



From the Desk of Andrew Barnett, Executive Director



This past year has been a momentous one for SMYAL, as August marked the 25th anniversary of our founding. It is remarkable to consider how SMYAL has grown throughout our history!

In 2009, we have witnessed many successes for our LGBTQ youth. In the spring, our inaugural group of Youth Advocacy Interns implemented a variety of projects

to raise awareness of LGBTQ youth issues. During the summer, we commemorated National HIV Testing Day with a “You Should Know” dance, offered sessions of our Brotherhood University program, and showed our Pride by marching in the Capital Pride Parade.

In the fall, we celebrated our 25th Anniversary at our annual Fall Brunch, welcoming the largest number of guests in the history of the signature event. We also partnered with the Office of the State Superintendent of Education for an all-day Youth Leadership Conference.

As we move into winter, we are getting into the holiday spirit through our Thanksgiving dinner and our upcoming Holiday Dance. We are planning for even more successes in 2010!

On behalf of the SMYAL Board, staff, and youth, thank you for your support!

Sincerely,

Andrew Barnett
Executive Director

The Sexual Minority Youth Assistance League

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www.smyal.org



SMYAL's 25th Anniversary: Celebrating the Past, Looking to the Future

In 1984, community activists founded SMYAL in response to reports of young male students in Washington, DC being incarcerated for acting “too effeminate.” SMYAL began as a weekend support group, expanded into an after-school program, and, in 1997, purchased two adjacent row houses on Capitol Hill that serve as our offices and Youth Center.

From these humble beginnings, SMYAL has grown into a well-respected provider of outreach, services, and advocacy for lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and questioning (LGBTQ) youth.

As the only Washington, DC metropolitan area service provider dedicated solely to supporting LGBTQ youth,



SMYAL has reached over 10,000 youth through direct programming and provided training and outreach to over 5,000 youth workers and community members.

Though great strides have been made in addressing the unique challenges LGBTQ youth face everyday, the need for SMYAL's high-impact programming and cultural competency trainings is greater than ever.

LGBTQ youth in our nation's capital face daunting odds. By providing them with the skills they need to live healthy, fulfilled lives, SMYAL is shaping the next generation of LGBTQ leaders!

Our journey and mission would not be possible without your generous support of our community. The future of SMYAL and LGBTQ youth looks bright!

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SMYAL at a Glance

Youth Spotlight: Alexis Browne

“I want to dedicate my life to protecting the weakest in our community”



SMYAL Youth, Alexis Browne, speaks at the 25th Anniversary Fall Brunch

At the young age of 16, Alexis Browne came to an important conclusion: not only would she refuse to be ashamed of herself, but she also had a talent for helping other people embrace their own uniqueness.

This important decision was the first step for a young lady who would soon engage her unquenchable passion for social justice, LGBTQ civil rights, and advocacy for the underserved.

As a junior at an Alexandria, VA high school, Alexis became active in her school's Gay-Straight Alliance (GSA) club. Her drive and passion were evident to all, and she

was soon elected as President of the GSA.

While serving as GSA President, Alexis saw an opportunity to expand her sphere of influence. SMYAL became the answer to that endeavor, and she soon became a ubiquitous presence in the SMYAL Youth Center.

In 2008, Alexis was selected for a spot in the inaugural class of SMYAL's Youth Advocacy Internship. In her capacity as an outspoken champion of LGBTQ youth issues, Alexis found a platform from which to apply her valued skills, grow as a person, and affect positive change.

Highlighting her enhanced skills in advocacy and public speaking, Alexis Browne was a guest speaker at the 2009 Youth Pride Day. From the podium, her poise and determination were evident as she discussed marriage equality for same-sex couples.

Alexis now serves on the SMYAL staff as a Youth Leadership Specialist—facilitating cultural competency trainings to other LGBTQ youth and youth service providers.

As a Psychology major at Northern Virginia Community College, Alexis looks forward to a career dedicated to assisting underserved youth.

25th Anniversary Fall Brunch: A Milestone Event

On September 20, 2009, SMYAL hosted its 25th Anniversary Fall Brunch at the Mandarin Oriental, Washington D.C. The event attracted over 500 guests, and set an attendance record for the annual fundraising brunch.

Guests were welcomed via video by Honorary Co-Chair and U.S. Representative, Tammy Baldwin. Honorary Co-Chair Dana Beyer was in attendance for the festivities.



Emcee, Wendy Reiger entertains guests at the Fall Brunch

The event was emceed by News4 Anchor, Wendy Reiger, who introduced keynote speaker, Judy Shepard.

Judy Shepard serves as Executive Director of the Matthew Shepard Foundation, which seeks to "replace Hate with Understanding, Compassion & Acceptance."

Ms. Shepard spoke about recent successes of the LGBT rights movement, and the importance of SMYAL's work with youth and youth service providers.

For pictures and video of the 25th Anniversary Fall Brunch, visit:

www.smyal.org



Honorary Co-Chair, Dana Beyer, with guests at the Silent Auction Reception

SAVE THE DATE...

You are cordially invited to

**SMYAL's
13th Annual Fall Brunch**

**Mandarin Oriental,
Washington D.C.**

September 26, 2010



Judy Shepard addresses guests at SMYAL's 25th Anniversary Fall Brunch

Staff Stories: Leandrea Gilliam

After more than 3 years running SMYAL's Care Advocacy program, Leandrea Gilliam has many stories to tell. In her position, Leandrea works to assist HIV-positive youth to access critical medical and mental health services.

Reflecting on her time at SMYAL, Leandrea is convinced about the power and importance of SMYAL's Care Advocacy program. In collaboration with Children's National Medical Center, she ensures that HIV-positive youth receive the care and education they need to stay healthy and compliant with treatment.

Often accompanying youth to appointments, Leandrea has witnessed the psychological and physical effects of the HIV virus. The affected youth often feel alone in their struggles and afraid to share with others.

“I am pleased to see our HIV-positive youth taking charge of their health and advocating for

In one remarkable story, two SMYAL youth were able to provide peer support for each other after realizing they were both HIV-positive.

Through this friendship, two young men facing diagnosis with a life-changing illness were able to peer-counsel each other, providing a valuable resource.

This relationship served as the foundation for two young, HIV-positive males to face their fears and emotions. Ultimately, the two SMYAL Care Advocacy participants found health, hope, and motivation in each other. They now work together to mentor other youth in gaining the skills and knowledge necessary for healthy living and making responsible choices.



SMYAL Care Advocacy Program Manager, Leandrea Gilliam

Women for SMYAL

In June of this year, SMYAL hosted our first “Women for SMYAL” event to raise awareness of SMYAL’s work to support LGBT youth in our local women’s community.

The event drew more than 100 attendees and featured a keynote address by former HRC President, Elizabeth Birch.



SMYAL Board member Susan Butler (left) and SMYAL Board Chair Betsy Pursell (right) with Donna Greenfield (center) at the Women for SMYAL event.

SMYAL's Leadership Circle

Thank you to all of the members of SMYAL's Leadership Circle! Your continued support is essential to SMYAL youth.

Sponsors: (\$500 - \$749)

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Danny Reed
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Brian J. Scott
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Leaders: (\$5,000 +)

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Beneficiary Event Sponsors:

Homo Hotel Happy Hour
Progressive Dinner
Capital Classic
Capital Area Gay & Lesbian Chamber of Commerce (CAGLCC)
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The Sexual Minority Youth Assistance League (SMYAL) is the only Washington, DC metro area service organization solely dedicated to supporting lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and questioning (LGBTQ) youth. Founded in 1984, SMYAL is a 501[c][3] nonprofit organization.

Our mission is to promote and support self-confident, healthy, productive lives for LGBTQ youth as they journey from adolescence into adulthood.

To fulfill our mission, we concentrate our commitment and energy on five focus areas: (1) Life Skills & Leadership Development, (2) Counseling & Support, (3) Health & Wellness Education, (4) Safe Social Activities, and (5) Community Outreach and Education.



www.smyal.org



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SMYAL Board Of Directors

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GREATER WASHINGTON

Get Involved!

The support of our community is instrumental in providing programming and a safe space for local LGBTQ youth.

There are many ways for you to get involved!

**DONATE OR
CONTRIBUTE...**

SMYAL is a registered 501[c][3] nonprofit, and all contributions are tax-deductible. There are many ways you can contribute, including: making an online gift, donating stock or automobiles, and estate planning. You can also support SMYAL through the United Way (#8142) and the Combined Federal Campaign (#46119). For more information, visit us on the web at www.smyal.org, or contact:

Jason Maglaughlin, Director of Development
202.567.3159 or jason.maglaughlin@smyal.org

VOLUNTEER...

We have different levels of volunteering that fit your schedule and use your many talents. To learn more about upcoming volunteer opportunities and how you can become part of the SMYAL team, contact:

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