



Spring 2020 newsletter

Greetings,

In many ways, this isn't the newsletter I expected to send this spring. **The pandemic has changed life for all of us; it has altered our plans, tested our resolve, and forced us to cope with many kinds of loss.** At the same time, we continue to reckon with police brutality and anti-Black injustice, simultaneously grieving and showing up for our neighbors. **As we enter into Pride month amidst so much upheaval, I'm reflecting on the Stonewall Riots of 1969. The events at Stonewall changed the trajectory of the LGBTQ+ liberation movement, building on the sacrifices and gains of the Civil Rights Movement. Black lives matter and, as an organization with predominantly White leadership, we are aware that we need to be explicit about our anti-racism, mindful of our impact, and unwavering in our commitment to serving Black queer and transgender youth.**

Through these intertwined events, our goal is to be a safe haven for young people. LGBTQ+ youth often deal with rejection or lack of understanding at home, and these youth need us now more than ever. Since mid-March, all of our programs have been fully online, allowing youth to access support virtually three times each week. **Because of you, they remain connected to one another and to supportive adult role models, and it is clearly making a difference.** Program attendance is strong, and we've been heartened by the power of engaging across distance.

So while this newsletter is different than the one I'd imagined writing, you'll find that, like you, we're forging new paths to activism, connection, and community. Our educational workshops have made a seamless transition to the virtual realm, we're hosting chats with alums home unexpectedly from college, and **this week we are welcoming aboard our next executive director. You can read about her below,** and she is looking forward to meeting you soon!

I hope that you and your loved ones are feeling supported and finding the resources you need at this time. If you aren't, **please tell me how we can help.** And as we head into Pride month, **I'm sharing a few opportunities to be part of our community's joy.** If these are activities that would bring light to your life, I hope you'll take part.

Here's to our resilience, our collective liberation, and to the youth who will shape our future!

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Donna".

Donna Tambascio, Chair
OUT MetroWest Board of Directors

Announcing our new executive director

I'm excited to announce that Whitney Retallic is joining us as OUT MetroWest's next executive director. For more than 20 years, Whitney has developed programs for youth and young adults, including time as a Unitarian Universalist youth coordinator and as advisor to an LGBTQ+ student organization. Whitney brings strong experience building organizational structures, nurturing community partnerships, and developing financial resources.



These skills, coupled with her relational management style and her dedication to the LGBTQ+ community, will help guide OUT MetroWest through this challenging time in our world, as well as this moment of growth in our organization's history.

We're excited to welcome Whitney and look forward to your meeting her soon, too. To learn more about Whitney and the rest of our staff, [click here](#).



Rainbow Lawn Signs

With so many LGBTQ+ young people isolated from their typical support systems, let's show them some love! Our friends at [Lauren Tetreault & Team Realtors](#) have donated these beautiful lawn signs to do just that. Would you be willing to display one in your yard? We know it would mean a great deal to your young neighbors.

If you would like a free lawn sign, please fill out [this form](#) and we'll make a contactless delivery to your home. We can deliver them anywhere within a 15-mile radius of Framingham. Supplies are limited, so sign up now and show your Pride!

Pride Car Parade

Thanks to inspiration and support from some incredible volunteers, we're excited to sponsor a rolling Pride parade through downtown Framingham on Saturday, June 13. With Boston Pride cancelled due to the pandemic, we wanted to find a safe way to mark the holiday.

Participants are encouraged to decorate their vehicles so that we can livestream our colorful celebration far and wide.



In order to ensure the safety of all participants and residents, we are limiting the

number of vehicles that can participate and discouraging congregation along the parade route. **Advance registration is required, and just a few spots are left.** Please note that we'll also be live-streaming the parade on [our Facebook page](#) starting at 9:30 a.m. on June 13.

To learn more or sign up, click [here](#).

Local Small Businesses Supporting OUT MetroWest

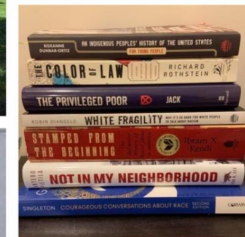
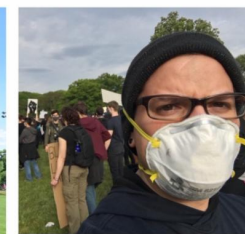
This Pride month, two local businesses have generously pledged to support OUT MetroWest and local LGBTQ+ youth!

- For every book that they sell from their [Pride Month 2020 list](#), [Silver Unicorn Bookstore](#) in Acton will make a donation to OUT MetroWest. There are some great books for children and teens on their list!
- For every handmade Pride soap that they sell, [Molly's Apothecary](#) in Medway will make a donation to OUT MetroWest. This woman-owned business makes beautiful products you can't find anywhere else.

Both of these businesses have worked tirelessly throughout the pandemic, providing our communities with in-demand items like books, puzzles, hand sanitizer, and soap. They are offering curbside pickup and shipping, and we know you'll find lots to love among their wares! **When you spread the love this Pride season by shopping local, you'll be making a difference for LGBTQ+ youth!**

Racial Justice is an LGBTQ+ Issue

Our mission is to build communities where LGBTQ+ youth thrive, and we can't do that without advocating for racial justice. Increasing our cultural competency as an organization is part of our [strategic plan](#), and we're also taking individual steps toward racial justice during this moment of national mourning and action. **Are you wondering how you can help?** There are many great lists like [this one](#) and [this one](#) available on the web, and here are a few actions OUT MetroWest folks have been taking locally:



How staff and board members have been taking action

- Demonstrating in Boston and the surrounding communities
- We're reading and watching movies about race and talking to other non-Black people about what we learn
- Following Black voices and organizations on social media to learn and signal boost
- Talking to White children about race and racism (with help from [Wee the People](#))

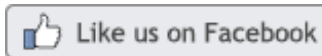
- Giving to causes that center Black individuals and communities (a few we wanted to shine a light on this week are [National Bail Out](#), [Southern Poverty Law Center](#), [Fathers' Uplift](#), [the fund for Darnella Frazier](#), and [Robbins House](#))

There are ways for all of us to engage in racial justice work. For those most directly impacted by racism, this might mean taking time to rest, connect with loved ones, and recharge. Others may be called to direct action, charitable giving, and advocacy. **However you are engaging in this work, we are grateful.**

Outstanding Partner Award

On May 20, we were honored to receive the Outstanding School Partner Award from the Massachusetts Association of School Committees. Nominated by the Framingham School Committee for our partnership in serving local LGBTQ+ youth, OUT MetroWest attended a virtual award ceremony where we were recognized alongside fellow honorees The Homework Center at the Framingham Public Library, the Retired School Volunteers Association, and community leader Carol Phelan. We are truly grateful for this special recognition and for the chance to work alongside so many inspiring educators.

STAY CONNECTED



MetroWest

Enriching lives. Building community.

P.O. Box 2122 | Framingham, MA 01703

508-875-2122

info@outmetrowest.org

[Donate today!](#)