



ALSOYouth

Annual Report

*A rainbow of resilience
after the storm.*



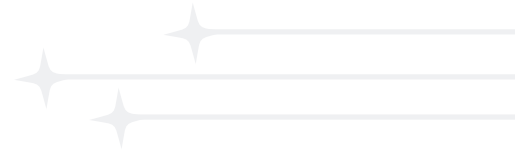
*What does hope
look like after skies
finally clear?*

FISCAL YEAR 2024-2025

Scan with your phone's camera to view:

- A video message from our Youth
- A PDF download of this report





December 10th, 2025

Dear Friends, Supporters, and Champions of ALSO Youth,

This past year tested us in ways I don't think any of us could have predicted. We lost our center to Hurricane Milton, and with that came a wave of logistical challenges and real uncertainty for the young people we serve. Still, ALSO Youth kept showing up. And because of you, our light held steady. Like a rainbow after the storm, our community is brighter on the other side.

With your support, we reopened in Sarasota this fall. Our new space is already filled with safety, laughter, and belonging. We also grew our mental health counseling program, providing more than 900 free sessions to youth and families who needed someone steady in their corner.

None of this happens without donors and partners like you. In a year when the need felt heavier than ever, individuals stepped up in a big way. You showed us what "community" really means, and you helped us stay grounded through the toughest moments.

At our Grand Opening, a mom came up to me and said, "I just want you to know that ALSO Youth literally saved my child's life." I won't forget that. It's a powerful picture of what hope looks like when the skies finally clear.

Our young people keep inspiring me. One participant in our Adulthood 101 program learned how to tailor their résumé, practice interview skills, and job hunt with confidence. Within weeks, they landed an interview and were hired on the spot. Their dream is to become a nurse and give back the way they've been supported here.

These stories are why we do this work. When youth are surrounded by care and opportunity, they don't just get through hard things, they grow into leaders and advocates for others.

As we look toward 2026, I'm deeply grateful for every donor, volunteer, foundation, and friend who helped us weather this year. Together, we proved that even in uncertain times, love, compassion, and inclusion win.

Thank you for believing in our mission and for standing beside our youth. You helped bring every color of hope back into view.

With gratitude and pride,

Annie Berkness
Executive Director
ALSO Youth

FY 24-25 **IMPACT**

1,535

youth visits to
our programs, +17%
from previous year

61%

of our 254 youth
attendees were
new this year

300%

increase in support
group attendance

of free therapy sessions

917

64 youth received help to
reduce mental health crisis,
increase coping skills &
strengthen family bonds.

On average, we provide

32

programs a month!
We introduced 11 new
programs over the last 12
months.

YEAR AT A GLANCE

October 9, 2024

Hurricane Milton swept through Florida's west coast, leaving ALSO's long-standing Sarasota Youth Center without a roof.



March 2025

Community members rallied behind ALSO Youth at our annual Sushi Brunch fundraiser, selling out tickets and raising more than \$35,000 to support youth programs and services.

June 2025

Jamie Smith was hired as Youth Programs Manager, drawing on his education background to build purposeful programming for our youth.

September 2025

Eleven months after the loss of our previous Sarasota facility, we proudly opened the doors of the new Sarasota Youth Center to youth and families.

February 2025

Over 100 youth attended our Space Cowboy-themed prom, enjoying the freedom and excitement of a truly inclusive celebration.

April 2025

Annie Berkness stepped into the role of Executive Director and immediately hit the ground running, bringing with her a wealth of technological expertise and project-management experience.

July 2025

Our summer day camp, Camp True Colors, was a tremendous success featuring multiple community partners who generously donated their time to speak with and engage our youth.

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

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.

WHAT WE DO



ALSO Youth works to create spaces 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.



"From a neurological standpoint, safe, trauma informed spaces are not just a commodity, they are life transforming experiences, that have the potential to save lives." - Dr. Johana Kuemerle Pinillos, Sarasota-based clinical therapist serving ALSO Youth.

MENTAL HEALTH WELLNESS

As the demand for accessible, affirming mental health care continues to grow, ALSO Youth remains deeply committed to supporting the emotional well-being of LGBTQ+ youth and their families. What began in 2022 as a response to rising concerns around youth suicide, discrimination, and isolation has evolved into a cornerstone of our organization's services.

3

Average Days
From Request to
Setting Therapy
Appointment

64

Number of
Therapy Clients,
+27 New This
Year

917

Total Counseling
Sessions

3

New Licensed
Therapists

Our services include individual and family therapy, a weekly parent support group, and two identity-centered peer groups: the Disabled & Neurodivergent Support Group and the Gender & Identity Support Group. All sessions are facilitated by qualified professionals dedicated to creating supportive, affirming, and inclusive spaces for LGBTQ+ youth and their families.



Services are offered entirely free of charge, and this year we increased our investment by more than 25%, averaging \$7,300 per month to ensure continued access to this essential program. Notably, on average it only takes 3 days from requesting help to scheduling your first therapy appointment, compared to the national average, 6 weeks.

"I'm not as alone as I used to think I was."

- stated by a youth.

Impact Snapshot: A 13 year old with severe anxiety and history of self-harm, built trust and coping strategies and now reports a year without self-harm!

COMMUNITY ENRICHMENT

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 in unaccepting environments.

As societal pressures and the rollback of DEI initiatives have created new challenges for LGBTQ+ visibility, ALSO Youth has become more intentional about when and where we show up. While public spaces can sometimes feel less safe, our commitment to connection and visibility remains steadfast; we've simply become more strategic in how we engage.

This year, we focused our outreach on events and partnerships that celebrate inclusion and community. From our annual Art Exhibit, to a lively Bingo Night at a local allied business, and a Home-Run Derby hosted by IMG Academy's Pride ERG, we created safe, joyful community spaces where LGBTQ+ youth and allies could connect and belong.

Our community partnerships and dedicated volunteers make these moments possible, ensuring that, even in challenging times, acceptance, creativity, and pride continue to thrive.



INCLUSIVE PROGRAMMING



Across our two youth centers, ALSO Youth provides six days of engaging, educational, and inclusive programs each week. These centers serve as safe and welcoming spaces where LGBTQ+ youth and their allies can find community, build friendships, and receive support as they navigate the challenges of adolescence.

Each program is developed in response to the evolving needs and interests of our youth, ensuring that activities remain relevant, empowering, and reflective of their lived experiences. Since reopening after the hurricane, attendance has grown steadily—averaging 60 youth participants per month, including 12 new attendees on average each month.

Our frequent program events include:

- Adulthood 101 (life skills workshops)
- OUTBurst (art workshops)
- Disabled & Neurodivergent Support Group
- Gender & Identity Support Group
- ALSO, Jr. for Ages 10-12
- Queerly Written Book Club
- GAYmers' Guild (DND-style games)
- Friday Night HangOUT
- Youth Leadership Program

ALSO Youth invests **\$728/youth per year** for programming. These **programs and services are completely free for all youth** who wish to attend.

ANNUAL EVENTS



Scholarship

Each year, ALSO Youth provides college-level scholarships for LGBTQ+ youth pursuing their next level of learning. In 2025, ALSO in conjunction with Project Pride granted 8 scholarships to well-deserved youth.



Prom

Spring brings an opportunity for youth to celebrate the time-honored tradition of prom. ALSO hosts one of the few LGBTQ+ proms in the state, providing a space where youth can embrace their authentic selves without fear or judgment. The 2025 celebration marked the seventh year of this annual event.

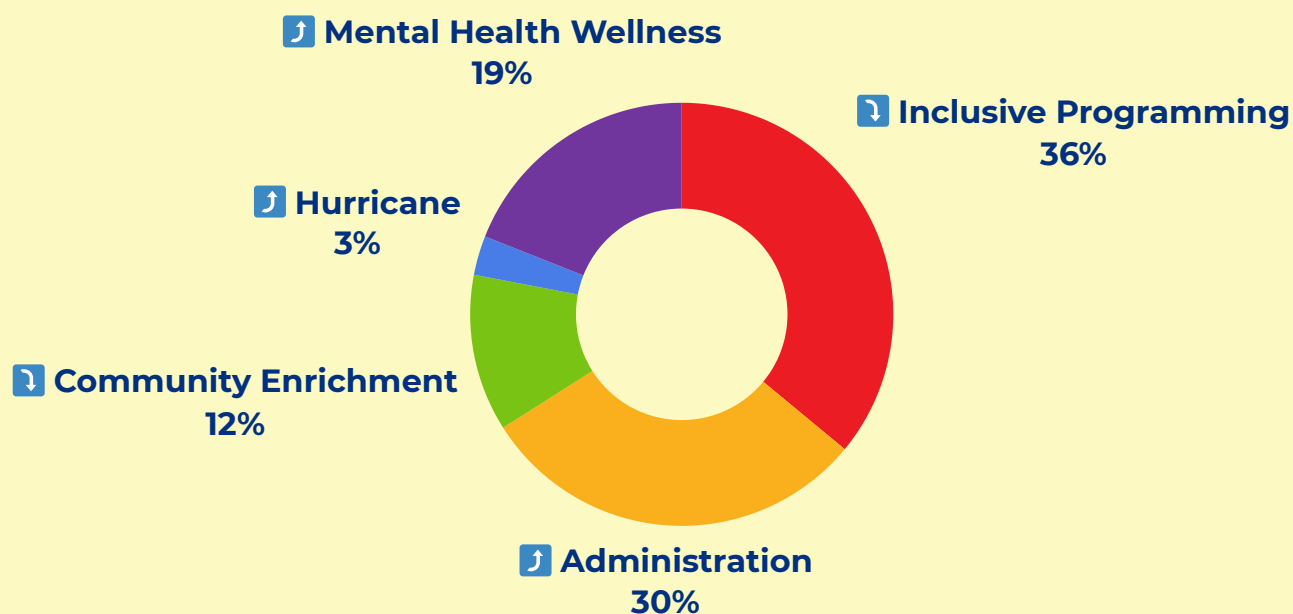


Camp True Colors

Each summer, ALSO hosts a week-long camp with activities and learning for our younger youth to build memories and fill the summer heat.



OUR EXPENSES



*Arrows represent change from prior year

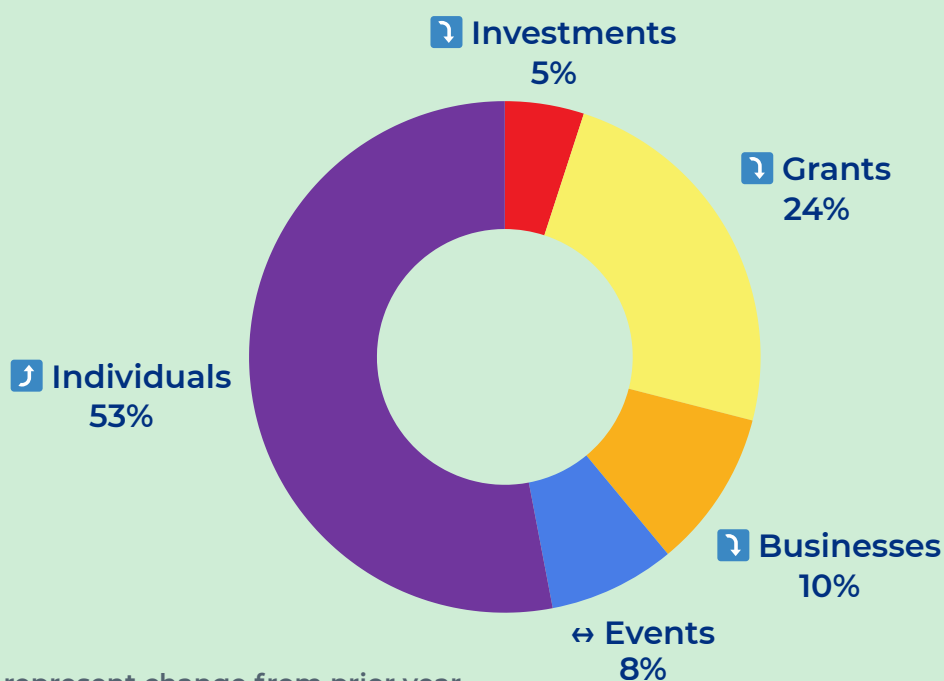
Despite a year marked by transition and recovery, ALSO Youth maintained strong fiscal discipline throughout 2024–2025, reducing total expenses by 5% compared to the prior year.

Programs remained our largest area of investment, reflecting our ongoing commitment to directly serving LGBTQ+ youth. However, two strategic financial decisions shaped our spending this year:

- 1. Investing in Our Future:** We strengthened long-term capacity through key investments in staffing, upgraded IT systems, and enhanced donor communications. While these raised administrative costs temporarily, they position ALSO Youth for continued growth and resilience.
- 2. Temporarily Reducing Community Enrichment Spending:** After the loss of our Sarasota center to Hurricane Milton, we prioritized essential operations and youth-centered programs. We anticipate returning to normal spending in 2026 as we expand across both counties.

It's worth noting that while the 2024 hurricanes had a significant operational impact, we successfully minimized financial strain. Storm-related costs represented **only 3% of total expenses**, thanks to shared resources and efficient relocation efforts.

OUR FUNDING



*Arrows represent change from prior year

The 2024–2025 fiscal year presented unique funding dynamics, with notable peaks and valleys in income. December 2024 alone accounted for 25% of total revenue, while August 2025 represented just 1%.

The most encouraging development was the **remarkable 25% growth in individual giving**, reflecting the generosity and trust of our community. This increase helped ensure we could sustain programs and services during a time of change.

Grant funding decreased by 38%, primarily due to adjustments in accounting practices rather than reductions in support. Importantly, **68% of grant income was received in the second half of the year**, setting a positive trajectory for 2026.

We closed the fiscal year with a strong balance sheet and renewed financial resilience, made possible by the unwavering commitment of our donors, partners, and community supporters.



CHALLENGES

Here are some of the most powerful factors from FY24-25 that defined how our organization's daily operations were impeded.

HURRICANES

We lost our center to Milton, but Debbie and Helene impacted our entire area. We had to cancel some events due to decreased attendance.

DEI

Diversity, Equity and Inclusion initiatives were cut, resulting in lost opportunities and support from companies we had previously relied on.

STAFFING

Long-term success depends on attracting, training, and retaining talent. We experienced change in every staff position in 2025.

ECONOMY

Overhead costs climbed this year, driven by inflation and related economic pressures.

SCHOOLS

School Boards have passed rules and regulations that have reduced our ability reach out to youth in schools.

TRANS RIGHTS

Trans+ youth continue to be targeted and vilified, impacting their overall sense of safety and hope for the future.

WHAT IS NEXT?

As we settle into our new Sarasota Center, we are focused on rebuilding and re-establishing our presence in the community while continuing to meet the needs of LGBTQ+ youth in Sarasota and Manatee Counties. With the help of our donors, volunteers, and partners, we are entering this next chapter with optimism and purpose.

Key initiatives for FY25-26 include:

Strengthen Our Foundation

Our move has brought new opportunities to grow our volunteer, committee, and board base. Increasing these groups will ensure our work remains sustainable and community-driven. With this foundation and the right partnerships, we will continue to advocate for DEI and Trans Rights.

Expand and Refresh Programming

New offerings such as Adulthood 101 and OUTburst will equip youth with real-world skills and creative outlets, while updated annual events will reflect current interests and challenges.

Enhance Communication and Engagement

We will continue to refine how we share our story — through donor updates, community outreach, and partnerships — to strengthen relationships and foster understanding.



With a renewed home, a dedicated team, and an engaged community, we look forward to the year ahead and the continued growth of ALSO Youth.



THANK YOU!



Scott Swan
Board President



Annie Berkness
Executive Director

While 2025 brought many challenges, we remain energized and optimistic for the future.

We extend our sincere gratitude to everyone who volunteered, donated, and championed our work.

As we look ahead to 2026, we invite you to take the next step with us; because now is the time to make a difference.



CONNECT WITH US



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