



SIDE BY SIDE

2025 Impact Report

A message from our **EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR**

Dear Side by Side Community,

We made it. Truthfully, there were too many moments where 2025 felt incredibly heavy, and while 2026 still carries a lot of uncertainty, we are still here. More importantly, our young people are still showing up. In a time where fear, isolation, and exhaustion have become very real parts of many LGBTQ+ youth and families' daily lives, we continue to see something powerful happen every single day: young people choosing connection, community, and each other.

This year challenged us in a lot of ways. We saw barriers grow around school access, visibility, life-saving medical care, and safety, especially for Black youth and families and for young people who already faced challenges getting connected to support. But instead of shrinking back, YOU helped us lean in. We adapted, expanded outreach, strengthened partnerships, trained more community members, and kept creating spaces where young people could feel seen, supported, and safe enough to exhale for a moment.

The numbers throughout this report matter, but what they really represent is people. Every visit represents a young person walking through our doors. Every training represents another adult better equipped to support LGBTQ+ youth. Every donation represents someone choosing to invest in hope and community at a time when both can feel hard to hold onto.

And through it all, Side by Side remains exactly what it has always worked to be: a reminder to young people that they are not alone.

Thank you for continuing to show up with us.

In solidarity and community,
Marquis D. Mapp, QMHP-C



Training & Education

We deliver a comprehensive suite of training and education services designed to foster understanding, allyship, and inclusivity for LGBTQ+ youth and communities. Offerings include foundational sessions on LGBTQ+ identities and terminology, specialized workshops on supporting transgender and gender expansive youth, and practical guidance on allyship and creating inclusive organizational cultures.

All trainings are available both in-person and virtually, ensuring broad accessibility. These services empower individuals and organizations to better support LGBTQ+ youth and advance equity in their communities.



Trainings

9 trainings held

298 individuals trained

Support Groups

At Side By Side, support groups are more than a place to meet, they're a place to belong. Our free, hybrid support groups connect LGBTQ+ youth and young adults across Virginia with peers and caring facilitators in affirming spaces where they can be themselves.

We offer groups for middle school youth, LGBTQ+ teens, transgender and gender-diverse youth, LGBTQ+ youth of color, and young adults navigating life after high school. Each group fosters connection, builds resilience, and reminds participants that they are not alone. Through every conversation, shared meal, and new friendship, our support groups help young people define themselves, belong, and flourish.



Volunteering

6 large community events

60+ active volunteers trained

856 volunteer hours logged



Clinical Services

Sometimes our youth need additional one-on-one support to navigate mental health challenges. We offer free, short-term counseling with licensed consulting clinicians, available in person or through secure telehealth appointments. Counseling is provided at no cost to eligible youth connected to Side by Side's services, ensuring access to affirming, LGBTQ+-inclusive mental health care when they need it most.

The \$40,000 gift from the Wayne Taylor bequest and facilitated by the Richmond Friends Meeting made it possible for Side by Side to restart this critical program by rehiring clinical counselors and restoring access to free mental health services. In 2025, 12 youth received affirming counseling through the program. As awareness of our restored clinical services grows, we expect more youth to access counseling. We look forward to continued investment in this program as it helps us expand access, reduce barriers to care, and ensure even more LGBTQ+ youth and young adults receive the mental health support they deserve.



Our Youth

196 new
enrollments

500 youth
enrolled

3305 center
visits



Drop-In Hours

Side by Side Richmond provides drop-in hours for LGBTQ+ youth and young adults ages 11-25. Any youth or young adult is welcome to drop by the Richmond Youth Center during drop-in hours to connect with Side by Side staff, enjoy a snack or meal, or just hang out in our space.

Drop-in hours allow youth to strengthen social connections, reduce isolation, and foster a sense of belonging in a supportive space. Whether someone visits for a few minutes or stays for hours, every visit is an opportunity to build relationships, access resources, and be reminded that they are not alone.



A thought from our BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Like many people who grew up in Richmond in the 20th century, I had zero positive LGBTQ+ role models, and a “safe space” for lesbian and gay kids would have pretty much referred to the closet. Hey, I thought Elton John was straight! (Yes, it was the ‘70s, but still.)

So it’s been an amazing journey for me to go from there to here, and to be asked to join the board of Side By Side last year. When you live in a “big city,” there are vast numbers of worthy organizations competing for donations, but I wanted to find a place that was making a difference in Richmond, where I came from, and where I still have family and friends.

Our family first became aware of Side By Side in the ROSMY days, specifically in the months after the shocking and sudden death of my partner Steve in 2004. My parents and I, and Steve’s parents too, wanted to honor his memory with a space dedicated to one of the joys of his life: reading. It’s a thrill for me to see that it’s still being used by the youth at Side By Side more than 20 years later.

Today I’m married, something I would have found inconceivable for more than half my life. Joaquin and I treasure our ongoing connection to Side By Side. The short time I’ve spent on the board has given me a window into the dedication (and the problem-solving skills) of so many people who manage not just to keep this essential organization going, but to help it thrive.

These aren’t easy times to be a young person who is “different,” but the previous times weren’t easy either, and look at the progress we’ve made! By helping young people find their voices and discover that they have a right to safety and community here in Richmond, Side By Side has made all our lives richer and better. I’m proud to be a part of it.

Sincerely,

Jon



Board of Directors



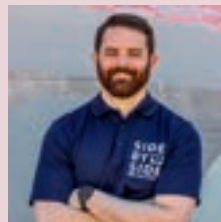
Eric (he/him)
Co-Chair



La Verne (she/her)
Co-Chair



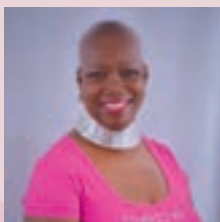
Jordan (he/him)
Treasurer



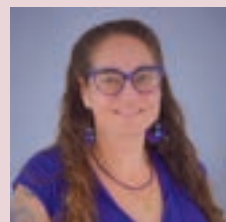
Ben (he/him)
Secretary



Chris



Mahalia



Nicole



Brittany

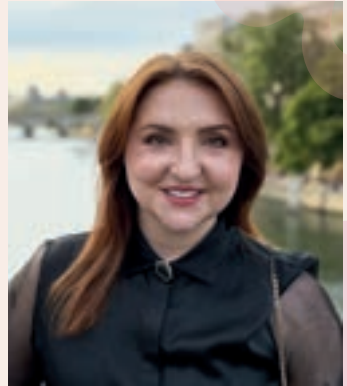
A note from our LAVENDER CIRCLE

Growing up in conservative, small-town Virginia, I did not have many LGBTQ+ examples or resources to look to. I came to understand and embrace my bisexuality much later in life, and now as an adult tend to seek out queer spaces and stories to feel more connected to the community I always felt was missing when I was younger.

While researching Richmond's queer history for my work at the Valentine Museum, I came across ROSMY – Richmond Organization for Sexual Minority Youth, the first iteration of Side by Side. Digging into their story, I was thrilled to discover Side by Side still actively providing dedicated space and support for Richmond's LGBTQ+ youth, exactly the kind of resource I wished I had growing up. I took the opportunity to do some of their community workshops and trainings, getting to know the Side by Side team and the important role they play in Richmond.

I choose to give to make sure queer youth continue to have a space where they can fully be themselves, safely explore all facets of their identities, and find a refuge from the ongoing political challenges currently facing the queer community. I am so happy that a youth focused organization like Side by Side exists in Richmond and am proud to play a small part in making sure it continues to provide services for the next generation of queer people.

Warmly,
Rachel Asbury Cole



2025 Lavender Circle

The Lavender Circle is a special recognition program that honors supporters who have made significant financial contributions of over \$1,000 within a calendar year. This exclusive group provides a unique opportunity for members to connect with fellow supporters and help drive matched donations for our organization. As a token of appreciation, Lavender Circle members are celebrated annually at a private pinning ceremony and publicly acknowledged during our large Springtime event.

Thank you to our 2025 Lavendar Circle Members:

Rachel Asbury Cole
Mitchell Cole
Theodore Cam
Kristen Bartholow
Brian and Angela Bortell
Ruben Garci

Lisa Halberstadt
Lynn Harling
Cary Hint
Ross Horner
Holly Hudson
Jeff Lacker

Kevin Li
Paul Munso
Ellen Rider
Jon Sche
Jeffrey Smith
Don Warren

Queer Care Closet

The Queer Care Closet is a welcoming space dedicated to providing essential toiletries, hygiene products, and independent living items at no cost. From shampoo and toothpaste to blankets, hand warmers, and other everyday necessities, the closet is stocked with items that help meet immediate needs and reduce barriers to well-being. We are extremely thankful to both Kroger and McKesson for being our generous partners in this effort!

Helping young people obtain essential items without financial burden, allows them to focus on school, work, relationships, and personal goals. Every item is a reminder that our community cares.



McKESSON

Kroger
FRESH FOR EVERYONE™

Development

360

donations totaling

\$215,558.04



Development and Partnership

Throughout the year, Friends of Side By Side have many opportunities to make an impact. During annual campaigns like Springtime in May and GiveOUT Day in June, as well as through annual, monthly, and one-time gifts, our donors keep our mission alive.



No contribution is too small - every dollar donated, every meal provided, every in-kind gift given helps create safer spaces, stronger programs, and brighter futures. Together, these gifts add up to something extraordinary: a community where LGBTQ+ youth and young adults are seen, supported, and empowered to thrive.

It takes a village to create a world where LGBTQ+ youth feel safe, supported, and celebrated. This year, your generosity made that world possible. To every donor, volunteer, and partner, thank you for believing in our mission. Your contributions, whether time, resources, or financial gifts, remind us that we are not alone in this work.
Thank you!

Employee Resource Group Friends

Carmax Cares
CoStar Builds
Dominion Energy LGBTQ+ Resource Group
Enterprise Mobility
Kroger

Other Friends of Side By Side

Centaurs MC
Knight Hawks of Virginia
Virginia Boys of Leather

Foundation and Grant Support

Laughing Gull Foundation
BAC Success 360
City of Richmond
Power ON
Weissburg Foundation
Richmond Friends Meeting

 SideBySideVA.org

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