THE STATE OF US

Dear OUTWORDS community,

After the past year-plus, do we dare to hope? More folks are vaccinated, and the weather is warming up. As we tenderly emerge from the darkness of the past year, we are also aware that there is no “going back” to the way things were. If this is a difficult reality to accept, it also offers promise; undeniable issues rose to the surface during the pandemic that require our attention. *Moving forward, may we continue to interrogate our individual and collective ways of living,* to ensure they are sustainable, and that they promote peace and justice.

BUILDING OUTWORDS’ CAPACITY

Late last year, OUTWORDS received a $25,000 capacity-building grant from Gilead Science, focusing on two areas of operation: **Development** and **Archive Optimization**.

Development is just what it sounds like: helping OUTWORDS create our first comprehensive 3-year fund development plan. Archive Optimization is about making sure that the portion of our website that hosts our [Full Length Interviews](https://www.outwords.org/full-length-interviews) is as user-friendly and functional as possible, for both casual browsing and in-depth research.

The Development RFP (Request For Proposals) is [here](https://www.outwords.org) and the Archive Optimization RFP is [here](https://www.outwords.org). Please feel free to share these RFPs with any folks whom you think might make great candidates. *(deadline: Friday, May 14)*. And thank you Gilead for your generous support!!

SAVE THE DATE: INTERSECCIÓN
Intersección: The Latinx LGBTQ Artist Experience in Los Angeles
Wednesday, May 12, 2021
5pm PT/8pm ET

A virtual panel with artists and elders sharing on the intersectionality of their personal experiences being Latinx and LGBTQ in the Los Angeles art scene for the last 40 years. Register here to attend.

Presented by The Outwords Archive with panelists:

• Louis Jacinto, Mexican-American photographer documenting Los Angeles subcultures.
• Odalys Nanin, Cuban-American founder of MACHA Theatre (Mujeres Advancing Culture, History & Art).
• Joey Terrill, pioneer of queer Chicano visual art and second-generation native of East Los Angeles.
• Moderated by Andrea Pino-Silva, digital movement architect and OUTWORDS board member.

This panel discussion was made possible with funding by the City of Los Angeles Department of Cultural Affairs.

Register here to attend.

A MOMENT OF SILENCE

We want to acknowledge and honor here two OUTWORDS interview subjects whom we lost in recent months. Health revolutionary Carmen
Vázquez, who proudly described herself as “[a] Puerto Rican, a butch lesbian, and a socialist,” passed away in January of Covid-19. And legendary San Francisco philanthropist Al Baum died of non-Covid causes in March.

Our hearts go out to the many, many folks who loved Carmen and Al, including Al’s husband Robert Holgate who has become a cherished friend and supporter of OUTWORDS.

The departures of Carmen and Al remind us of the vitality and urgency of our mission. OUTWORDS is founded on the premise that our pioneers and elders have the most wisdom to share, and the least amount of time to share it. Thank you, as always, for enabling us to capture these important stories while we can.

WORTH THE WAIT!

Five years. That’s how much time transpired between when North Carolina organizer Mandy Carter was first recommended to OUTWORDS as an interview subject, and when we finally were able to align our schedule with Mandy’s to record her story in April 2021.

Let me just say here: it was worth the wait. Mandy has deeply moving and compelling stories to share about spending the first 18 years of her life in foster care; of making her way to the San Francisco Bay Area in the late 1960s in time to join the War Resisters League in protest against the Vietnam War (spending 10 days in jail at the age of 19); and of the challenges and joys she has experienced over more than five decades as a dedicated Black lesbian activist. We can’t wait to share Mandy’s full interview with you!

We’re also excited that in the past few months, we have been able to upload a bunch more full-length interviews to our website, including transgender pioneers Valda Prout and Shannon Minter, passionate bisexual activists Loraine Hutchins and ABilly Jones-Hennin, and Arden Eversmeyer, founder of the Old Lesbians Oral History Project.

AN AUSPICIOUS CORRESPONDENCE
OUTWORDS recently had the honor of interviewing William Waybourn, who was an indispensable gay activist and organizer in Dallas during the 1980s, particularly as the gay community confronted the AIDS epidemic.

During the course of his interview, William told the story of the 1988 lawsuit that he, as President of the Dallas Gay Alliance, helped launch against Parkland Memorial Hospital. Parkland Memorial was the only hospital in Dallas County that was serving people with AIDS, and the hospital had exactly one doctor assigned to this rapidly expanding group of mostly indigent men who desperately needed medical care. Read more...

SAVE THE DATE: GIVE OUT DAY

This year, OUTWORDS will be participating in Give OUT Day, a month-long fundraising campaign culminating on June 30, 2021, the only national day of giving for the LGBTQ community. Mark your calendar!

This year, Give OUT Day is June 30, but the campaign lasts all of Pride Month. That means that every donation through the month of June helps us win prizes that can expand our impact.

More to come; watch this space for more details soon. We hope you'll join us! We can't wait until June!

A ROADMAP FOR OUTWORDS' FUTURE

In June 2020, OUTWORDS received a grant from the California Arts Council to create its first Strategic Plan, in conjunction with Executive Service Corps of Southern California, a professional non-profit consultancy in Los Angeles.
From August 2020-March 2021, the OUTWORDS Strategic Plan task force met twice per month, analyzing OUTWORDS' strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats, and interviewing approximately 25 OUTWORDS stakeholders including interview subjects, staff, donors, and community members.

I can tell you -- it was a ton of work!! But the results are in, and I cannot tell you how excited I am to share the Plan with you, our extended OUTWORDS community. Please click here to read the 3-pg Executive Summary; and if you are interested in delving into the full plan, just send me a note by hitting "reply" and I’ll be happy to share it with you.

**BOOK OF PRIDE ON THE MOMS DEMAND ACTION BOOK CLUB!**

We’re pleased to share that *The Book of Pride* has been selected by the Moms Demand Action Book Club, whose theme for April-June is “Lessons from LGBTQ+ History.”

With nearly 6 million supporters nationwide, Moms Demand Action is the nation’s largest grassroots volunteer network working to end gun violence. We are deeply honored to be included in their reading list (which also includes recent OUTWORDS interviewee Susan Stryker). Check out the full list here.

**TRAUMA-INFORMED INTERVIEW APPROACH**

Our core OUTWORDS team (of whom I am so incredibly proud) had a collective “ah-hah” moment last Fall, when we realized that along with being very resourceful, resilient people, many if not most of our interview subjects have experienced some form of trauma, on their journeys as LGBTQ individuals and pioneers.

We realized **we needed tools to support our subjects** as they revisit and recount traumatic events from their lives, and also to take care of ourselves, as witnesses to their profound stories. This realization led us to invite the
wonderfully skilled Kim Cookson from the Southern California Counseling Center for a four-hour training on how to develop and implement a trauma-informed interviewing approach to our work. Kim shared many useful tools with us, including the Community Resiliency Model.

Thank you Kim for wise and powerful guidance -- and thank YOU, our supporters, for providing the financial resources that made this important training possible.

As we turn our gaze towards Pride Month, I am profoundly grateful for the opportunity to serve OUTWORDS as Executive Director, and for the generous support you all provide -- whether it’s a financial contribution, a short email response of encouragement, a suggestion, or all of the above.

Because of you, LGBTQ+ history is being captured, preserved, and shared in the voices of those who witnessed it and made it happen. Please continue to support our work as generously as you can.

Warm and grateful regards,

Mason

Mason Funk
Executive Director, OUTWORDS

Donate to OUTWORDS