



Newsletter



January 2021



Let's Reset!

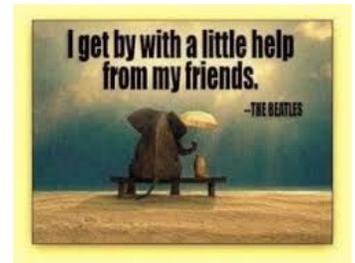
I think we could all agree at some level that we are glad that 2020 has ended. It has brought about financial and health hardship for many. We have had to get creative on how to healthily maintain our social lives while staying safe. It's truly been a tough year. Now that 2021 has arrived, it's time to hit the reset button! Think about ways to put yourself first this year. Think of things that are going to make you the happiest and best version of yourself. Do something bold and challenge yourself! Cheers to a fantastic 2021!

It Takes a Village

I Get By With A Little Help From My Friends

By: Bethany Roses

When Hazel began her transition, I felt so alone. I felt like there was truly NO ONE else in this world that understood or knew what I was going through. It was a very lonely time. For years, I navigated Hazel's transition and my emotions on my own. To put it simply, it didn't work. I gave myself no outlets of people to talk to and work through my feelings. I finally reached rock bottom and realized that I needed someone. That's when I got a therapist and reached out to support groups to find spouses who were going through a similar situation. It has been so great to have outlets to help process my emotions throughout Hazel's journey. I can finally say that I am at peace and am so happy with where our marriage currently sits. Having friends who can truly relate to my situation and be there through the thick and thin is something that I am so appreciative of. This transition is not something anyone can handle on their own; it undoubtedly takes a village.



We All Need Somebody to Lean On



By: Hazel Grace Roses

It's no secret that this girl just had breast augmentation less than a month ago. Going into surgery was a terrifying experience. I struggle from severe depression and anxiety so you could only imagine how messed up in the head I was that week. The thing is that I had so many amazing friends and a strong support system, so I should have never been fearful. Going through any type of surgery for transition definitely shows you who your true friends are. The comments and phone calls I've gotten definitely helped those painful first few days. I think this is definitely one of the most vital things anyone should start before they consider surgery. Ask yourself, 'Do I have a person that will be able to help me through the healing?' If I didn't have Bethany, I don't know what I would have done. The first few days she had to feed me, clothe me, brush my teeth, do my hair, and help with the bathroom. In addition, Bethany and I have amazing friends that brought us food to help out and we are eternally grateful for the help. I've learned that the smallest gestures done by my family and friends are really the biggest things! No matter what your path through transition is, medically or not, just remember your support system is the most important and will always pull you through!

Upcoming Support Meet-Ups

Due to the current COVID-19 outbreak all support group meetings are taking place virtually via ZOOM - Please note logins change periodically to ensure security.



Next Renaissance Transgender Meet-Up - Second Saturday Every Month @ 7:00pm (January 9)

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/82818647982?pwd=emJqYWRUUnVjOVZUWEE5ZWdBK2I2Zz09>

- Meeting ID: 828 1864 7982
- Passcode: EPTEP



Spouses & Partners - Second Tuesday Every Month @7:30pm (January 12)

<https://lvacademy.zoom.us/j/83253823949?pwd=V1g1aUdybkM2QUpJYWE0d3BwZkwxUT09>

- Meeting ID: 832 5382 3949
- Passcode: spouses



Beyond the Binary - Second Friday Every Month @7:30pm (January 8)

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/88455936193?pwd=MmpMTW5ka3duQXhVVG9BN3VHSHJQdz09>

- Meeting ID: 884 5593 6193
- Passcode: ENBY

The results are in!!

We want to thank all who took part of the Pennsylvania LGBT Health Assessment and we wanted to let you know that the results have been compiled in a public report available for download. There is also a summary presentation available on YouTube. Check it out [here!](#)



Star Trek Discovery Debuts Not One But Two Gender Expansive Characters!

Star Trek just announced that there are two new characters joining the Star Trek cast for this upcoming season. One of the characters is non-binary and the other is transgender. This is a huge advancement in LGBTQ representation in film. Read more about the new characters [here](#).



No One Should Go Hungry

No One Should Go Hungry

Food Assistance Is Available For Members of the Transgender Community In Our Service Area

Visit www.PATransEquity.org

EASTERN PA TRANS EQUITY PROJECT
www.PATransEquity.org

Available to transgender individuals and the parents of trans kids residing in Lehigh, Northampton, Monroe, Montgomery, Berks, Bucks, Carbon, and Schuylkill Counties

Eastern PA Trans Equity Project believes that everyone deserves to have food security. Unfortunately, many people are struggling to place food on their table - especially this year. That's why we provide food assistance to trans people and the parents of trans kids located within our service area. If you are in need of a grocery store gift card to help you this month, please apply at <https://www.patransequity.org/food-assistance/>. All applications are 100% confidential.

Eastern PA Trans Equity Project's mission is to Empower Transgender People while Promoting Social Justice and Building Community.

We serve Trans folk and the people who love them in Lehigh, Northampton, Berks, Monroe, Montgomery, Bucks, Carbon and Schuylkill counties.

Just What has Eastern PA Trans Equity Project accomplished this year?

We will be issuing our first official annual report sometime in February, but here are some high-level things to consider:

- We have had over 350 attendees take part in three different support group programs.
- We have mentored 47 transgender individuals with their legal name changes.
- We have approved over \$13,000 in empowerment grants to assist with name changes, education, transition clothing and more.
- We have educated and trained almost 500 health care providers and others on the importance of trans inclusivity.
- We have provided food assistance to dozens of members of our Community.
- We have hosted and coordinated events in support of Pride, Trans Day of Visibility, Black Trans Lives Matter, and Transgender Day of Remembrance.
- We helped to beat back a proposal that would have put trans rights on the ballot in Northampton County.
- We are working with healthcare providers, school districts and church groups and government leaders to improve things for trans folk.
- And - we are expanding our programs and services in 2021.

This is life-saving and life changing work. But it requires time and money to make these things happen. Please consider a small tax-deductible donation to help us continue our work by visiting <https://www.aplos.com/aws/give/EasternPATransEquityProject/general> or, if you are able to, please consider donating your time and skills.



Seeking Trans Affirming Healthcare?

We have updated and expanded our lists of trans -affirming therapists and physicians! It is available for download on both the EPTEP and LV Renaissance Websites!



Announcing Trans Topics Tuesdays

Beginning January 12th, Eastern PA Trans Equity Project will be hosting free virtual workshops on topics of interest to transgender folk. This is an opportunity for transgender and gender non-binary people as well as their allies and family members to learn more about topics such as transgender medical care, financial, legal, and political concerns, wellness, as well as transition advice. Workshops will be 60-90 minutes in duration and will include opportunities for Q&A. Please register for the programs of your choice at:

<https://www.patransequity.org/workshops/>

- 12-Jan Make Up for Blending In
- 14-Jan Making your Coming Out Plan
- 26-Jan Managing Dysphoria Using Mindfulness
- 9-Feb Feminizing Hormone Therapy
- 23-Feb Traveling While Trans
- 9-Mar Changing Your Name In PA
- 16-Mar Becoming Your Own Healthcare Advocate
- 23-Mar Reproductive Healthcare for Trans Guys
- 13-Apr Telling Our Stories through writing
- 27-Apr Voice Modification for Transition



Transgiving Trivia Contest Winners!

Congratulations to the following winners, who will each receive a swag bag full of EPTEP items including a t-shirt, refrigerator magnet, buttons and more!

- Christine
- Hazel
- Nathalie
- Stephanie

GenderBands - GRANTS AVAILABLE!

Each year, GenderBands provides funding to assist trans folk with the cost of affirming surgery. The 2021 grant application cycle is now open! So if you are seeking affirming surgery, this is a great opportunity for you – don't delay as all applications must be in by the end of December!



GALAP - The Gender Affirming Letter Access Project

Here is a great new resource for people who are struggling to obtain the letters they need to access HRT therapy or surgery. The Gender Affirming Letter Access Project is a network of medical providers and therapists who understand the importance of eliminating the medical gatekeeping that prevents many trans folk from accessing affirming care. We have linked to GALAP from the LV Renaissance website or you can visit them at <https://thegalap.org/>



EPTEP Awards Student With College Scholarship



Eastern PA Trans Equity Project has awarded its first College Empowerment Scholarship!

Matteo Montero - a resident of Bethlehem, PA - is a student at Moravian College who holds a 4.2 GPA.

Matteo is an active volunteer for Summerbridge - a summer enrichment program for middle schoolers from lower income families in the Lehigh Valley - where he mentors young people.

He also works to support the BIPOC trans community at Moravian and has personally donated a dozen binders for trans masculine individuals.

Eastern PA Trans Equity Project will be giving away another \$1,250 scholarship to a trans student in support of the Fall Semester, so be on the lookout for an announcement of the application period.

Quotes to Inspire you!

- “You’ll never be bored when you try something new. There’s no limit to what you can do.” - Dr. Seuss
- “It always seems impossible until it’s done.” - Nelson Mandela

Transgender Topics in the News

- [Elliot Page](#) thanks friends and family after coming out as transgender
- [‘Jeopardy!’](#) Contestant Kate Freeman is 1st out Transgender Winner

Homelessness Creates Trauma - Can Community Can Heal It?



The Holidays can be challenging for me emotionally, like for so many other Trans folks. I'm 44 and currently facing my third run-in with homelessness and unemployment in just the past two years. I had also been homeless for a time when I was 7 years old, but at least then I had my Mother and Sister, and the car we would sleep in together. Throughout my life I've experienced other types of devastation too – death, suicides, depression, abandonment, childhood trauma –which all weigh heavily on me when I'm going through difficulty like this again. Yet I remain open to these feelings and lean in, to find some healing through self-reflection, or learn from others' experiences.

Most recently, I got off of a bus in the wrong neighborhood after work. A familiar shivering began, my knees buckled me into a seated position, and I could do nothing but embrace myself as I rocked wildly back and forth, tears streaming down my face. My disorientation was so suddenly intense that I just sat there for hours in the cold night air, with myself and my CPTSD, on the curb of a random Banks' parking lot. I needed to get Home.

Desperate and exhausted, I found my way to my new apartment somehow and collapsed onto my bed, still angry at how rapidly my triggers turned a normal day into a terrifying one. I carry this same feeling when I think of those people in my LGBTQ family who are experiencing homelessness at this time of year; as they too are being traumatized, while simultaneously being exposed to a dysfunctional societies' value signaling on just about every topic, including the validity of their own existence.

While "OMG 2020!" has been the calling card of collective exasperation across social media platforms this year, and many communities have accepted the unusual circumstances of a distanced holiday, I find myself worrying more and more frequently about something else: the unacknowledged privileges in our society, that will allow many to just return to business as usual after COVID, thereby glossing over the societal imbalances that exacerbated this moment in the first place. I hope someday we can heal the dysfunctions inherent in our society that often lead to homelessness. For those who have experienced it though, their memories of abandonment after this year may never be the same, until they can find a Home, and a time to heal.

Corinne's Corner

Sometimes You Go Wide. Other Times You Go Deep!



The end of each year brings about opportunities for many of us to look back on what we have achieved. That reassessment is usually accompanied by the setting of goals and targets for the upcoming year.

This month's newsletter features messages from Bethany, Hazel and Aoife - all of which, in one form or another speak to the importance of Community.

Looking back, I can see how I have drawn on the strength of our Community. I know that I would not be where I am today had it not been there for me when I needed it most. Our Community and the individuals who make it up allowed me to grow strong roots. Roots that have helped me to stand tall - even when facing a headwind.

That is what EPTEP is all about. A Community of trans people helping other trans people grow the deep roots they need to, not just survive, but to thrive!

Our support groups create opportunities for learning and safe socializing while our empowerment grants create life-changing opportunities - opportunities that a trans person may not have otherwise had. As we head into this new year, EPTEP will be working hard to build-on our successes as we further strengthen our Community. Be on the lookout for some exciting announcements as we move ahead.

More critically, I hope that you will join us in our mission. I hope that you will set a goal of giving back to your Community. There are lots of ways to do so. Volunteer at your local food pantry... Mentor a young person... Give a ride to someone when they need to go to the doctor... or any of a dozen other activities.

The important thing is to set a goal and then through personal action, an investment of your time, or making a financial donation - make a difference in someone else's life - a difference that will help them to build deeper and stronger roots.

Join our campaign for visibility!



As part of our Transgender Day of Visibility programming next year, we are going to feature profiles of trans and gender-expansive people on our social media. If you would like to participate, please send a photo along with a 2-3 sentence description of yourself – Here is an example from Rowan “I am a trans man but being trans is the least interesting thing about me. I began transitioning in 2018 and am now at a place where this secret that plagued me for so many years is no longer something that I even have to think about on a daily basis. I didn't even know I had the capacity to be this happy every day. I wish I could reassure past versions of myself that not only is it going to be ok, it's going to be better than I could've ever imagined.”

Volunteer Opportunities

Renaissance and EPTEP continue to broaden our services and our reach and that has resulted in opportunities for our members to step-up and spread the word of inclusiveness. We currently are seeking:

- People interested in writing a column for this newsletter
- People who can accompany trans folk at their court hearings for legal name changes
- People interested in finding guest speakers for Renaissance meetings
- Bilingual individuals to assist Spanish speakers

If you want to make a difference and enjoy the good feelings you get from doing good work, email us at info@PATransEquity.org

Upcoming Events

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, many events/groups have been cancelled or are being held remotely. Please check with the facilitators of other groups as needed below.

- January 7 - Parents of Trans Kids in the Poconos 7pm (first Thursday of every month) - Contact Catherine at lgbtpride.org@gmail.com for details
- January 8 - Beyond the Binary Meet-up from 7:30-9pm (remote) - Contact KhrysExpositoclc@gmail.com for information
- January 9 - Renaissance Meeting (remote) - Contact Corinne at lvrenaissanceinfo@gmail.com for details
- January 12 - Spouses and Partners meet-up (via Zoom) - Contact Corinne at lvrenaissanceinfo@gmail.com for details
- January 13 - Parents of Trans Kids from 6-7:30pm (remote) - Contact Reilly at reilly@bradburysullivancenter.org for details
- January 26 - Transmasculine Group from 6:30-8pm (remote) - Contact Reilly at reilly@bradburysullivancenter.org for details
- January 27 - Parents of Trans Kids from 6-7:30pm (remote) - Contact Reilly at reilly@bradburysullivancenter.org for details
- January 27 - Transfeminine Group from 6:30-8pm (remote) - Contact Reilly at reilly@bradburysullivancenter.org for details

Always Stay in the Know - Follow Us on Social Media!

Follow us on [Facebook](#) and [Instagram](#)!



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