

# IT GETS BETTER PROJECT<sup>®</sup>

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2022 ANNUAL REPORT



**“It Gets Better has filled me with an endless joy, support and confidence I really needed. It’s been an absolutely empowering experience, and it means so much to me to share my story as a young queer and trans kid and make a difference in my community. The staff and other youth voices are all kind, inspiring, amazing people and I am honored to have been a part of this organization.”**

**– Elliot, 15**





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# LETTER FROM LEADERSHIP

**Twelve years ago, we embarked on a mission to communicate to LGBTQ+ youth that “it gets better,” and to create the changes necessary to make things better for them. In the process, we became the world’s largest storytelling effort to empower LGBTQ+ youth to unlock and pursue their greatest potential. How remarkable!**

Today, our message reaches well beyond the United States, from India to Brazil to Panama. We’ve become global in every way. Thousands of young LGBTQ+ people connect with the It Gets Better Project every year through programs designed explicitly to connect them to a future filled with endless possibilities. Whether tapping into the knowledge base of our community through the stories we collect and share, connecting with us through powerful middle and high school grantmaking initiatives, or elevating personal activism and the desire to give back, the It Gets Better Project is here to ensure that every LGBTQ+ young person is capable of defining their own authentic journey.

The path is different for everyone. And we know with determination and a little resiliency, a path forward exists to anybody that comes across our efforts.

We are so proud of what we continue to accomplish, but there is still much work to be done. With a rising anti-LGBTQ+ sentiment — driving hateful legislation here in the US and around the world — we must stay focused on preparing the next generation of LGBTQ+ people to understand they are not alone. We are using these battles to become our rallying cry for triumph and love.

As you review our accomplishments from the past year, I want you to imagine a time where there is no need for an organization like the It Gets Better Project — then every young LGBTQ+ person possesses a positive self-identity. Then they can advocate for themselves and others. Then they can contribute to building a caring and thoughtful community through meaningful relationships with others.

Then, I want you to ask yourself, what role can I play to help make that world a reality?



**BRIAN WENKE**  
Executive Director  
It Gets Better Project



**PAUL DIEN**  
President  
Board of Directors  
It Gets Better Project

# CREATING POSITIVE CHANGE

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LGBTQ+ youth deserve to be surrounded by safe and affirming environments. But today, many queer young people around the globe have limited information about what it means to be LGBTQ+ and are growing up in spaces that reject their identities. Adults — whether it's lawmakers spreading disinformation, or parents who simply don't know how to support and advocate for their kids — are failing them.

When LGBTQ+ youth can see a path to a brighter future, they thrive. We know that with access to education, affirming resources and supportive communities, their overall physical and mental health is stronger and academic achievement improves.



# OUR TASK

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The It Gets Better Project is the world's largest storytelling effort to empower LGBTQ+ youth with initiatives spanning four continents and eight languages. Our mission is to uplift, empower and connect LGBTQ+ youth around the globe.

We empower LGBTQ+ youth to embrace and pursue their greatest potential by nurturing their confidence and providing the resources they need to build skills for navigating the world. We ensure that LGBTQ+ youth know and believe there is a future out there for them — and that their options are limitless.



**“After coming out during COVID and the isolation that came with it, Elliot was struggling through a very rough period in their life; which was also extremely scary as a parent. One of their middle school teachers sent the recommendation for the It Gets Better Project Youth Voices application. Being accepted into the program brought a light back into their life. Youth Voices has provided acceptance, support, resources (for both Elliot and for us as parents), has encouraged advocacy through creativity in multiple mediums, and has been a huge part of them finding security in being their authentic self. I know Elliot has found their true spirit with this program and is ready to lead to inspire others!”**

**– Holly Schneider, Parent (Texas)**



## Our Focus Areas

The It Gets Better Project reaches LGBTQ+ youth before they are in crisis, offering resources and encouragement they can carry with them along their individual journeys. Our three focus areas inspire hope and conversation, encourage learning and skill-building, and cultivate a global community to support LGBTQ+ youth.

### STORYTELLING & MEDIA

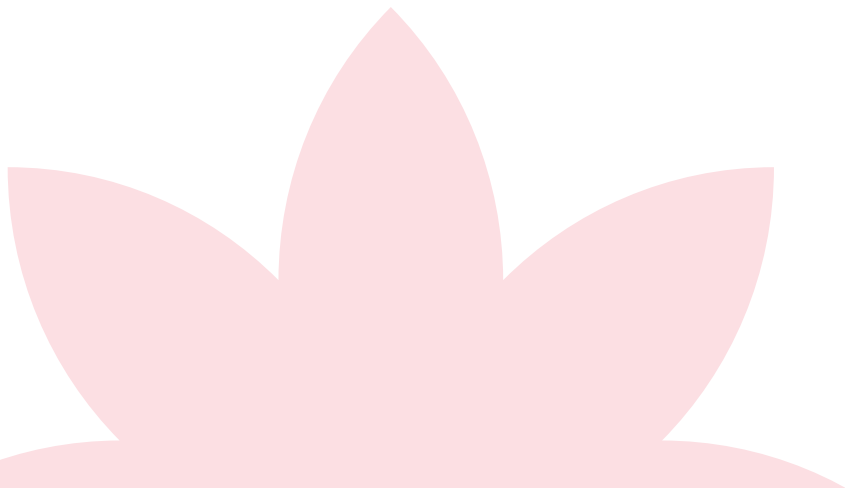
Storytelling is at the heart of our effort to empower LGBTQ+ youth around the globe. We share stories that inspire hope, stories that spark conversations, and stories that can inform and positively influence a sexual orientation and/or gender identity journey.

### EDUCATION

It Gets Better EDU exists to ensure that our uplifting and informative stories reach LGBTQ+ youth and their peers wherever learning takes place. With an impactful youth ambassador program, student-driven grantmaking initiatives, and a growing library of free educational resources for educators and student leaders, thousands of middle and high school students engage with the It Gets Better Project EDU programming every year.

### GLOBAL

The It Gets Better Project is the world's largest storytelling effort to empower LGBTQ+ youth. Investing in local, like-minded organizations outside the US, the It Gets Better Project brings story-telling and other life-affirming support to communities of LGBTQ+ youth around the globe.



# OUR 2022 IMPACT

The It Gets Better Project's stories and resources serve as an affirming guide and safe haven for LGBTQ+ youth far and wide. Just how far did we reach in 2022? Take a look:

STREAMED OVER  
**1,200 HOURS**  
OF QUEER JOY ON TWITCH WITH  
**100+**  
LGBTQ+ STREAMERS CONTRIBUTING TO A  
**300%**  
FOLLOWERSHIP INCREASE

MORE THAN  
**21M VIEWS**  
ACROSS TIKTOK, INSTAGRAM, TWITCH, TWITTER, FACEBOOK, LINKEDIN, REDDIT AND TUMBLR

**64,000 STUDENTS**  
AND MORE THAN  
**2,800 EDUCATORS**  
REACHED THROUGH THE IT GETS BETTER PROJECTS'S FREE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES

MORE THAN  
**\$570k**  
IN GRANTS  
DISTRIBUTED TO SCHOOLS AND ORGANIZATIONS WORKING TO MAKE THINGS BETTER FOR LGBTQ+ YOUTH GLOBALLY

HOSTED  
**891**  
LGBTQ+ ACTIVISTS  
FROM  
**111**  
COUNTRIES  
AT ILGA WORLD CONFERENCE

MULTIPLE  
**TELLY, ANTHEM, WEBBY AND MARCOM**  
AWARDS FOR THE ORIGINAL SERIES  
**QUEER SEX ED**

**19**  
YOUTH AMBASSADORS  
PARTICIPATED IN THE YOUTH VOICES MENTORSHIP PROGRAM.

**50,000**  
USERS  
ON *IMI*, THE DIGITAL MENTAL HEALTH TOOL THE IT GETS BETTER PROJECT DEVELOPED WITH HOPELAB, CENTERLINK AND HUNDREDS OF LGBTQ+ YOUTH

**1.8M**  
VIEWERS  
REACHED THROUGH THE **INDUSTRY: STEM** ORIGINAL SERIES

MORE THAN  
**10B**  
UNIQUE MONTHLY VISITORS REACHED THROUGH MEDIA COVERAGE



# Storytelling & Media

For 12 years, the It Gets Better Project’s stories have connected LGBTQ+ youth around the world, helping them foster a sense of pride in their identity and giving them the tools to imagine and shape their own futures. Here are some highlights of how and where our storytelling efforts reached LGBTQ+ youth in 2022.

## Story Highlights

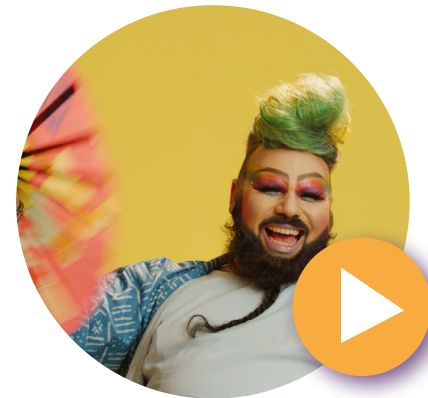
**Chella Man, Dee Trannybear-Marino** and **April Kae** introduced audiences to our reimagined It Gets Better videos by sharing wisdom and observations from their identity journeys.

**“I could not have found this at a better time in my journey ❤️ Thank you so much for sharing, Chella. And thank you for providing a platform it gets better!”**

*– Youtube Commenter*



*“Being deaf made me really wanna figure out... how can I express myself without sound.”* Artist, director and author **Chella Man** spoke about his multifaceted identities as a “curious, stubborn, Deaf, transmasculine, genderqueer, Jewish and Chinese” person.



*“Bigger and better things always come your way, no matter how dark times might be.”* **Dee Trannybear-Marino**, an “artist” who founded a beauty company catering to trans and nonbinary people, shared how they grew into their identity and found their community.



*“One thing that’s made a huge difference is seeing other people be confident in their sexuality over time.”* Bass player **April Kae**, who went viral on YouTube with a Cardi B. cover, talked about her experience of music and getting better at handling the challenges the world has brought her.



## ORIGINAL SERIES: Queer Sex Ed

*Winner of Telly, Anthem, Webby and MarCom awards!*

Comprehensive sex education is critical for LGBTQ+ young people’s health. But with systemic barriers impacting many schools across the country, sex ed is limited and exclusive. So with the help of educators **Melina Gaze** and **Dr. Lexx Brown-James**, the It Gets Better Project launched *Queer Sex Ed* to spotlight inclusive conversations about sexual health, and help to fill in the gaps where the educational system falls short. We partnered with *Q. Digital* and *Hornet* to bring this series to more than 1.2 million viewers.

**“We have no templates.” Thank you for boosting the dialogue! This topic is so incredibly important. ❤️**

*– Youtube Commenter*

## ORIGINAL SERIES: Perfectly Queer



### Winner of the Shorty Award for Art & Culture Podcast

Our original Twitch Vodcast, *Perfectly Queer*, curated a digital space where LGBTQ+ youth can safely interact with their peers. Comedian **Ever Mainard** and PhD student **Taylor Scriber** hosted 16 bi-weekly episodes, inviting LGBTQ+ youth to join casual conversations about identity, self-expression, and LGBTQ+ news and art. Special guests included **Calle y Poché**, **mxmtoon**, **Zolita** and more. The series was made possible with support from the Humble Bundle community.

*“You live in your truth the way you want to live in your truth and you don’t need to explain that to anyone because at the end of the day while it is important to have examples of ourselves in the world... your sexuality is an incredibly private thing and you don’t have to share it with anyone. You don’t owe anyone that but yourself.”*

- Taylor S., host, *Perfectly Queer*

## ORIGINAL SERIES: LGBTQ+ Fundamentals



We unveiled this series of bite-size educational videos as a companion to the popular Glossary section of [ItGetsBetter.org](https://itgetsbetter.org). *LGBTQ+ Fundamentals* provided explanations for well-established terms, as well as those that are still gaining wider recognition, to help LGBTQ+ youth develop language and feel a sense of belonging around their unique identities. These videos were funded with support from the Humble Bundle community.

**“As an indigenous gender-pan person. I am so happy to see my other siblings up there and showing pride. Both to LGBT and to our heritage!!❤️”**

- Instagram Commenter

## It Gets Better Digital Pride



Our third annual *It Gets Better Digital Pride* created welcoming spaces for youth to celebrate and learn together, comprising 550 hours of digital programming that garnered 11 million impressions and 230,000 engagements across all the It Gets Better Project’s social media platforms. Our Youth Voices interviewed LGBTQ+ public figures, we hosted inclusive and body-positive fitness events, and we presented a series of TikTok videos offering advice to LGBTQ+ youth celebrating their first Pride. Our events featured an impressive array of talent including **Nyle DiMarco**, **Armand Fields**, **Jeffrey Jay** and more.



“gosh ty for this! I’m going to my first pride parade this weekend so this helps curb a lot of my anxiety 😊”

– Tiktok Commentor

DIGITAL PRIDE



## ORIGINAL SERIES: Industry: STEM



With support from our friends at Howmet Aerospace Foundation, *Industry: STEM* provided LGBTQ+ youth with a glimpse of what their own incredible futures could look like. LGBTQ+ STEM professionals — including Google coder and TikTok instructor **Anna Lytical**, t-cell immunologist **Reiss Reid PhD**, and neuropsychologist-in-training and The Great American Baking Show semi-finalist **Jiwandeep Kohli** — shared their experiences as LGBTQ+ people in their industries and how they found their career paths with more than 1.8 million viewers.

## #ElectionSzn



To help LGBTQ+ youth develop resources and skills to advocate for themselves around the 2022 midterm elections, the It Gets Better Project teamed up with Rock the Vote, DoSomething! and GLSEN for an educational video series on TikTok and Instagram. *#ElectionSzn’s* weekly videos featured LGBTQ+ content creators and activists spreading important, youth-focused information about the voting process and registration reminders.



#ElectionSzn



## PARTNER SPOTLIGHT



The It Gets Better Project partnered with the Taco Bell Foundation to launch *The Assignment*, a career and skill-readiness web series pairing queer youth with LGBTQ+ professionals in the food and beverage industry to learn a craft while discussing shared queer experiences. Taco Bell also supported the It Gets Better Project through a series of drag brunches, produced at select Taco Bell Cantina locations across the country with host Kay Sedia hosting each event with an overview of the organization and our work.

[WATCH THE SERIES](#)



# It Gets Better EDU

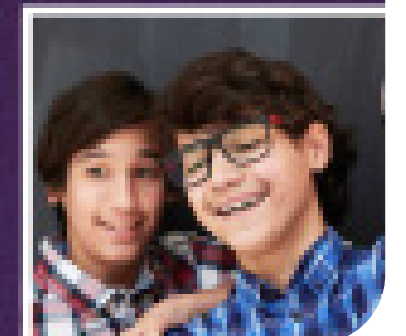
LGBTQ+ youth know how they want to see the world around them change for the better. They just need the right resources and affirmation to support their bright ideas.

## 50 States. 50 Grants. 5,000 Voices

In 2022, we saw a record number... of anti-LGBTQ+ bills introduced in nearly every U.S. state, many of which stand to make schools overtly hostile to LGBTQ+ youth. But students pushed for progress in spite of these threats, and led LGBTQ+ affirming projects in middle and high schools across the country with the help of more than \$500,000 in grants from the It Gets Better Project. With support from American Eagle, Aerie and their customers, [\*50 States. 50 Grants. 5,000 Voices\*](#) enabled students to create an educational experience on Native Hawaiian's recognition of māhū identity (third gender identity) in Hawai'i; a set of murals based on inclusion and unity highlighting queer, Black history in Mississippi; and more. We are excited to expand the initiative in 2023, with schools in Canada also becoming eligible for grants.

"This is AMAZING!! Props to you and all the other staff and students who were behind this. You're all making our school a more inclusive place ❤️"

- Instagram Commenter



50 STATES  
50 GRANTS  
5000 VOICES

Get a sneak peek at which schools were granted up to \$10,000!

## Youth Voices



The It Gets Better Project's official youth ambassador program, [Youth Voices](#), welcomed an outstanding cohort of young LGBTQ+ people ages 13-18 to share their stories, build advocacy skills and connect with their peers. In 2022 our Youth Voices led the way on educating community supporters with such activities as:

- **Speaking at SXSW EDU about anti-trans legislation in Texas, hosting panels and taking the stage at the NYC Pride Human Rights Conference and TheRally.**
- **Speaking with *USA Today* on the rise in book bans across the country and with *Seventeen.com* on the importance of proper pronoun use.**
- **Producing a series of zines on self love, mental health and Pride Month that were released throughout the year.**

- **Joining Teen Vogue for an Instagram Live conversation with 14-year-old in luencer and activist **Zaya Wade** and 40-time Jeopardy champion **Amy Schneider** on the rise in anti-LGBTQ+ bills and how to better support LGBTQ+ youth.**

We also offered a brand-new opportunity for our Youth Voices to bond and learn together by hosting an inaugural three-day Youth Summit at the Los Angeles LGBT Center. Youth Voices came together to participate in workshops; discuss issues that matter to them; and celebrate with other Los Angeles area LGBTQ+ youth for an afternoon of games, crafts, music, dancing and more.

**"I was so inspired today listening to some of the youth ambassadors talk about the family and the friendships they have together. I need to be a part of this program - it's so cool"**

*- Twitch Commenter*

## imi: A Mental Health Resource



The It Gets Better Project joined Hopelab, CenterLink and hundreds of LGBTQ+ young people in developing a digital mental health tool for LGBTQ+ youth. [imi](#) is an essential resource that supports LGBTQ+ young people as they explore their identities, equipping them with positive coping skills to safely move through a world where their identities are ignored or stigmatized. *imi* has reached more than 50,000 users, and research shows it boosts positive coping skills that support LGBTQ+ youth mental health.

## EduGuides



We added two new guides to our library of [free educational materials](#), which complement the It Gets Better Project's original web series *Queer Sex Ed* and *Industry: STEM*. Overall, educators downloaded thousands of the It Gets Better Project educational materials in 2022, reaching more than 64,000 students to help them grow into confident, self-actualized individuals.



**“With the help of the It Gets Better Project, students in our community were able to see themselves represented and celebrated. Although homophobia is still present in our community, it no longer gains students social cache. These changes are only the beginning of what I hope to see happen in our organization as we seek to create a safe space for all. Seeing queer students feel comfortable enough to come out, find support when they encounter conflict at home and have meaningful young romantic relationships excite me for their futures as comfortably out queer people.”**

**– Sarah Dean, English Teacher**

## PARTNER SPOTLIGHT



Bungie is a long-time supporter of the It Gets Better Project and has played a vital role in raising funds to help us reach more LGBTQ+ youth in the digital space. Through sales of the Destiny Pride pin and the message that “hate has no place in our games,” Bungie has mobilized the gaming community to foster inclusive environments for LGBTQ+ individuals, raising several hundred thousand dollars for the It Gets Better Project in the process. Their support has allowed us to expand our presence on gaming platforms like Twitch and work with a diverse roster of streamers, all focused on connecting with and empowering LGBTQ+ youth.





# It Gets Better Global

LGBTQ+ youth know how they want to see the world around them change for the better. They just need the right resources and affirmation to support their bright ideas.

## Global Grantmaking

For LGBTQ+ youth everywhere, feeling seen, heard and connected to support systems strengthens their ability to face the challenges of the world and avoid falling into crisis. Our [Global Grantmaking](#) initiative supports international storytelling and community-building projects for LGBTQ+ youth, by investing in organizations that are part of our Global Affiliate Network and beyond. Our Global Affiliate Network spans 19 countries across four continents, with storytelling initiatives in eight languages: English, Spanish, Portuguese, Russian, German, Greek, French, and Hungarian.

We awarded \$73,100 in global grants in 2022. More information regarding our grantees can be found on our [website](#).

## IT GETS BETTER BRASIL

### Grantee Highlight It Gets Better Brasil

It Gets Better grants supported the production of a web series titled *Dear Diary: A Journey to Queer Self-Esteem*, which guides LGBTQ+ youth in building self-confidence. The series is currently in production and will be released in the second half of 2023.



### Grantee Highlight Taiwan Equality Campaign

It Gets Better grants supported the [Asia Rainbow Ride](#), a week-long annual bike ride that for three years has traveled around Taiwan to raise funds, awareness and visibility for the Asian LGBTQ+ community.

## IT GETS BETTER PERÚ

### Grantee Highlight It Gets Better Peru

It Gets Better grants supported the creation of an educational web series highlighting the experiences and community-building efforts of transgender women in Peru.

## ILGA World Conference



LGBTQ+ youth not only need the agency to fight for themselves; they need adults to fight for them, too. The It Gets Better Project is part of the fight as a member of ILGA World, working alongside more than 1,800 organizations from 168 countries that advocate for LGBTQ+ rights. In 2022, we co-hosted the [ILGA World Conference](#), one of the largest gatherings of LGBTQ+ activists from around the world. More than 800 LGBTQ+ leaders and organizations joined us in Long Beach, CA where they participated in skill-building workshops, networked and bonded at social engagements, and discussed the global LGBTQ+ movement.

## Cumbre en Español



We welcomed Global Affiliate Network members from Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Guatemala, Spain, Hungary, Mexico, Panama and Peru to connect with one another in Miami, Florida at [Cumbre en Español](#), our first-ever summit held entirely in Spanish. It was a special opportunity for us to discuss our strategies for ensuring Spanish-language accessibility and Latine representation in our work, and for affiliates to build relationships and share knowledge to strengthen their efforts.

**“The Summit in Spanish allowed me to meet and learn from members of different affiliates and experience the wide range of efforts we’re all establishing to better serve LGBTQ+ youth. It was an inspiring meeting with many people and a unified message: It Gets Better”**

– Erika Cisneros, Student Council coordinator of It Gets Better Mexico.





**USA TODAY**  
FEBRUARY 5

Books are being banned from school libraries. Here's what that does to students.

[LINK](#)



**THEM**  
MARCH 31

From "X" Gender Passports to New TSA Regulations: Everything Happening on TDOV

[LINK](#)



**WASHINGTON BLADE**  
MAY 5

2022 ILGA World Conference takes place in Calif.

[LINK](#)

**TODAY**  
JUNE 26

Meet the 14-year-old bringing a queer youth conference to rural Texas

[LINK](#)



**INTO**  
JULY 20

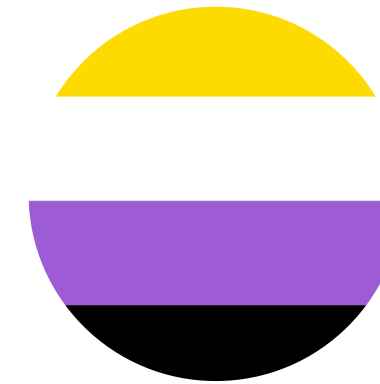
EXCLUSIVE: Chella Man Encourages Queer Kids to Keep Going in "It Gets Better" Video

[LINK](#)

**SEVENTEEN**  
AUGUST 30

Young People on the Moment They Knew They Were Nonbinary

[LINK](#)



**PRIDE**  
NOVEMBER 29

Chris Evans & Brother Scott Show Support for It Gets Better Project

[LINK](#)

JAN FEB MAR APR MAY JUN JUL AUG SEPT OCT NOV DEC

**TEEN VOGUE**  
FEBRUARY 22

Teen Vogue Chat: Supporting LGBTQ+ Students

[LINK](#)



**TASTING TABLE**  
APRIL 25

Taco Bell Is Throwing A Drag Brunch In 5 US Cities

[LINK](#)



**IGN**  
MAY 24

The Sims 4 Is Adding Custom Pronouns At Last

[LINK](#)

**FORBES**  
JUNE 28

'It Gets Better Project' Supports LGBTQ+ Youth With \$500K In Grants

[LINK](#)

**NORTHJERSEY.COM**  
AUGUST 9

Anti-LGBTQ curriculum emails spurred a new club in Hackensack. Now, it's won a \$10K grant

[LINK](#)



**WOKE AF PODCAST**  
NOVEMBER 28

Queer Youth Are the Future

[LINK](#)

**QUEERFORTY**  
DECEMBER 1

New It Gets Better Project web series features LGBTQ+ STEM professionals

[LINK](#)



**“Connecting with other queer activists and creating a community of people who care about the world in the same way I do has only amplified my voice to fight for liberation. Being a Youth Voice has not only taught me all the ways to use my voice to tell my story, but also how to support and be supported by the people in your corner.”**

***– Eris, 18***





**“My daughter is 14 years old and I am so grateful for the work you are doing on behalf of LGBTQ+ youth. Thank you, too, for the content you are providing for family members, friends, and loved ones who want to show allyship. We are well intentioned, but we often don’t know how to help or what words to use. We are so grateful for your organization.”**

***- Monthly Donor***

## THE IT GETS BETTER PROJECT 2022 FINANCIALS

### Statement of Activities for the Year Ended December 31, 2022

with comparative totals for the year ended December 31, 2021

	2022	2021
Revenue & Support	\$3,096,265	\$3,982,695
Expenses	\$4,558,085	\$2,388,858
Change in Net Assets	\$1,461,820	\$1,681,234
Net Assets - Beginning of Year	\$3,909,368	\$2,228,134
Net Assets - End of Year	\$2,447,548	\$3,909,368

### Statement of Financial Position, December 31, 2022

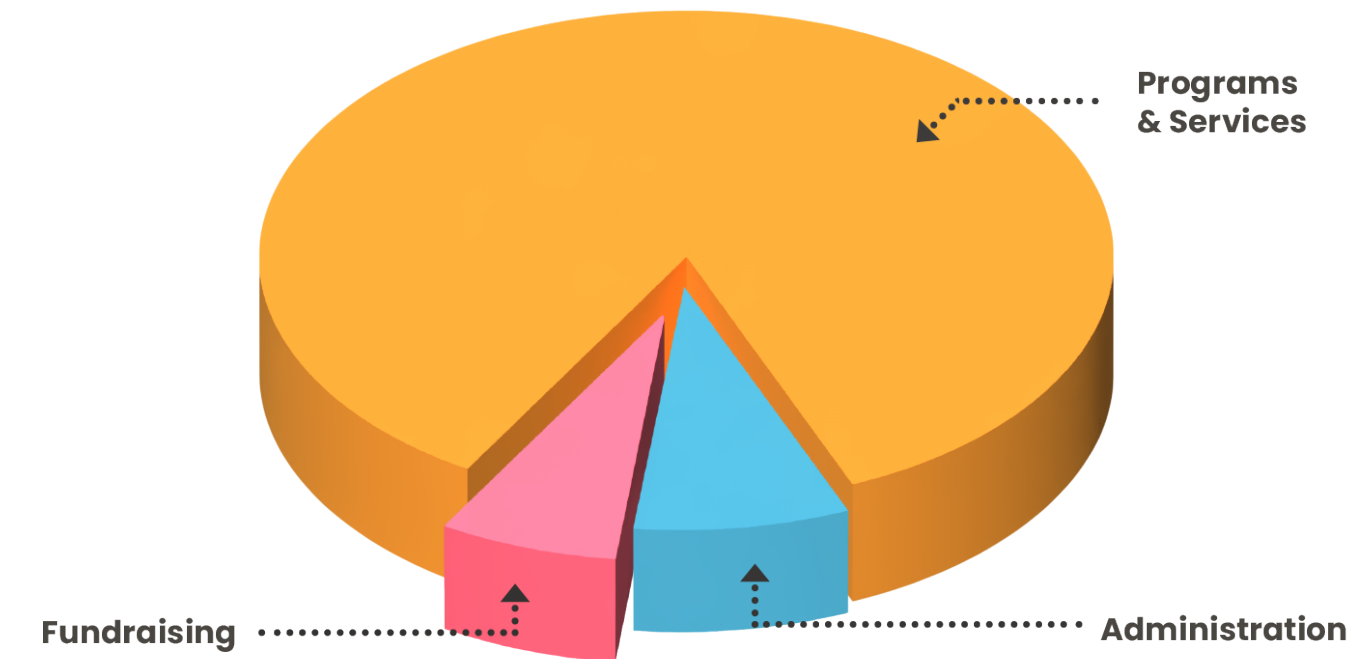
with comparative totals as of December 31, 2021

	2022	2021
Assets	\$2,720,925	\$1,977,732
Liabilities	\$273,377	\$75,523
Net Assets	\$2,447,548	\$3,909,368

### Statement of Functional Expenses for the Year Ended December 31, 2022

with comparative totals for the year ended December 31, 2021

	2022	2021
Programs & Services	\$3,912,155	\$2,369,845
Administration	\$371,163	\$204,857
Fundraising	\$274,767	\$206,269



The It Gets Better Project is committed to financial transparency, with a score of 100 on Charity Navigator and a Gold GuideStar rating.

# CATALYST CLUB

## Ground Shaker

(\$100,000+)

- American Eagle Outfitters
- Aerie
- Bath & Body Works
- Bungie Inc.
- Humble Bundle
- Taco Bell Foundation

## Thought Leader

(\$50,000 - \$99,999)

- AbbVie Foundation
- Ardene
- Converse Inc
- Freeform
- Funko Pop
- Howmet Aerospace Foundation
- Oribe
- Ulta Beauty Charitable Foundation
- Zumba

## Social Innovator

(\$25,000 - \$49,999)

- Banter by Piercing Pagoda
- Buena Vista Theatrical Group (Disney Theatrical Group)
- ChapStick
- Don Levin Trust
- e.l.f. Cosmetics
- Lexus
- Lilly Pulitzer
- The Rona Jaffe Foundation
- See's Candies
- State Farm Insurance
- Stuart Weitzman
- TikTok
- Trailer Park
- Visible Wireless

## Catalyst

(\$10,000 - \$24,999)

- #Lubelife
- ACCO - Mead Five Star
- Artisan Council
- Automobile Club of Southern California
- AZ Factory
- Casetify
- Centric Brands
- County of Los Angeles Third Supervisorial District
- Electronic Arts
- Ernst & Young
- Gallagher Insurance
- GANT AB
- GHOST Lifestyle
- Glow Recipe
- Hopelab
- Hulu
- Jack & Jones
- MISSOMA
- NARS Cosmetics

## Change Agent

(\$5,000 - \$9,999)

- Advanced Micro Devices
- Capital Group
- Colorproof
- FitOn
- Hampton Water
- Johanna Cosby
- Names for Good
- Pledgeling Foundation
- RhinoShield
- Scott & Jairo Parra-Matthews
- Taiwan Equality Campaign
- The Good Patch
- Thomas Hitzlsperger
- Toddland & Bob's Burgers
- Together for the Future (Sandro Europe)
- Voodoo Doughnut, LLC

## Influencer

(\$1,000 - \$4,999)

- 17 Media
- Buddah Jewlery
- Coors Family Foundation
- Daniel McGregor
- Destany Chisom
- Durham Academy Upper School GSA Club
- Emily Bett Rickards
- Hallie Bush
- ICL Specialty Products
- Jeffrey and Susan Lubetkin
- Jordan Carver
- Josie Maran
- Juan Morales
- Justin Wee & Timothy Ito
- Kirrin Finch
- Kohler Co.
- Krave Beauty
- N-able HR Department
- Nathan Ingham
- Ole & Steen
- Pacific Shaving Company
- PopSocket
- RightPoint
- Shaun Lewis
- Spare the Rock Records LLC
- Stonewall Community Foundation
- Universal Music
- Verve Coffee



# The Year Ahead

**If we've learned anything from the last few years, it is that nothing is certain and vigilance is key. Yet, in spite of the sweeping anti-LGBTQ+ legislation cropping up in nearly every U.S. state, my faith in the resiliency of our community and the determination of the next generation of queer folk remains steadfast.**

The obstacles we have overcome in the last few decades have all but guaranteed the mainstreaming of our community. There is no going back — the closet doors have been blown off their hinges. There are too many of us to ignore. With every obstacle LGBTQ+ people encounter, we grow stronger. The more our detractors try to silence us, the louder we become. This will not change.

Young queer people today possess a power unlike any generation before them. Yes, they share some of the core, age-neutral experiences most queer people face on their journey to self-acceptance, but they are vastly unique in their understanding of and access to the world. They are motivated to create the world in which they want to live, and that world holds strong the tenets of equality, inclusiveness, and the freedom to live authentically without fear of persecution.

That passion and spark is what we at the It Gets Better Project work tirelessly to protect and foster. It is our reason for existing: to empower LGBTQ+ youth to define their own journey.

In the coming year, we will continue to shine a light on the stories from our community that have the power to inform and inspire. We will walk in step with local communities with the expansion of *50 States, 50 Grants, 5,000 Voices*, our initiative to put power into the hands of LGBTQ+ youth wanting to change their schools for the better. And, we will continue our journey around the world to ensure that no matter where a young LGBTQ+ person lives, they will know and have access to a global community that is ready to support them in their time of need. We are so much better together, and we will undoubtedly climb to great heights in 2023!

**- Brian Wenke, Executive Director**



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