



ALSOYouth
ANNUAL REPORT

Fiscal Year 2023-2024



"This place is literally heaven on earth. ALSO Youth is the best place I could ever go to. I have never laughed as much as I have here, and if I could come here every day I would."

ALISON, 15





OUR VISION

All people living their lives with dignity, honesty, and pride, regardless of their sexual orientation or gender identity.

OUR MISSION

Empowering LGBTQ+ youth and their allies and creating inclusive communities.



Advocacy
Leadership
Support
Outreach





WHO WE ARE

ALSO Youth was founded in **1992** by community members concerned by the high rates of suicide among LGBTQ+ youth. In cooperation with local organizations such as PFLAG, Planned Parenthood, and YMCA Youth and Family Services, volunteers were recruited to conduct a support group for Sarasota Youth.

After moving between several temporary youth centers, we moved into our Sarasota Youth Center in **2004**.



Our programs and services have evolved over the years to support our community's most relevant needs.

- **2014 and in 2015**, we launched an annual alternative prom and introduced annual scholarships for LGBTQ+ youth looking to continue their education.
- **2020**, we merged with an organization in Manatee County, called PRISM Youth Initiative, expanding our area of service.
- **2021**, ALSO Youth introduced ALSO, Jr. in response to an increased demand from families for programs for youth 10 to 12 years-old.
- **January 2023**, ALSO Youth opened our permanent Manatee County Youth Center to better establish our reach of programs and services.

We are looking forward to meeting the widening needs of the LGBTQ+ youth in our community for years to come.



WHAT WE DO

ALSO Youth works to create a space where kids and young adults receive a multi-dimensional approach to their wellbeing. Our efforts focus on three connected areas to help make LGBTQ+ youth feel healthy and safe.





HEALTH & WELLNESS

Youth continue to report difficulty with concentration, low self-esteem, and feelings of loneliness and isolation. Our mental health services were introduced in 2022 in response to concerns about LGBTQ+ youth suicide, discrimination, and emotional turbulence. **In 2024, we provided over 800 therapy sessions.**

Our services include a weekly parent support group and mental health counseling sessions for youth and families, scheduled at their convenience, whether in person or virtually. We approach these services clinically, utilizing licensed and trained mental health counselors who can successfully address LGBTQ+ issues.



All of our mental health services are provided **free of charge** to participants, and we invest an average of \$6000 each month for this critical program.

“I love my therapist! She really understands me and doesn’t judge. Now I have hope.” as reported by one of the ALSO Youth.



YOUTH EMPOWERMENT

We provide five days of engaging, educational, and diverse programs each week between our two youth centers. Our centers are safe spaces for LGBTQ+ youth and their allies to find community, build friendships, and receive support to navigate the challenges of adolescence.

Programs are created and implemented in response to the needs of the youth in our community. Attendance at program activities **averages 115 each month.**

Our frequent program events include:

- Gender Identity Peer Support Group
- Disabled Youth Program
- ALSO, Jr. for Ages 10-12
- Rainbow Book Club
- Annual Scholarships
- Youth Leadership Program
- Summer/Spring Day Camps
- Diversity & Inclusivity Training
- Community Field Trips
- Young Adult Night



ALSO Youth invests **\$43.51/youth** each month for programming. These **programs and services are completely free for all youth** who wish to attend.



INCLUSIVITY + COMMUNITY

According to The Trevor Project, LGBTQ+ young people who reported living in very accepting communities attempted suicide at less than half the rate of those who reported living in very unaccepting communities.

Outreach opportunities are unique experiences to connect with youth, families, and community partners who may benefit from the programs and services we provide. We connect to:

- Local community at Farmer's Markets and cultural, sporting and recreational events.
- Businesses via free educational training and
- Chambers of Commerce and other not-for-profits via networking.

Our community partnerships allow LGBTQ+ youth and allies to enjoy experiences together in safe and welcoming spaces outside of the ALSO Youth Centers.

We depend on our critical volunteer base to achieve these connections. There is a place for everyone to help!



14,000
people informed
through our outreach
efforts in FY 23-24!



FY 23-24 IMPACT

1962

youth attended our
programs.

195 (+10%)

new youth participated
in community activities with us.

We average over

70

free counseling sessions
per month for youth and
their families.

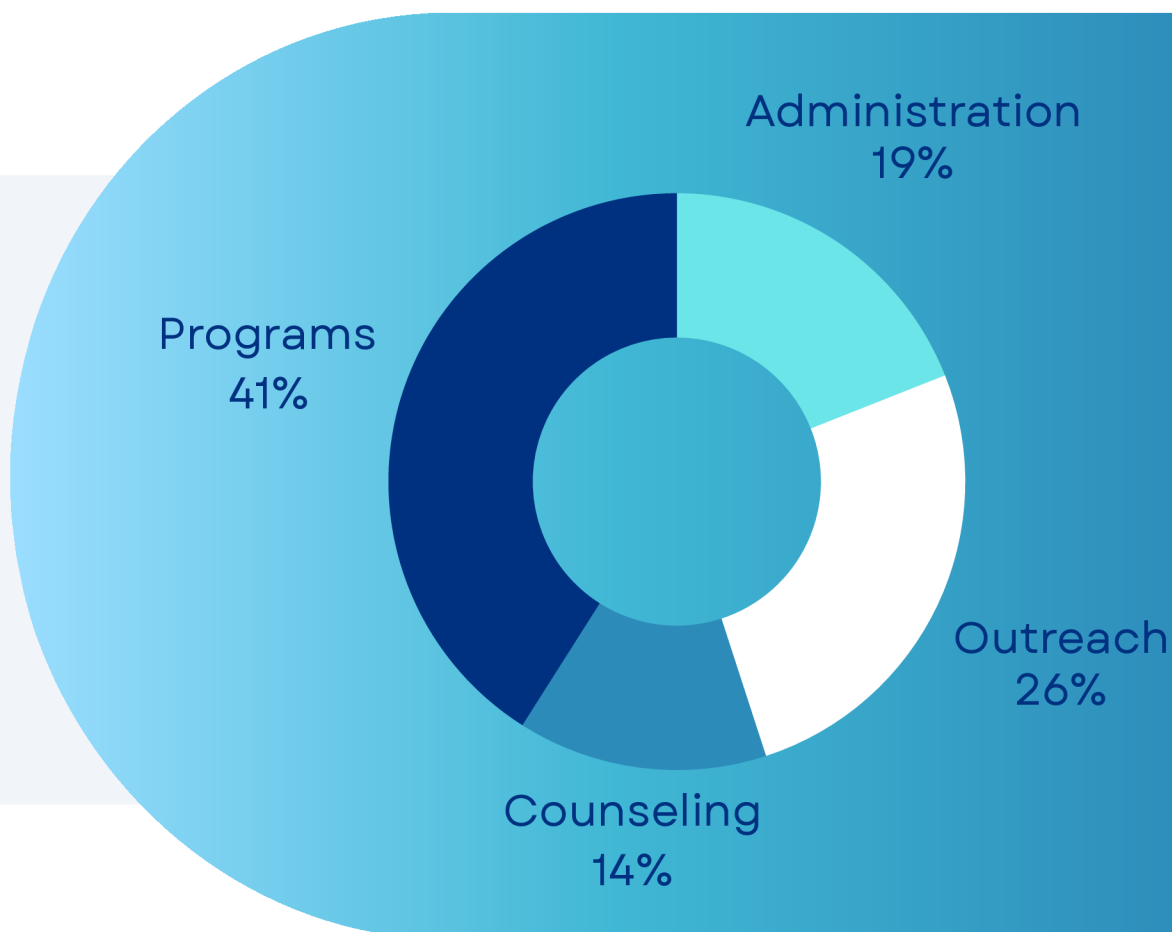
On average, we provide

32

programs a month, and
introduced 13 new
programs over the last 18
months.



OUR EXPENSES



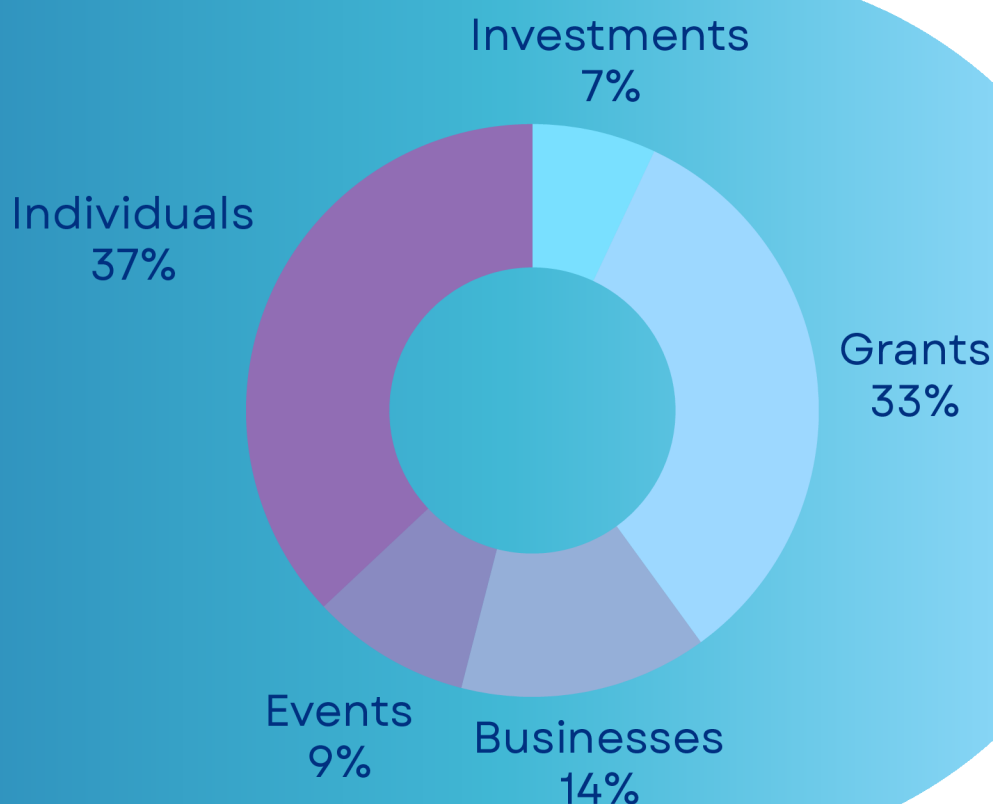
We take our fiduciary responsibility seriously and act with integrity and transparency for both the community we serve and our generous donors.

The majority of our expenses continue to be spent on Programs that have a direct impact on the ALSO Youth community and empower them for the future.

As our cultural climate changes, so do the needs of our youth. From 2023 to 2024, the number of requests for mental health counseling has increased by 7%. Additionally, our overhead costs have increased steadily over the last three decades.



OUR FUNDING



Since 2020, our budget has almost doubled due to population growth and increased demand for services to LGBTQ+ youth. Fortunately, our remarkably generous donor base continues to grow and evolve in support of our mission.

Our primary source of income are Individuals and Grants (total 70%), but events and investment returns from our Reserves contribute 16% and are an important part of our community connections and sustainable future.

In 2025+, we wish to further develop our community of sponsors, with a special initiative to partner with more businesses. This directly fulfills our mission to create more inclusive communities.



CHALLENGES

In 2023,

41%

of LGBTQ+ youth considered attempting suicide.

In 2023, less than

40%

of LGBTQ+ youth found their homes to be LGBTQ affirming.

In Florida in 2022,

74%

of LGBTQ+ youth faced discrimination for their gender identity/sexual orientation.

In Florida in 2022,

65%

of LGBTQ+ youth wanted mental health counseling, but could not access it.

“Manatee denies funding for ALSO Youth’s Mental Health Counseling Program”

*Headline Herald -Tribune,
July 2023*

Sarasota County Population

+10.2% by 2035

vs. +0.6% nationally.

*Florida State Office of
Commerce & Development*

Across the nation, in Florida, and locally in Sarasota and Manatee counties, mental health issues persist. With a growing population, there is an ongoing need to provide LGBTQ+ youth affirming spaces and communities.



WHAT IS NEXT?

As we enter our 33rd year, we have much to celebrate and be thankful for, but we also know that our work isn't done. Our future is dictated by the needs of the LGBTQ+ youth in our community, and with the help of our donors, community partners, volunteers, and tireless staff, we will continue to respond to these needs thoughtfully.



Key initiatives for 2024-2025 include:

Evolve Programming for New Engagement

Each generation has different interests and want changes. We plan to add and expand events to bring LGBTQ+ youth the most relevant and impactful programs to support their well being and development.

Increase Number of Volunteers, Committee Members and Board Reps

With over 100 volunteers including 10 board members and 20 committee members, we are always mobilizing more to join us in support of our mission. The passion and energy that our volunteers bring to our organization is invaluable.

Enhance our Presence in the Community

Our youth centers are the heart of our mission, and we are exploring means to be even more present in the community wherever we can share our message and support all LGBTQ+ youth. We aim to be recognized as THE Community Leader for LGBTQ+ Youth. Please help us get there!





CALL TO ACTION

Despite 30+ years of work at ALSO Youth, LGBTQ+ youth still need our help, support, and love. We are undaunted and remain steadfast in our mission and vision as we once again call upon you to volunteer, give, and champion in our years ahead.



Sheila Weiss
Board President



Becky McDonough
Executive Director
2022-2024



Mel Gosselin
Executive Director
2024+

THANK YOU



ALSOYouth



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