

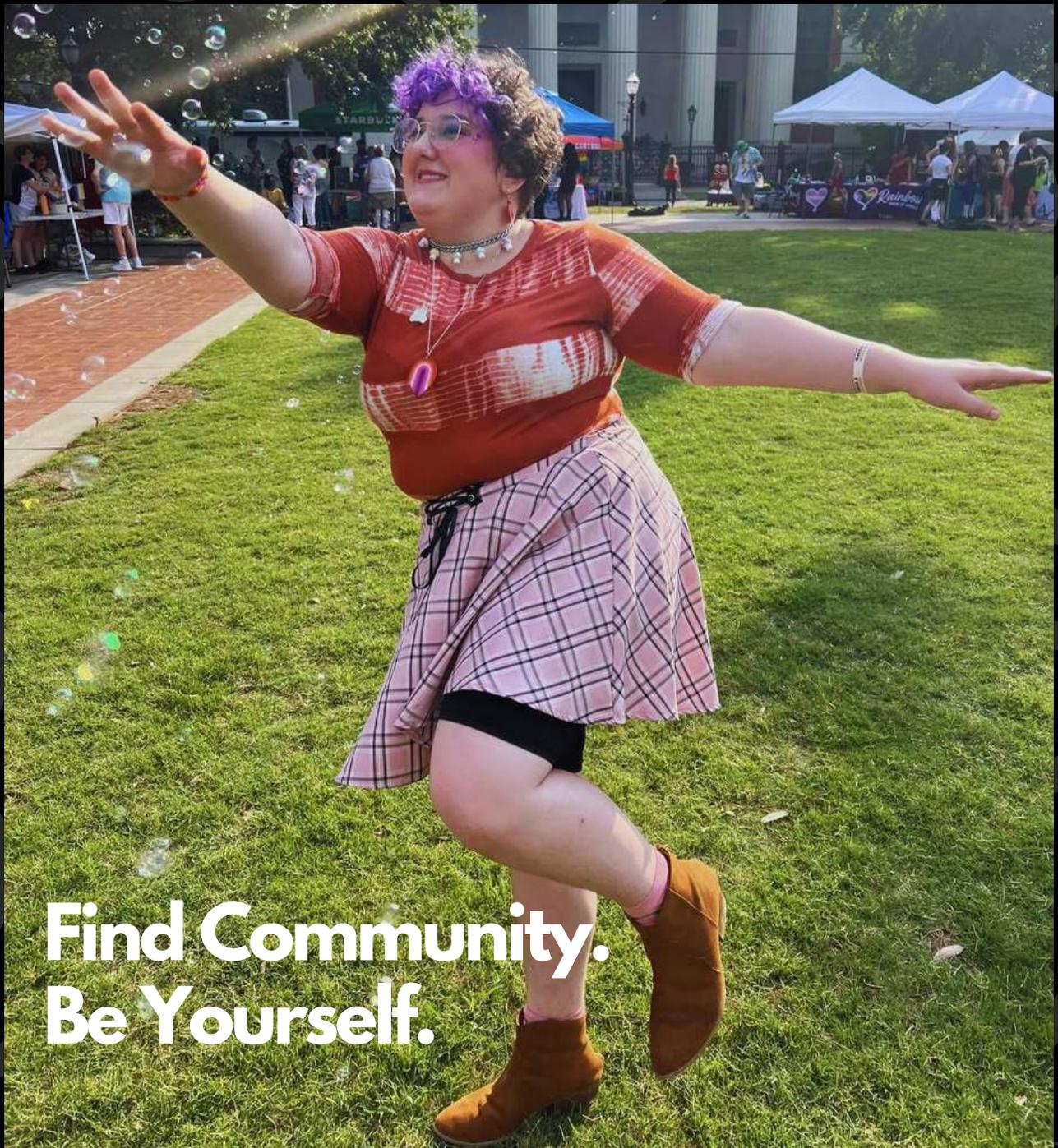


# ANNUAL REPORT

2024

Fiscal Year

July 2023 - June 2024



**Find Community.  
Be Yourself.**

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# LETTER FROM OUR DIRECTOR

At Prism United, our commitment to being a data-driven organization has always guided our mission. When we began our journey in 2018, we reached out to local LGBTQ+ high school students to understand their needs. Through surveys, follow-up questions, and deep conversations, we crafted our first program based on their insights. From these early interactions, our name—"Prism"—was chosen by the very teens we aimed to support. As we grew, feedback from parents led us to create additional programs like Prism Preteens and Prism Families, staying attuned to the evolving priorities of our community.

In addition to local insights, we've also closely monitored national data on LGBTQ+ wellness. For example, national statistics reveal that LGBTQ+ youth are more likely to experience suicidality and housing insecurity than their straight and cisgender peers. Recognizing that no such data has been collected on LGBTQ+ youth in southwest Alabama, we decided to take action.

In 2022, Prism spearheaded the Southwest Alabama Inclusion Project, collaborating with 30 local organizations to conduct a comprehensive needs assessment of LGBTQ+ populations in our area. After two years of meticulous work, the results are both alarming and revealing: 40% of surveyed youth had seriously considered suicide in the past year, and over 25% had attempted it. These statistics not only validate our concerns but also highlight the urgent need for targeted support in our community.

Amidst these challenges, there's reason to hope. This fiscal year, we began evaluating the impact of our Prism Teens program on mental health. The preliminary data (see page 6) suggests that our initiatives are effectively reducing depression and anxiety while promoting joy and well-being. This evidence reinforces our belief that, with continued support, we can make a powerful difference in the lives of struggling LGBTQ+ youth.

While data guides our decisions, the young people who come to our gatherings are far more than just numbers to us. We know them by name, and we see their worth. We believe they deserve love and belonging—and our work is to help them believe that, too.

The pages of this report represent the dedication of board members and committees, staff and volunteers. They represent the donors who sustain our programs, the supporters who attend our events, and the funders who invest in our initiatives. They represent a community rallying around LGBTQ+ youth in southwest Alabama. Thank you for being on this journey with us.

Sincerely,  
Corey Harvard (he/him), Executive Director



“

While data guides our decisions, the young people who come to our gatherings are far more than just numbers to us. We know them by name, and we see their worth. We believe they deserve love and belonging—and our work is to help them believe that, too.

”



# OUR MISSION & VALUES

## MISSION

Prism United responds to the comprehensive needs of LGBTQ+ youth in southwest Alabama. Specifically, Prism works to mitigate the psychological, socio-economic, and academic disadvantages caused by repression and victimization.

## VALUES

- Diversity & Inclusion:** We value the breadth, depth, and diversity of the human experience.
- Safety:** We create secure environments for healing and harm reduction.
- Research:** We make data-driven decisions to meet the needs of LGBTQ+ youth.
- Joy:** We celebrate joy for self-expression, empowerment, and resilience.
- Trust:** We value openness, honesty, and transparency to build trust.
- Equity:** We cultivate a cooperative governing ethos within the organization.
- Queerness:** We practice self-love, challenge biases, and deconstruct self-limiting beliefs.
- Community:** We support LGBTQ+ youth holistically, involving families and institutions, and sustain our work through community effort.

# IMPACT & COMMUNITY

This year has been nothing short of transformative for Prism United. We've continued to grow and formalize our programs while reaching new heights with events that have surpassed all expectations in both attendance and fundraising. The success of these events has not only strengthened our community but also demonstrated increasing support for our mission. Our new giving program has further expanded our funding opportunities, laying the groundwork for long-term sustainability. Additionally, we're proud to have become partners with the United Way of Southwest Alabama, a collaboration that will significantly enhance our reach and impact.

All of this has been achieved during a time when the cultural climate remains challenging, with ongoing threats to LGBTQ+ rights. Yet we remain hopeful and resolute in our commitment to empowering youth. With the support of our community, we will continue to stand strong, fostering a safe and inclusive environment for all young people in southwest Alabama.



“

Prism has given me a sense of meaning. I have always wanted to make a difference in the world as a queer and trans person, and I feel like I have the opportunity to do so now. Being apart of a safe space and talking to other people who are like me is one of the most fulfilling experiences I could ever ask for.

”

—Jay, Prism Teen

# OVERVIEW OF PROGRAMS



## PRISM TEENS

Prism Teens gatherings boost emotional well-being, with over 80% of participants reporting increased happiness and contentment. These safe spaces foster resilience and a stronger sense of community. Our facilitators also note that teens grow more open and confident after repeated attendance, enhancing their ability to connect meaningfully with others.

## PRISM PRETEENS

Prism Preteens light up with excitement at these gatherings, where they can freely express who they are and showcase their creativity. According to our facilitator reports, preteens thrive in this supportive space, forming deep connections, diving into activities with enthusiasm, and cherishing the opportunity to socialize and share ideas with a community that truly values them.

## PRISM FAMILIES

Loved ones of LGBTQ+ youth report feeling a deep sense of connection and comfort after attending our support groups, knowing they are not alone in their struggles. They express appreciation for the practical insights and emotional support they receive from each other, which help them navigate challenges like accessing affirming care and boundary setting for their children.

After attending Prism Teens gatherings, an overwhelming majority of participants report significant emotional improvements, with

**85%**  
**feeling happier**

**84%**  
**less depressed**

**73%**  
**less anxious**

# OVERVIEW OF EVENTS



## WIG WALK

The first annual Wig Walk was a resounding success, set to become one of Prism United's largest fundraising events. Made possible by eight community partners and three major sponsors, the event brought Mobileans together for an afternoon of bubbles, brews, and bites, all while building a stronger sense of community. Participants took to the streets of Downtown Mobile donning their most creative wigs, enjoying a vibrant atmosphere that culminated in an After Party with live music and local vendors at Oyster City Brewing Company.



## PRISM PROM

Prism Prom is a vital event for LGBTQ+ high-schoolers in southwest Alabama, offering a safe and joyous alternative to the often complicated experiences at traditional school proms. This year, nearly 100 youth attended and were supported by 23 community and individual sponsors. Prism Prom is a powerful testament to our community's love and support for LGBTQ+ youth, fostering hope for a brighter future.



## BENT BROADWAY

Since its debut in 2018, Bent Broadway has become a standout event in Mobile, assembling some of the city's greatest singers and dancers for a night of heartfelt tears and laughter. Featuring gender-bending performances of our favorite show tunes, Bent Broadway celebrates diversity, belonging, and the power of the performing arts to unite the community around a common cause. This year, the event moved to the USA Laidlaw Performing Arts Center for a two-night run that raised over \$14,000, surpassing all previous Bent Broadway events.

# COMMUNITY & ADVOCACY



We are excited to share that Prism United has been honored as Aramark Pride's **OUTstanding Community Partner** for 2023! This award is given to one community center annually, recognizing exceptional dedication to enhancing the lives of LGBTQ+ individuals, families, and allies through education, social support, and health services.

A big thank you to Aramark Pride's leadership team for this recognition and for nominating us. Your support fuels our mission and makes a real difference in our community!

**OUTSTANDING  
COMMUNITY PARTNER**



Cheers to Brooke Thistlewaite, our first winner of the Prism Guardian Award, and Tiffany Trotter, recipient of the latest Prism Changemaker Award.



The **Prism Guardian Award** celebrates inspirational parenting and exceptional volunteerism.



The **Prism Changemaker Award** honors individuals demonstrating exceptional commitment and courage in advocating for LGBTQ+ equality and inclusivity in southwest Alabama.

**TIFFANY TROTTER  
2023 PRISM  
CHANGEMAKER AWARD**

**BROOKE THISTLEWAITE  
2023 PRISM  
GUARDIAN AWARD**

# MENTAL HEALTH SUPPORT



Trans youth are under attack—25 states have banned gender-affirming care since 2021, forcing families to make tough choices. The [Trans Youth Emergency Project](#) from [Campaign Southern Equality](#) offers patient navigation, \$500 emergency grants, and more to support those traveling for care. We're proud partners of this project, expanding these resources to families in our area.

## EMPOWERING LGBTQ+ YOUTH WITH AFFIRMING CARE

Research shows that LGBTQ+ youth in conservative regions like the South experience higher rates of mental health distress due to discrimination and limited resources. This year, the [Southwest Alabama Inclusion Project](#) revealed that 40% of local LGBTQ+ youth had seriously considered suicide, highlighting the urgent need for mental health support. The Prism Healing Fund directly addresses this need by offering free therapy to youth and their families. To date, the fund has provided more than 65 hours of therapy, connecting individuals with affirming, LGBTQ-competent therapists through the Prism Mental Health Network. This initiative ensures that those in need have access to the crucial care they deserve.

“

Prism saved my life, quite literally. October 7th, 2023, the day before my 19th birthday, I went to Prism Teens for the last time. I remember enjoying every moment of being there that day, and being grateful that Prism existed, and that it's a safe space for queer kids like me. As I get older, I promise to lead and protect queer youth, just as y'all have done for me. Thank you for saving my life.

”

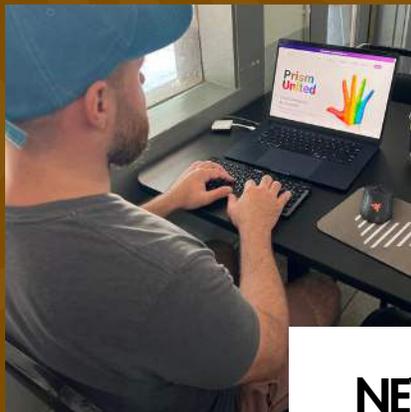
—Fae, Prism Teen

# INNOVATION & LEADERSHIP



After two years of hard work, the [Southwest Alabama Inclusion Project](#) is proud to produce the first-ever community needs assessment of LGBTQ+ populations in southwest Alabama. Involving 30 community organizations and businesses, Prism spearheaded the effort, successfully engaging over 500 participants and garnering recognition at the 2023 Mobile Community Health Leadership Awards. The final report was released in August 2024.

## INCLUSION PROJECT COMPLETION



We've revamped our website with an updated and engaging design and content to better showcase the scope of our work. New additions to the site include an "Our Story" page, detailed program and event overviews, and a "Prism Awards" section. The redesign was led by Margaret Jordan of Bold Layout, a Prism board member and facilitator, who volunteered her time and expertise to the project.

## NEW WEBSITE & ONLINE PRESENCE



This year, we held our first Leadership Retreat at Cheaha State Park, uniting board members and staff for team building and reflection. Activities included strategic planning, self-reflection on our character strengths, and an anti-racism workshop. This retreat was made possible by [CenterLink's](#) Center Capacity Building Initiative grant, which has allowed Prism to expand outreach, enhance services, and strengthen sustainability, allowing us to better serve our community.

## FIRST EVER LEADERSHIP RETREAT

# FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

## INCOME

Prism United is enhancing its financial management by transitioning to accrual accounting and deferring \$122,196.70 from two major grants to sustain key initiatives. Our revenue has increased by over 120% in just two fiscal years.

**Corporate Partners: \$46,900.44**

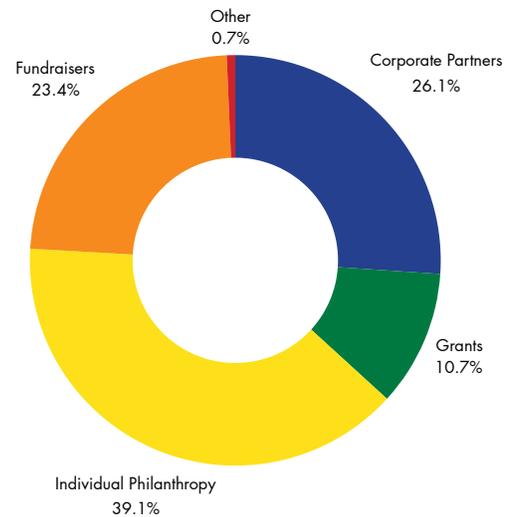
**Grants: \$19,303.30**

**Individual Philanthropy: \$70,422.90**

**Fundraisers: \$42,163.02**

**Other Income: \$1,202.55**

**TOTAL: \$179,992.21**



## EXPENSES

During its 2023-24 fiscal year, Prism acted as the fiscal sponsor of Coloring the Eastern Shore, a new LGBTQ+ organization serving Fairhope and surrounding communities. We are proud to dedicate time and resources in support of emerging LGBTQ+ efforts in our area.

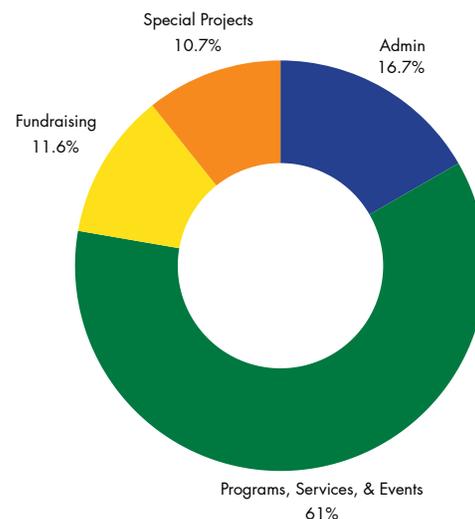
**Admin: \$31,543.37**

**Programs - \$115,416.12**

**Fundraising - \$21,847.01**

**Special Projects - \$20,281.14**

**TOTAL: \$189,087.64**



# FINANCIAL STATEMENTS, CONT.

## MAJOR GRANT AWARDS

### **\$50,000: CCBI GRANT**

CenterLink’s Center Capacity Building Initiative (CCBI) grant focuses on expanding Prism United’s capacity through several key initiatives: transitioning our Development Director to a full-time role, enhancing marketing efforts, providing professional development opportunities, and developing a long-term funding strategy. We were even able to hold our first-ever leadership retreat with these funds.

We are deeply grateful to CenterLink for their continued leadership in connecting and guiding centers like ours. Their partnership has been invaluable to our growth and development.



### **\$90,000: WAYOUT GRANT**

The wayOUT Grant will provide funding for the establishment of Mobile’s first-ever LGBTQ+ youth center. The journey to this incredible milestone was made even more special by our experience at the wayOUT Gayla in New York City last October. The Prism United team had an amazing time at the “Fantasy Prom” themed event. We were ecstatic to see our very own Ricketha crowned prom queen!

We can’t thank the members of wayOUT NYC Chapter enough for their support and generosity. Together, we are forging a path toward a more inclusive future for LGBTQ+ youth in southwest Alabama!



# GIVING PROGRAM

This year, Prism United launched a robust giving program, building on the success of our previous sustaining donors program, which grew from 31 to 57 memberships (representing individuals, families, and couples) during this fiscal year thanks to a strategic end-of-year campaign and a new membership initiative. These efforts effectively engaged the community, highlighted the impact of recurring monthly donations, and offered enhanced benefits.

The expanded giving program, now including membership levels, benefits, and tribute and memorial gift options, will support Prism's growth and sustainability by cultivating a more engaged donor base and ensuring a stable funding stream for our initiatives.

**84%**

Increase in participation in our new sustaining membership program this fiscal year

Our sustaining members have played a crucial role in advancing Prism United's mission. Their consistent contributions have directly supported the expansion of our programs, the success of our events, and the creation of safe spaces for LGBTQ+ youth, ensuring that we continue to make a meaningful impact in our community. We extend our deepest gratitude to each of our sustaining members for their steadfast support and commitment.



# BOARD OF DIRECTORS



**AIMEE  
CLIFFORD**

(she/her)  
Member



**ANTONIO  
BRITO**

(he/him)  
Member



**CHENELE  
CHAPMAN**

(she/her)  
Administrative Officer



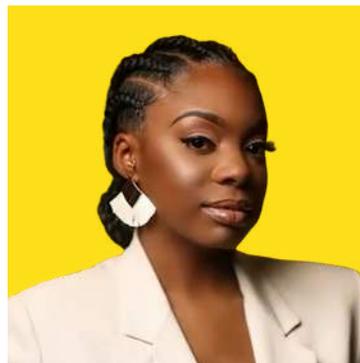
**DAN VAN  
NOSTRAND**

(he/him)  
Coordinating Officer



**KRISTON  
SEIBER**

(she/her)  
Finance Officer



**LOREN  
MODISA**

(she/her)  
Member



**MARGARET  
JORDAN**

(she/her)  
Member



**RHODA  
VANDERHART**

(she/her)  
Records Officer

# TRANSFORMATIVE PARTNERSHIP

## UNITED WAY OF SOUTHWEST ALABAMA PARTNERS

For the first time in nearly a decade, the United Way of Southwest Alabama reopened its highly competitive partnership application process to local health and human service nonprofits.

We were selected as one of the 50 agencies, representing the first and only LGBTQ+ organization UWSWA has ever partnered with. We are deeply grateful to the United Way for believing in our mission and championing our efforts to create lasting, positive change.

This partnership is more than just a milestone for us—it's a transformative opportunity that will significantly enhance our ability to meet the critical needs of our community.



**United Way  
of Southwest Alabama**

# CONTACT US



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info@prismunited.org



[www.prismunited.org](http://www.prismunited.org)