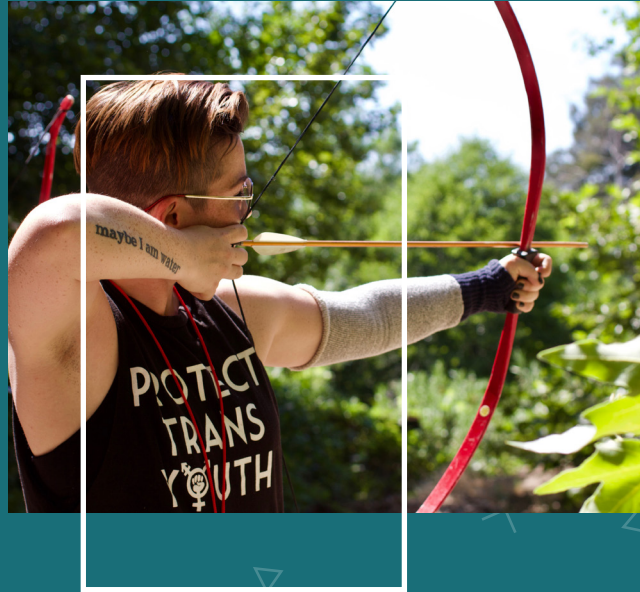
2017

2018



### CALIFORNIA CAMP

Brave Trails was sad to leave Camp Wrightwood, but is very happy to announce that we found a new home at a camp in the Angeles National Forest. Camp is located 1.5 hours outside of Los Angeles and is what you imagine camp to be: mountains, trees, and a very peaceful stream that runs right down the center of camp. The Camp directors created a safe and welcoming space for our LGBTQ+ campers and staff.



### FAMILY CAMP

This year we launched Family Camp! Family Camp is a three day weekend retreat camp for LGBTQ families. We hosted 12 families and over 50 campers at this year's inaugural event! Families' number one reason for coming: "We wanted our kids to see other families like ours." Our Brave Trails families made some incredible friendships, bonded over archery and s'mores, and created a loving space where everyone could be themselves deep in the beauty of the Angeles Forest. It was a wonderful weekend!



### MARYLAND CAMP

Brave Trails had the pleasure to work with Amy and Jonathan at their magnificent camp in Maryland this summer. Working with them is much more than just using a space, it is a partnership, and we are fortunate to work with Amy and Jonathan all year long. Amy heads up our East Coast outreach and helps us navigate the Maryland Camp. We are hoping to grow this relationship and continue it for many, many more years to come.



## SHOWCASE

As a leadership camp, we incorporate leadership skills in every program we have. This summer at Brave Trails we offered Build-On Programs, which are programs that are offered every day where campers attend and build a skill over the course of the week. The campers picked from theater, poetry, dance, drag, and outdoor adventure this summer. At the end of the week they had a chance to showcase their skills during one of our evening programs. The showcase included activist theater scenes, poetry readings, empowering drag performances and genderless dance performances as well as a “leave no trace” art project by the outdoor adventure campers. We are always amazed by the performances and art created by our campers through the Build-On Programs.



## ADVENTURE COURSE

We were fortunate enough to use the beautiful camp facilities in Maryland and that includes an incredible high ropes adventure course. For the first time in 4 years we were able to offer a high ropes leadership adventure course for our campers. It is hard to participate in the high ropes and our campers really encouraged each other and made sure they all worked together to succeed.





**EMILY KIENY**

Emily started at camp in 2015 (our first year), when she was 14 years old. It has been amazing to watch her grow over the years starting out as a camper and then becoming a Unicorn Justice League (counselor in training) member. Throughout Emily's time at camp she has led leadership workshops for campers, helped plan evening programs, worked in a cabin with younger campers and always stepped up to help where she was needed. Emily is the heart and soul of Brave Trails and is an amazing mentor to younger campers. Her leadership skills have grown through her time at Brave Trails and the skills she has learned helped her get into Puget Sound University. We are so sad that last summer was her last year as a camper but are so excited that she is going to join us summer of 2019 as a staff member.



**NORA GRANT**

Nora came to camp in 2016 as a 13 year-old, who felt very alone and confused about her gender and sexual orientation. Her experience at Brave Trails has helped her start her journey to being ok with herself. She stated in her first application that she wasn't able to be herself and that she didn't feel safe. The growth we saw in Nora from her first summer at camp to the second was astounding. She came back to camp in 2017 as a different person, she was now the president of her Gender and Sexuality Alliance (GSA) at her school and was helping educate her community about the LGBTQ community. Nora takes the skills she learns at Brave Trails, leadership, commitment and responsibility, and applies them to her life at home. This past year she was on the tennis team, a cheerleader, has a part-time job with younger kids and plans on being in plays at school. Nora has stated that she wouldn't have the confidence to do these things if it wasn't for Brave Trails, supporting her to be her true self.





**RAE**

We were so honored to have one of our previous campers come back to camp this summer as a cabin counselor. Rae was one of our first campers to graduate the Unicorn Justice League (Camper In Leadership) program and become a cabin counselor. Rae identifies as non-binary and since their time as a camper, Rae enrolled at San Francisco State University majoring in Communication & LGBT Studies. Rae has become a huge activist in the San Francisco community, including spending their time volunteering for the Human Rights Campaign and running a poetry drop in space. It was an honor to have them at camp this summer as they helped lead our Passion To Action program and Poetry Build-On program. Rae has become such an impactful young leader and has truly inspired our campers to fight for equality.

**CHARMY**

Charmy joined us this summer for their 2nd year on staff. Charmy has become a fierce influencer of our campers. As a non-binary drag queen, Charmy teaches campers that everyone can use the art of drag to help heal wounds of gender identity and norms. Charmy took on the additional roles of managing our Unicorn Justice League program and Head Counselor. They are a perfect example of what we look for in our staff members - enthusiasm, kindness, and commitment to the betterment of folks in our community. Through camp, Charmy has discovered they would like to do more for the LGBTQ+ community and is now attending Pacifica Graduate Institute for clinical psychology and their hope is to provide a safer future for LGBTQ+ youth. We are so excited to see how Charmy continues to impact more communities like Brave Trails.





## FINANCIAL REPORT

In mid-2018, we made the decision to change our Fiscal Year to better align with our programming year. Our new Fiscal Year runs from September 1st through August 31st. This means the tax return filed for 2018 was a shortened filing period of January through August 2018. The financial information enclosed in this Annual Report is reflective of those numbers. Our 2019 Annual Report will cover from September 2018 through August 2019.

### JANUARY 2018 - AUGUST 2018

#### REVENUE & SUPPORT

Program Service Revenue	\$259,062
Grants & Contributions	\$65,440
Fundraiser Revenue	\$37,007
Earnings from Investment	\$24,072
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$385,581</b>

#### EXPENSES

Program Services	\$247,889
Management & Administrative	\$21,374
Fundraising	\$31,364
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$300,627</b>



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