

July President's Letter

Hello,

Over the past several months, OKEQ has been hard at work making the necessary changes to the organization in order to best serve 2SLGBTQIA+ Oklahomans. I try to remind myself that just like the challenges we face as an organization didn't come about overnight, it will take time, hard work, and patience to fix them.

OKEQ Strategic Consultant and Transition Team

In May of this year, we brought on Wendy Thomas as an executive consultant to help the organization for 12 months. Wendy brings a wealth of nonprofit experience and has been a huge asset to the board and staff as we stabilize the organization and work toward realizing all that OKEQ can be. She's responsible for managing a Transition Team composed of individuals with diverse backgrounds and identities who have donated their time and expertise to carry out specific actions to implement our crisis management plan. In early June, we had a Transition Team Retreat where we prioritized tasks necessary for OKEQ's stabilization. The Transition Team meets monthly, and Wendy provides Transition Team updates to the Board of Directors at our monthly Board meetings.

OKEQ Board

Gala

I want to thank Gala Chair Crista Patrick, Honorary Chairs Marcy Smith and Sue Welch, and our Gala Committee for all of their hard work and dedication in putting together the 2024 I AM EQUALITY Gala & Benefit: Be Your Own Masterpiece. The gala sold out and was our most successful gala to date. The Tulsa community raised over \$350,000, and we could not be more thankful for the support. As our major fundraising event, the funds raised will be put toward sustaining our operations for the next fiscal year (October 1st, 2024-September 30th, 2025).

Community Engagement

We will be engaging with other 2SLGBTQIA+ groups and community members in a format we are calling Community Cafes. We've hosted 2 so far and have 1 remaining on [Monday, August 19th from 6 to 8 PM](#). Additionally, we have released an [FAQ document](#) addressing frequently asked questions, added a [feedback form](#) to our website, released a [community survey](#), and will be reinstating quarterly town halls.

Pride Festival and Parade in October

Our Pride Chair and Committee are hard at work planning [Tulsa Pride](#) for October! OKEQ made this change for a few different reasons. First and foremost, it is for the community's safety. We want this celebration to be available to as many folks as possible, and the rising summer temperatures have made it increasingly dangerous for attendees. Additionally, it has always been a tight turnaround for our amazing staff to go from putting on our annual gala fundraiser in late spring/early summer to putting on the largest Pride Parade in the state in June.

For the sustainability of our staff, something had to give. We are focused on being good stewards of our funds as we plan for Pride this year while also maintaining quality for all attendees. Here's our new Pride weekend lineup:

- Pride in the Park, our family focused night on the Guthrie Green, will be on Friday evening. Folks can bring a picnic and enjoy community, lawn games, and a drag queen story hour!
- On Saturday morning, we will have our Rainbow Run, which consists of a 1-mile fun run and a 5K. Bring out your rainbows and tutus to make this run unforgettable!
- After the Rainbow Run on Saturday, we will have the Pride Festival with vendors and food trucks
- Grab VIP Lounge tickets or meet and greet tickets to get up close and personal with our Saturday night headliners!
- The Pride Festival will open again on Sunday, culminating in Oklahoma's largest Pride Parade to close out an incredible weekend!

Thank you for your continued support and commitment to our mission. Together, we are making a meaningful difference in our community.

Sincerely,
Whitney Cipolla