

Phoenix Area LGBTQ nonprofit; one n ten

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Local nonprofit one n ten provides LGBTQ youth with services, programs and resources that they need to succeed.



Nearly two decades ago, one n ten began with a concerned group of LGBTQ members who were involved in the community but noticed a lack of positive opportunities for gay and lesbian youth ages 14 to 24 in the Valley. Soon after its development, the nonprofit began to serve the youth in need with constructive social activities like dances and free social spaces to engage and interact with their peers in a positive environment.

Fast forward 20 years, and you will find the evolution of a youth-driven community filled with educational resources (like Q-High, a system that allows youth to earn a real diploma, not a GED); competitive team sports; supportive housing programs; the largest traditional summer camp in the world exclusively for LGBTQ youth; supplemental health services and behavioral counseling; and, most importantly, safe spaces for young people to connect with others who share the same experiences. "Our community has always taken care of each other. It's a family," says Micheal Weakley, deputy director.

Recent Arizona State University graduate, Bea Velazquez, serves one n ten as a resource specialist and esteemed confidant. "There wasn't anyone really advocating for the queer youth," Velazquez says. She was a key member in the development of the nonprofit's Promise of a New Day, a one-of-a-kind housing program that promotes goal development, leadership, future planning and job-oriented skills while providing a safe environment for youth to live. "When I started working here, there was a blatant sense of community. I became a part of Phoenix and the LGBTQ community."

Ira Bohm-Sanchez participates actively in the programs offered by the nonprofit and currently resides in the housing that Velazquez implemented. Bohm-Sanchez is open about being transgender and works to spread awareness by facilitating positive discussion. After being disowned by his parents in Southern California, Bohm-Sanchez found the hope of a new future upon arrival in Phoenix. By having regular access to the tools and resources that one n ten offers, Bohm-Sanchez has become empowered to handle life's twists and turns and can now focus on creating a bright future, having recently received a scholarship.

Today, the Central Phoenix nonprofit even hosts drop-in locations throughout the Valley. The ever-developing social media impact has fueled awareness and outreach for the nonprofit, while one n ten also visits local community centers, coffee shops and more to distribute helpful information and advice to youth.

One n ten also counts on local partnerships with YMCA, The Boys and Girls Club, Phoenix Children's Hospital, Arizona Housing Incorporated, St. Mary's Food Bank and many more to build a vast network of support that focuses on young LGBTQ in need.

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one n ten www.oneten.org.