

SPRING 2020



SidebySideYouth.org



The mission of Side by Side is to walk with youth impacted by adversity toward a future with connection and meaning.



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LETTER FROM MARY



Dear Friends,

As you can imagine, I have been working intently with my team at Side by Side as the coronavirus pandemic has unfolded. With shelter-in-place restrictions for all of California now in place, life has become challenging and stressful for everyone.

Against the backdrop of this pandemic, Side by Side is commemorating its 125th anniversary this year. When a group of civic-minded women started an orphanage in San Anselmo in 1895, they couldn't possibly have imagined the vital and diverse agency this organization has become. Those founders may very well have helped what was then the San Francisco Presbyterian Orphanage and Farm (yes, our original name!) through the 1918 influenza pandemic, so I believe they would have sympathy for the challenges that we face today. Managing through times of crisis is in our DNA.

From an orphanage that served 100 children in Marin County, we now reach over 2,500 youth and their families across the Bay Area. At Side by Side, as a provider of essential social services, we are endeavoring to offer the maximum assistance that we can to the vulnerable young people we serve and our larger community in these unprecedented circumstances. Please see the facing page for a description of current services provided by each of our programs.

This month, we're sharing with you more about the Our Space LGBTQ program we offer in Alameda County. The program has reached its 10th anniversary this year and I hope that you'll join me in wishing Our Space a very happy birthday. It is a small program with just two staff members, but their reach is deep and their fierce passion for the youth they serve is an honor to witness. Even with the shelter-in-place restrictions, the Our Space staff have been working tirelessly to make sure their young people are supported.

We meet our young people exactly where they are. We work with them to heal from trauma they may have suffered previously and provide coping strategies to handle the additional stress that our youth currently face. That's been our job for 125 years and our clients need us now more than ever. Whether orphans from the turn of the 19th century, or queer and trans youth today in the East Bay, and through pandemics and misfortune, Side by Side will continue our unwavering commitment to the young people we serve.

However, we are struggling to access the full extent of our traditional government funding as our clients' lives and our service delivery models are disrupted — even as we rapidly transition to video therapy and remote learning. Our clinicians are also deeply aware of the financial struggles that our clients and their families face, which only exacerbate their mental health challenges.

This is an extraordinary situation that we are all trying to weather — and your support is crucial to our ability to meet the needs of our young people in the coming months. Please consider donating to our Relief Fund today by mailing in a contribution or making a gift online at SidebySideYouth.org/donate.

With my deep and ongoing thanks,

Mary Denton, CEO

AGENCY NEWS

New Board Member

Side by Side welcomed Josh Corren to the agency's Board of Directors as of April 1. Josh is the General Manager for One Toyota of Oakland and has been increasingly engaged with Side by Side through One Toyota's sponsorship of our SHINDIG fundraising event in Alameda County and his participation on our Development & Communications Committee. Josh has also supported the Lend a Hand Foundation (Oakland) and Sky's the Limit Fund (Milpitas).

Upcoming Side by Side Events

QUEER LOVE YOUTH PRIDE

Postponed until the summer

BANK OF MARIN GOLF TOURNAMENT

Monday, June 22 @ Meadow Club, Fairfax

REACH FOR THE STARS GALA

Saturday, September 19

GLENWOOD GUILD BINGO DINNER

Saturday, October 10

THE IMPACT OF COVID-19 ON SIDE BY SIDE'S PROGRAMS

Side by Side is doing the utmost we can to minimize the spread of the coronavirus while meeting the needs of our clients and their families. All administrative staff able to work remotely are doing so and all non-essential in-person meetings have been suspended. To the fullest extent possible, we are maintaining continuity of service for our young people through phone or video sessions and electronic instruction. In-person meetings with youth at their home or at our offices are being offered if absolutely necessary. If a client or family member is ill, phone or video sessions are being used in place of in-person visits.

Please understand that this is a fluid and ever-changing situation and our response evolves accordingly. For up-to-date program information, visit SidebySideYouth.org/coronavirus.

Community Counseling

Marin, Alameda, Sonoma, and Napa clients are being served through phone, video or in-person visits. Sonoma school-based clients (prior to the school closures) were referred for phone or video-based services.

Irene M. Hunt School

Hunt School will be closed for onsite instruction at least through May 1. Individualized online learning is available remotely to all students with internet connections. For students without internet access, teachers are providing a weekly hard copy package that will be delivered to the student. Therapeutic services are being offered via phone sessions complimented by remotely accessed video instruction.

Our Space

Clients are being served primarily through phone and video sessions. The Community Center drop-in hours on Wednesday afternoons are suspended until further notice, however virtual meet-ups are being explored in their place. The Queer Love Youth Pride youth cabaret performance will be postponed to a later date.

Real Alternatives

Youth are being supported via phone sessions or in-person visits by their Clinical Case Managers and Youth Specialists. All youth have been educated on hand hygiene and social distancing.

TAY Space

All full-service clients are being served via phone or in-person visits. The TAY Space drop-in center is closed during the shelter-in-place restrictions. Youth should call the office at 415-870-9298 if they need food, support, or housing and we will address their needs through other means.

YouThrive

YouThrive in-school group sessions are suspended until schools in Sonoma and Marin re-open. Regular online group sessions have been started and staff are also engaging clients through individual texts and calls, as well as creative alternate methods such as a PlayStation-based online FIFA soccer tournament.

OUR SPACE PROGRAM SPOTLIGHT

For many young people who identify as lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, and/or questioning, it can feel like no place is safe. LGBTQ youth experience significantly higher rates of harassment and abuse – as well as poverty, homelessness, and involvement in the child welfare and juvenile justice systems – than their straight peers. They contemplate suicide three times more than heterosexual youth and 40% of transgender youth attempt suicide.

For ten years, Our Space has been a vibrant safe space for LGBTQ youth ages 13-24 and is the only LGBTQ provider in South Alameda County. Through the county, Our Space receives referrals for disconnected LGBTQ youth in the foster system who are at risk of further isolation and possible homelessness because of their sexual orientation, gender identity, or gender expression. Many of the youth are in complex relationships with their families. Others don't feel safe or are closeted at home, and current shelter-in-place restrictions exacerbate those issues.

Typically, Our Space provides 1:1 weekly counseling and case management. Working with a family counselor, Our Space also helps to reunite youth with their families whenever possible, supporting the youth in advocating for themselves while educating families. The Our Space community center offers a food pantry and a gender-affirming clothing closet.



QUEER LOVE
YOUTH PRIDE

Each year, the Our Space program celebrates LGBTQ interconnectedness, performance, and brilliance with our community event, Queer Love Youth Pride. Rescheduled for later this year when the coronavirus restrictions pass, Queer Love Youth Pride: Enchanted Forest will showcase original songs, poems, art, and dances by current and former Our Space youth as well supporters in the community.

With social distancing and the community center closed, staff is keeping tabs on youth through phone calls, texts, and virtual drop-in hours. "Our youth have often experienced a significant amount of trauma," says program manager Diego Basdeo Fitzgerald. "Creating a place where they can relax and feel supported is one of the most important things we do. Even if we can't see them in person, we still need to be there for them."

In normal times – through mobile peer support groups in schools, detention centers, and clinics – Our Space supports the personal and social development of LGBTQ youth, teaches them about their rights, builds self-esteem, and mitigates depression, anxiety, and suicidal ideation. Our Space also offers training for other providers working with LGBTQ youth to deepen their understanding of challenges faced by LGBTQ youth, and is the only organization in Northern California to do so.

When the pandemic is behind us, the Our Space staff looks forward to resuming full program activities. In the meantime, they are virtually offering wholehearted, fierce love for every queer and trans young person they work with.

Our Space Funders

Side by Side gratefully thanks the following supporters:

Bay Area Physicians for Human Rights
Gaylesta, The Psychotherapist Association for
Gender and Sexual Diversity
Horizons Foundation
Eden Medical Center | Sutter Health

Held at the Humanist Hall in Oakland, the cabaret-style performance will be organized by the youth participants, with the generous support of stipends provided by SBS board member Byrd Baldwin, and offers a deeply personal and creative outlet for young people to describe their journeys of isolation and acceptance, rejection and self-love, trauma and healing.

"Queer Love Youth Pride is an incredible evening where not only do our youth shine, but also where so many intersections of the work that we do come together. A lot of the work we do is behind closed doors to honor the safety and confidentiality of our young people, so to have such a moment of celebration and mutual support is a very special and unique joy for us,"

Diego Basdeo Fitzgerald, Our Space program manager

Stay tuned for an announcement of this year's date – and please join us!! To see clips from past Queer Love performances and interviews with the youth involved in our program, visit <https://vimeo.com/329659215>.



CLIENT & PROVIDER PROFILE

Our Space Youth Advocate, Jennifer Alvarez, began working with Selena*, a 15-year-old youth who identifies as transgender, in 2019. Selena was placed into foster care due to hostility at home related to her gender identity and had suffered a great deal of trauma. Now, only a year later, Selena is already planning for the future and a possible reunification with her mother.

With Jennifer

Side by Side: What were your first impressions of Selena?

Jennifer: When Selena first came to Our Space, she had been through so much trauma and rejection because of how she presented to society. She did not feel comfortable within herself and she did not feel self-love. She told me that she didn't care about her body, so people would take advantage of that. She was suicidal.

SBS: How do you see her now?

Jennifer: Selena is amazing, and so resilient. She has gone through a lot of challenges that young people don't usually have to face, and she is determined that she will come out better than before. I am really impressed with Selena's maturity level. She is very insightful about her own feelings and emotions, and also those of other people. She is able to understand complex situations and how these various feelings and emotions can create either harmful or positive outcomes. She also has a lot of self-confidence and self-love now that she did not have when she first came into the program.

SBS: How is the COVID-19 pandemic impacting your ability to work with Selena?

Jennifer: We've been chatting on the phone and playing games through iMessage. It's so important to me that she feels supported in these crazy times.

SBS: What do you see for Selena in the future?

Jennifer: Once we get through the current crisis, I think Selena has so much to look forward to in her future. I've been doing a lot of advocating with Selena's mom to move towards tolerance with the goal of acceptance. I just learned that the two of them are planning for a reunification soon! I am so happy for her. I see Selena getting back into high school, and I see her attending college. I see her finding a job, developing independent skills and helping to support her family. I see for her a future where she is happy and comfortable in her own skin. She is very creative and loves designing things. I see her going to school and doing something in design.

SBS: What have you learned from Selena?

Jennifer: I have learned how to be less critical of myself. Watching this young person who was extremely self-critical and was able to pivot so quickly to self-love has helped me to go easier on myself, and to stop demanding perfection from myself.

With Selena

Side by Side: How were you feeling about yourself when you first came to Our Space?

Selena: Before I came to Our Space, I experienced only hatred, rejection, and hostility about my gender identity – at home and at school. It was scary and I didn't feel safe. I felt really alone. I did not feel comfortable with myself, and I definitely did not love myself. I felt a lot of shame and I thought a lot about suicide..

SBS: What do you feel now?

Selena: Our Space helped me see that those events that happened before shaped me into the person I am today. Today, I love myself and I don't take myself for granted. Whoever is going to love me today is going to understand that I have boundaries, and if they don't respect those boundaries, then that is not love. And today I have hope and I'm actually excited about the future!

SBS: What have you learned from Jennifer?

Selena: It's OK to feel vulnerable and to feel stuck. Everyone feels stuck sometimes. Jennifer taught me how to focus on the efforts we can take to feel unstuck. She also taught me about how to practice self-love. It's something I'm still practicing but I'm getting much better at it!

SBS: How has Our Space made a difference for you?

Selena: Our Space feels like home to me. Without fear of judgment, I was able to be myself. I've never felt something like that, something so close to my heart. Jennifer advocated for me at school when I was being bullied and the school didn't stand up for me. It felt good knowing an adult cared enough to fight for me. I learned a lot from that. It's also helped me to have mentors in Our Space that I share a cultural background with and can speak Spanish with, in addition to being transgender themselves.

SBS: What do you see for yourself now and in the future?

Selena: I'm hoping to go back to school when I re-unify with my mom. I also really want to get a job so I can work, stay out of trouble, and be more independent.

**Name changed to protect the privacy of our client.*



Bruce Raabe

Side by Side supporter Bruce Raabe leads a Mill Valley wealth management firm, Relevant Wealth Advisors, which has been a key supporter of Side by Side's Bank of Marin Golf Tournament and Reach for the Stars Gala. Bruce served on the organization's board from 2003-2009 and has continued to be a cheerleader for Side by Side's evolution and growth over the years. We sat down with him recently to find out why.

Side by Side: Tell me about your first introduction to our organization?

Bruce: One of my neighbors, Marita Daly, was on the Board and she recommended that I check in with (what was then) Sunny Hills. I got excited about the great work that the organization was doing, and I joined the Board at that point.

SBS: You were a member of the Board for six years – what is your proudest moment during that tenure?

Bruce: Mental health services are an area for which it's hard to attract funding. At that time, there was a significant capital investment in residential programs. By redeploying those resources, I feel like the agency was able to develop a new leaner business model that benefits and impacts ten times more people. If you think about the 75 kids who lived in those houses versus the number of clients served today, I feel it was a great decision.

SBS: What's kept you engaged with Side by Side over the years?

Bruce: Unfortunately, I think the demand for SBS's services is growing in our community. Knowing how successful the agency is, and how committed the leadership team is, it's rewarding to be a small part of what Side by Side does. The agency is so efficient with the money they receive and the benefits are so tangible, I can't imagine another agency leveraging our support more effectively.

SBS: What aspect of the work that Side by Side does do you find the most meaningful?

Bruce: There's not one particular category, but Side by Side addresses a space that our society is currently not adequately serving. County agencies have their role and do the best that they can, but they don't have the agility to deal with the different populations the way Side by

Side can – and in a much more compassionate and effective way. What's impressive about Side by Side is that it has a very diverse client base but fundamentally all these kids are dealing with life-changing challenges. Side by Side is with them every step of the way. It's easy to justify supporting your organization because of its direct impact. I believe it's our obligation to help those who are struggling to rise up.

SBS: You were one of the leading cheerleaders for Side by Side's rebranding in 2018 – why...and how do you feel about the new(ish) name and the reshaped brand identity?

Bruce: I feel the new brand is fresh and exciting. It's worthwhile for every organization to revisit their mission and business model, and rebranding can be a part of that. I think it's great that you took the time to be thoughtful about the rebranding to make sure the new name resonated with all of your stakeholders. Now you can focus on the next 125 years!

SBS: After the coronavirus pandemic is behind us, what are your hopes for Side by Side's future?

Bruce: I hope that you can leverage our support to attract other donors – I know there's a lot more work to be done!

YOUR BUSINESS SUPPORT IS NEEDED NOW MORE THAN EVER



Corporate partners play a crucial role in supporting our work. Demonstrate your commitment to our community's most vulnerable young people by supporting Side by Side's programs and events.

In recognition of your generosity, Side by Side offers numerous benefits, including:

- Logo and/or name recognition on media ad buys and print/online marketing materials associated with the event or program being sponsored
- Opportunities to host your clients or senior staff members at the event
- Annual recognition in Side by Side's Annual Report (circ. 5,500)

Learn more at SidebySideYouth.org/corporate_sponsorship or contact Noelle Moss at 415-457-3200 ext 114 or nmoss@sidebysideyouth.org

125 YEARS OF WALKING WITH YOUTH THROUGH ADVERSITY



In June of 1895, the San Francisco Presbyterian Orphanage and Farm was born of the efforts of a group of San Francisco women concerned about the plight of Bay Area orphans. Nestled in the bucolic “sunny hills” of San Anselmo, the orphanage featured a farm and provided a home for 100 boys and girls between the ages of 3 and 16.

Though we don’t have any records regarding the impact of the 1918 influenza pandemic on the orphanage, our agency made it through that deadly outbreak over a century ago, perhaps thanks to the quick social distancing actions of Marin County and the San Rafael City Council at the time, and continued to care for the children living on the San Anselmo farm.



Over the years, with the creation of the foster care system, the orphanage transitioned to a residential treatment group home model for youth in foster care and juvenile probation, known as Sunny Hills Services, and served up to 90 young people from throughout northern California. Further evolution of child welfare policies, changing social environments, and mergers led to our providing school- and community-based mental health services, K-12 special education, transitional housing for youth aging out of the foster care system, early intervention in schools, and LGBTQ support services.



Through good times and bad, our community embraced our organization – and the children we served. In 1899, the Grape Festival embarked on 105 years of raising funds for the agency through the incredible dedication and countless volunteer hours of many Guilds spread throughout Marin County. A thrift store, the Bargain Box, was also a mainstay of fundraising efforts by the Guilds, while galas and our Bank of Marin Golf Tournament generated additional revenue to support the agency’s programs.

One hundred and twenty-five years later, that same organization – now called Side by Side – is still committed to ensuring that our young people and their families are supported. Even the calmest among us are feeling the stress of this pandemic and an uncertain future. But our clinicians, teachers, youth advocates, and all staff share an unwavering devotion to the youth we serve and we will get through this latest adversity together.



300 Sunny Hills Drive, Bldg. 5
 San Anselmo, CA 94960
 Formerly Sunny Hills Services

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REGISTRATION IS STILL OPEN

\$350/player or \$1,350/foursome

To register for the tournament
or sponsor the event, visit

SidebySideYouth.org/golf_tournament

SIDE BY SIDE, TOGETHER

As our community faces the day-to-day challenges of COVID-19,
we remain hopeful that we will see you at the Meadow Club in June.
Stay tuned for updates. Until then, be safe!

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Golf Tournament**

Founded by J. Patrick Hunt ~ Benefitting Side by Side

Monday, June 22, 2020

At the exclusive Meadow Club, Fairfax

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