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The Upswing Fund

for Adolescent
Mental Health

This November, we recognized [Transgender Awareness Week](#) and [International Survivors of Suicide Loss Day](#). As we approach the upcoming holiday season, it is important that we honor the strength and resiliency of those who may find this time of year challenging.

In this newsletter, learn about new resources to support families and caregivers of LGBTQ+ youth, new funding opportunities, and upcoming events.

Follow us on [Twitter](#), [LinkedIn](#), and [YouTube](#) to catch all of our latest updates.



Family Acceptance Project*

LGBTQ YOUTH & FAMILY RESOURCES

To Decrease Mental Health Risks & Promote Well Being

The Family Acceptance Project launches first of its kind online resource for LGBTQ youth and families

With support from The Upswing Fund, and in collaboration with the

Institute for Innovation & Implementation, the Family Acceptance Project launched a national, integrated online resource to help LGBTQ Youth and Families find services and increase support for youth.

Resources accessible through the new site include: support services for LGBTQ youth; peer support for parents, caregivers, and families; LGBTQ community centers; LGBTQ health clinics; gender clinics; school supports; affirming faith-based organizations and resources; and a national list of culture-based resources for ethnically and racially diverse LGBTQ communities.

Dr. Caitlin Ryan, Director of the Family Acceptance Project, noted:

“Although awareness has increased significantly of the risks that LGBTQ youth experience, there is still widespread lack of understanding of the essential role of family support in protecting against mental health risks and increasing well-being for LGBTQ youth.

Our social media and online resources will help educate parents and caregivers on the compelling impact of family rejecting and accepting behaviors on their child’s risk for suicide, drug use and other serious health risks.

Simple changes in how families respond to their LGBTQ children can make a powerful difference in preventing risk and building healthy futures. As families gather for the holidays this year, we are releasing this new resource to help decrease isolation and increase support for both LGBTQ youth and their families.”

Apply to MTV's Mental Health Youth Action Forum!

MTV Entertainment and 18 leading nonprofits are hosting the first convening with the White House to empower young people to use storytelling and media to drive mental health actions.

Visit [MHyouthactionforum.com](https://mhyouthactionforum.com) to learn more & apply by **12/15!**

**Mental Health
is Health**



Deadline for MTV's Mental Health Action Forum extended to Dec. 15!

The Upswing Fund is one of 18 non-profit partners in MTV's first-ever Mental Health Youth Action Forum, taking place in early 2022. This initiative seeks to empower young people to support positive mental health and well-being for themselves and their peers. The convening will center the conversation on young people's solutions for using storytelling and media to drive mental health action in their communities. Learn about why this opportunity is important to our team at The Upswing Fund [here](#).

Youth (aged 18+) will have the opportunity to take part in a 4-6 week program (2-3 hours/week) to develop their ideas for mental health action in small groups under the mentorship of mental health experts. The program will culminate in a 2-day forum in Washington D.C. where youth will be invited to present their ideas at a White House event. **Interested youth can [read more](#) and [apply here](#). Deadline: December 15th.**

Partner Spotlight: Girls Write Now

This November, we're highlighting [Girls Write Now](#) (New York, NY), a mentoring organization that elevates diverse youth voices with a focus on equity and wellness.



Photo credit: Richelle Szypulski featuring current Girls Write Now mentor Anáis Fernández, presenting her work "Passenger's Library".

About Our Work:

Girls Write Now is a powerhouse of voices that have been ignored or silenced for too long, and a pipeline of talent into schools and industries in need of different perspectives. As a community, we follow our hearts and—through bold, authentic storytelling—inspire people to open theirs. For 25 years, Girls Write Now has been breaking down barriers of gender, race, age and poverty to mentor the next generation of writers and leaders who are impacting businesses, shaping culture and creating change.

Girls Write Now serves a culturally and educationally diverse community of girls and gender-expansive youth (mentees):

- 90% of color
- 90% high need
- 75% immigrant or first-generation, and
- 25% LGBTQ+/gender-expansive.

These young adults, who have long been systemically deprived of resources and opportunities in public schools, face significant challenges to educational and professional success and are more vulnerable to mental health illnesses like depression, anxiety, self-harm, eating disorders, suicidal ideation, and more.

Girls and gender-expansive teens of color are rarely given the guidance,

care, and support they need to gain confidence in their talents and accomplishments, graduate from high school, and access viable college or career opportunities, perpetuating cycles of poverty and disempowerment. Girls Write Now is uniquely positioned to help correct these longstanding inequalities.

Support from The Upswing Fund has helped launch Girls Write Now's "Writing Our Way to Wellness" Initiative—episodic wellness writing activities nearly every day of the week: Writing Works Wednesdays, Thursday Community Chats, Friday Night Salons, and Saturday 360 Series, plus our spring Girls Write Now Live Performance Series and our seasonal Awards ceremonies.

Through varied events that cover a range of genres, media, and platforms, Wellness informs the content, format, tone, and frequency of our activities. At Writing Works workshops with our corporate partners, mentors and youth alike work through the emotions of their day in order to think and write clearly, exchanging letters and multi-generational advice. At our performance series, mentees give “mini master classes” on self-care, climate justice, empathy, and activism. Wellness Wednesdays and Community Chats are weekly deep-dives that include therapeutic writing, breathing and movement exercises, and a chance for mentees to reflect on recent events around racial violence and the Black Lives Matter movement, the pandemic, and the election through writing and discussion. Each workshop supports the individual while building community, and is led by a professional woman and gender-expansive writer.

Recent Success:

At our [Girls Write Now Awards](#) we celebrated the incredible mentees and mentee alums who are sharing their different perspectives, healing communities, and passing on their craft, including Kat Jagi (Girls Write Now Mentee Alum, Current Mentor and Editorial Assistant at Alloy Entertainment); Julia Mercado (Girls Write Now Mentee Alum, Summer Associate at Meredith's Real Simple and Talent Coordinator at Hearst); Tiffani Ren (Girls Write Now Mentee Alum, Current Mentor and Marketing Assistant at Penguin Random House).

[Learn how to support Girls Write Now](#)

Funding Opportunities

Nationwide:

- [It Gets Better Project's 50 States, 50 Grants Initiative](#). This funding opportunity seeks to support school-based projects that uplift, connect, and empower LGBTQ+ youth in all 50 states. This initiative will provide up to \$10,000 to one project in each of the 50 U.S. states. See website for eligibility, application details, and sample projects. **Deadline: February 10th.**

Mid-Atlantic:

- [Morgan Stanley's Strategy Challenge](#). This funding opportunity will provide cash grants ranging from \$5,000 - \$25,000 to non-profits in New York and Baltimore. The opportunity will also include a 10-week consulting project for 9 selected non-profits, as well as pro bono volunteer hours from Morgan Stanley employees to strengthen an organization's capacity and impact. **Deadline: December 14th at 5:00 PM EST.**

Midwest:

- [Akron Community Foundation's Gay Community Fund](#). This funding opportunity serves to support programs that improve the health and well-being of the LGBTQ+ community in the Greater Akron area of Ohio. **Deadline: December 15th.**
- [William Swanston Charitable Fund's Children First Initiative](#). This grant opportunity will support innovative projects that prevent or reduce risk factors for disparities in the health and wellness, education, and services access of children in the Mahoning and Trumbull counties of Ohio. Please see their [flyer](#) for more details. **Deadline: January 1st.**

Resources & Tools

- **(Guide)** [Things to Consider when your LGBTQ+ Clients Plan to Attend Family Gatherings](#). Ahead of the holiday season, the [Center for Excellence LGBTQ+ Behavioral Health Equity](#) and the [University of Maryland Institute for Innovation and Implementation](#) have prepared this guide for clinicians describing the potentially non-affirming behaviors and narratives

that LGBTQ+ clients may face when traveling home and recommendations for how to help support them.

- **(Video)** [Fablevision's "The Reflection in Me."](#) This short video from [Fablevision](#) depicts a conversation between a young person and their reflection, celebrating their beauty, kindness, and talents. The video has been recommended as a resource to help build children's self-esteem and help them see their strengths and talents, developing self-love and confidence.
- **(Website)** [Resources for Transgender Youth in Texas.](#) This resource hub walks transgender youth, their families, and allies in Texas through the state of trans rights in Texas and includes their Free to Be Me toolkit on protecting LGBTQIA+ students' rights.
- **(Guide)** [Surviving Suicide Loss: Resource and Healing Guide.](#) This comprehensive guide from [American Foundation for Suicide Prevention](#) serves as an empathetic and supportive resource for those who have experienced suicide loss. The guide can also serve as an important resource for providers to inform their work with those impacted by suicide loss.
- **(Guide)** [Consensus Approach and Recommendations for the Creation of a Comprehensive Crisis Response System.](#) Authored by 15 leading organizations in the mental health space, this guide serves as a roadmap for a national response to the mental health crisis. It details recommendations and pillars for supporting our mental health care infrastructure, including the upcoming 988 national mental health crisis hotline.
- **(Toolkit)** [Speaking the Same Language: A Toolkit for Strengthening Patient-Centered Addiction Care in the United States.](#) Developed by the [American Society of Addiction Medicine](#) and [Well Being Trust](#), this toolkit serves to elevate the need for adopting a common framework for addiction care, educate stakeholders about the diverse strategies and tools available, and empower those seeking to build sustainable, quality, and integrated addiction treatment systems.

Upcoming Events

Times listed in event host's time zone

- **(Virtual Conference) December 8th - 10th. OutSummit 2021.** [Register here.](#)
 - Hosted by OutRight Action International and CUNY School of Law, this annual global conference brings people across civil society, State, and private sectors to prioritize the human rights of LGBTIQ+ people. This year's schedule includes discussions on media and LGBTIQ+ equality, social activism, queering philanthropy, SOGIE change efforts, and more! General and Organization Admission tickets are \$25 and there are free tickets for students, activists, and media/press.
- **(Webinar) 2:00 PM EST, December 9th. Providing Affirming Services to LGBTQ+ Youth Experiencing Homelessness.** [Register here.](#)
 - The Homeless and Housing Resource Center (HHRC) and SAMHSA's Center of Excellence on LGBTQ+ Behavioral Health Equity will present an engaging panel discussion about affirmative services and supports for LGBTQ+ youth experiencing homelessness. For providers working in housing and homelessness, knowing about the unique experiences of LGBTQ+ people is essential in providing quality and appropriate care. This panel will discuss the unique needs of the population, and ways providers and clinicians can provide supportive and affirming care.
- **(Summit) December 13th - 15th. The Sozosei Foundation's 2nd Annual Summit to Decriminalize Mental Illness.** [Register here.](#)
 - This free, global conference brings together mental health care providers, experts, leaders, those with lived experience, advocates, artists, and funders to collaborate and explore pathways to decriminalize mental illness, with a particular focus on the upcoming 988 national mental health crisis line set to go live in July 2022. The conference is held in Philadelphia, PA, but many portions of the conference will be live-streamed for those attending around the country and world.

Partners in the News

Dr. Alfie Breland-Noble of The AAKOMA Project featured in Lady Gaga's short film

"The Power of Kindness"

THE POWER OF KINDNESS



Lady Gaga [released her short film "The Power of Kindness"](#) on November 13th to coincide with World Kindness day. The 30-minute film supported by the [Born This Way Foundation](#) features [Dr. Alfiee Breland-Noble](#) (Upswing Advisor and Founder and Director of [The AAKOMA Project](#)) as a resident expert who speaks with 11 young people sharing their personal mental health stories. The film elevates the real mental health experiences of young people and provides a positive space for breaking down stigma. See the video and read about the Born This Way Foundation's Channel Kindness project [here](#).

Doc Wayne Youth Services partners with The Village and ESPN to advance mental health initiatives for youth through sports



DOC WAYNE



[Doc Wayne Youth Services](#) (Boston, MA) partners with [The Village](#), a non-profit in Hartford, CT, and [ESPN](#) to [empower youth and uplift their well-being through sports programs](#). Doc Wayne's evidence-based programs support youth 5 - 18 years old and take place out in the gym or the field, instead of a clinical setting. Through their [Champions Network](#) training arm, Doc Wayne has extended their impact training organizations in 25 countries, impacting nearly 68,000 youth. Now, The Village (with the support of ESPN) is among those organizations being trained by Doc Wayne.

We Are Family's Gabby Mullins advocates for inclusion of LGBTQ+ books in South Carolina school libraries



Gabby Mullins, Office and Volunteer Coordinator of [We Are Family](#) (Charleston, SC), [recently advocated for the inclusion of LGBTQ+ centered books and narratives in public school libraries](#). There has been a recent increase in parent, educator, and politician calls for [banning books containing content surrounding LGBTQ+ issues and race-related topics](#) from public school libraries across the United States. Among these novels under fire is [Maia Kobabe's Gender Queer: A Memoir](#), which has now been pulled from two high school libraries in South Carolina. However, Gabby Mullins explains the importance of including literature that represents and explores diverse identities, explaining that "[...] A lot of those kids, if they don't feel like they have anyone in their school that's like them, books can be a way to say, 'Oh, I'm not alone.'"

Mount Sinai Health Systems announced opening of new Center for Transgender Medicine and Surgery Space



[Mount Sinai Health Systems](#), whose [Adolescent Health Center](#) is a partner of The Upswing Fund, [announced the opening of their new Center for Transgender Medicine and Surgery](#) at the start of November. The center offers a safe environment dedicated to serving transgender individuals and youth in a culturally responsive and accessible way. Mount Sinai aims to alleviate waitlists and streamline patient services with this additional space. Clients can choose to receive their primary care with the Center or use it for specialist services and personalized surgical care. The Center for Transgender Medicine and Surgery has also developed the [first full-year fellowship to train providers in gender-affirming psychiatric care](#), working to elevate trans health care services as an educational priority and increase the number of providers prepared to comprehensively serve trans individuals and youth.

If you would like to be considered to be featured in our monthly newsletter or have exciting news and/or accomplishments to share, please reach out to Sierra at upswing@panoramaglobal.org.

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