

Like a pot of gold at the end of a rainbow, my child found ItGetsBetter.org. When they watched all of the articulate, successful, happy people telling them it would get better, it was like discovering a secret friend who had their back. The feeling of belonging my child receives from your organization cannot be overstated —it continues to be a lifeline.

-Jacqueline, parent

Letter from Leadership

2021 Annual Report

The LGBTQ+ community, especially youth, has been through a lot over the last couple of years. With more than 300 anti-LGBTQ+ bills on the docket. a rash of book bans, aggressive tactics to restrict inclusive educational opportunities, a pandemic that continues to threaten our global community, and a pervasive mental health crisis - it can feel like the odds are stacked against us. But one thing has remained constant at the It Gets Better Project: hope.

When hope feels threatened, our immediate response is to tap into the collective creativity of our community to carve a path through the darkness. Our job is to cut through the noise and uncover the sometimes difficultto-see steps toward progress the LGBTQ+ community is making every day. Whether we're amplifying the stories of LGBTQ+ people, supporting educators with inclusive educational programming, or providing capacitybuilding grants to our like-minded partners abroad, the It Gets Better Project is determined to uplift, empower, and connect LGBTQ+ youth around the globe. And, our work is more important now than it ever has been.

The It Gets Better Project is here for the long haul, to help LGBTQ+ young people find joy in their personal journey to becoming self-actualized adults, and to understand what it truly means to be proud in their sexual orientation and gender identity. We are determined to reach every single young LGBTQ+ person in need of a supportive friend, to open their eyes to their limitless potential, before they encounter obstacles with the potential to diminish their light. Nothing will sway us from striving for a world where all LGBTQ+ young people are free to live equally and know their worthiness and power as individuals. In the pages to follow, you will understand why!

Paul Dien President, Board of Directors



Brian Wenke Executive Director It Gets Better Project



The It Gets Better Project is the world's largest storytelling initiative to empower LGBTQ+ youth. We envision a world where all LGBTQ+ youth are free to live equally and know their worthiness and power as individuals.

Our mission is to uplift, empower, and connect LGBTQ+ youth around the globe in three ways:

STORYTELLING & MEDIA

The It Gets Better Project works in all forms of media to bring messages of hope to LGBTQ+ youth, spark conversations about the challenges they confront, and inform and positively influence their sexual orientation and/or gender identity journey. The It Gets Better Project's storytelling campaign is at the center of its global effort to empower LGBTQ+ youth. Every It Gets Better story offers a unique and wisdom-infused perspective, but the core message in each is the same: telling LGBTQ+ youth that, whatever their circumstances, life has the potential to get better.

This message has attracted millions of followers and positioned the It Gets Better Project as THE PREMIERE destination for LGBTQ+ youth exploring their sexual orientation and/or gender identity. Our work has been honored with an Emmy Award, translated into award-winning TV specials; inspired a New York Times bestselling book; showcased in museum exhibits, live performances, TV show plotlines, comic books, graphic novels and more.

EDUCATION

It Gets Better stories can empower young LGBTQ+ people to pursue their greatest potential. They can also inspire empathy and understanding in others. With a growing library of free educational resources inspired by It Gets Better stories that delve into the LGBTQ+ experience, a premiere youth ambassador program, and ambitious grantmaking initiatives, tens of thousands of high school students are engaged and positively impacted through It Gets Better EDU programming every year.

GLOBAL

The It Gets Better Project is building a global community by connecting and supporting like-minded affiliate organizations* that have embraced our mission to support LGBTQ+ youth in their home countries; spearheading global grantmaking initiatives to elevate the work of organizations serving LGBTQ+ youth; engaging with young LGBTQ+ people both on and offline through special events; and curating safe virtual spaces where LGBTQ+ youth can connect and engage with one another.

"Il Gets Better Global Affilicites are located in Argentina, Austria (Brzal) Canada, Chile, Colombia, Dominican Republic, Greece, Guatemala, Hungary, India, Mexico, Panama, Paraguay, Penu, Portugal, Russia, Spain, and the United Kingdom. To connect with these affiliates, click here.



Ratings & Recognition + Our 2021 Impact

CHARITY NAVIGATOR
Your Guide To Intelligent Giving

Charity Navigator Accountability
& Transparency Score

GuideStar
Gold
GuideStar Rating

It Gets Better original series Passion, Power, Performance: Out & Training for the Tokyo Olympics reaches

2.5 Million

400,650
visitors to ItGetsBetter.org

LGBTQ+ non-profit on TikTok

Panama

is the latest country to join It Gets Better's Global Affiliate Network Inspiring stories viewed

7.3 Million times

50,000+
Students

2,100
educators reached through
It Gets Better EDU resources.

\$84,500

in grants awarded to global organizations championing the needs of LGBTQ+ youth. 1.6 Million
Overall Followers

128,000

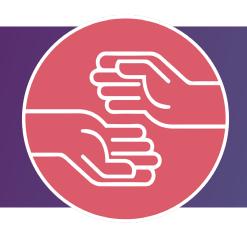
New Social Media Followers (Facebook, Instagram, LinkedIn, TikTok, TumbIr, Twitch, Twitter and YouTube)

> It Gets Better Global Summit attracts

125
activists from around the world

Earned Media Impressions:

8.1_B



About Our Audience

Approximately 5.6% (~2 million) of youth ages 13-17 in the United States identify as LGBTQ+. Globally, that number rises to as many as 72 million. Many of them are grappling with a variety of obstacles and challenges while on their sexual orientation and/or gender identity journey. More than two-thirds of LGBTQ+ youth report experiencing verbal harassment. Twenty-five percent of those kids are physically harassed. And as many as 1.8 million LGBTQ+ youth ages 13-24 contemplate suicide each year.

The It Gets Better
Project seeks
to reach LGBTQ+
youth before
they are in crisis.



Our organization was born in the digital space, and with 75% of Gen-Z'ers coming out online before they do so in real life, we are uniquely qualified and positioned to reach this audience as they begin to discover their place in the LGBTQ+ community.



Media & Storytelling

Stories are the vehicle we use to connect with LGBTQ+ young people around the world. From carefully curated conversations on Twitch and quick-bite advice on TikTok to original web series and youth-created zines, our stories exist across multiple platforms with the goal of sharing a story that reflects every LGBTQ+ young person exploring their sexual orientation and/or gender identity.

ORIGINAL SERIES Writing Our Own Dictionary





"I shared the first video from 'Writing Out Own Dictionary' with one of my non-binary students and it 100% made their day. They started off doubtful, but by the end, there was a tear in their eye and they set a reminder to watch the other three videos. You are doing important work."

-Mary B., educator

ORIGINAL SERIES

Passion Power Performance



Created in partnership with Procter & Gamble, <u>Passion Power Performance</u>: <u>Out & Training for the 2022 Tokyo Olympics</u> follows four queer athletes training for the summer games—all during a global pandemic. <u>Chelsea</u>

Wolfe is the first trans-Olympian to make the U.S. BMX team, giving queer, trans, and nonbinary kids hope that anything is within reach; <u>Courtney Ryan</u> (wheelchair basketball) plays a physical contact sport and is changing perceptions of athletes with disabilities; <u>Izzy Cerullo</u> (rugby) went from being unsure about her identity to getting engaged on the field; and <u>Michael Gunning</u> (swimming) trained to be the first out LGBTQ+ POC on Team Jamaica. These athletes let us into their lives and into their hearts—and their powerful stories inspired <u>2.5 million</u> views on social media.

"When you have a disability, you feel constantly shamed and dismissed. Same is true for the LGBTQ+ community. When you are part of both communities, it can be daunting. I needed to see this — it will uplift a lot of young people & motivate them to keep fighting every day."

—Melissa, YouTube comment

It Gets Better: A Digital Pride Experience



Pride continued to thrive in the digital space with the second annual It. Gets Better: A Digital Pride Experience. This two-day, 16-hour live stream event boasted talent including Kalen Allen, Laverne Cox, MJ Rodriguez, Zachary Quinto, Calle y Poché, Aly & AJ, Pabllo Vittar, and more! Bringing pride into the homes of LGBTQ+ youth all over the world, It Gets Better: A Digital Pride Experience generated 114.4M social media impressions, and was featured by Good Morning America, Esquire, The Los Angeles Times, and more.

"I was having such a bad day until I saw this. OMG they make me feel so inspired. Thank you for sharing your experiences with us Laverne and MJ."

-Geoffrey, YouTube comment

It Gets Better on Twitch



Last fall, we kicked off our Twitch Ambassador Program with an inaugural class of 14 streamers dedicated to furthering the life-affirming message of the It Gets Better Project. Special streams included a Transgender Day of Visibility panel made possible by our friends at Riot Games, a National Coming Out Day fundraiser with Playtra Games and Gayming Magazine, and a holiday-themed chosen family celebration.

"Being an Ambassador for the It Gets Better Project has truly been the opportunity of a lifetime. As soon as IGBP posted looking for Twitch Ambassadors, I knew I had to shoot my shot! I have been streaming on Twitch for over two years now and my goal has always been to create safe spaces for the LGBTQIA+ community. IGBP gives me the support to do that in fun and amazing ways."

–@joyfuljupiter,It Gets Better Project Twitch ambassador

It Gets Better on SNL

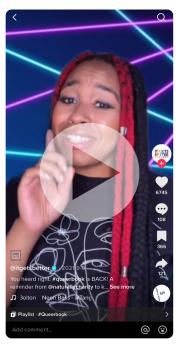


Schitt's Creek star Dan Levv celebrated his Saturday Night Live hosting debut by paying tribute to the It Gets Better Project in an all-star sketch. Supported by queer SNL regulars Kate McKinnon, Bowen Yang and Punkie Johnston, the sketch drew big laughs and even bigger numbers on social media. With more than 2.5 million views on YouTube alone, the It Gets better sketch also inspired a limited edition "iguana pin" that went into reprint five times and sold out

within hours.



It Gets Better on TikTok



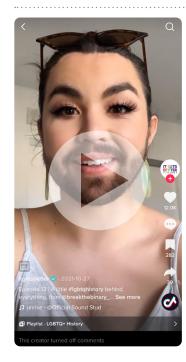
In 2021, the It Gets Better Project further made its mark as the number one LGBTQ+ non-profit on TikTok with more than 200 short-form videos aimed at empowering queer youth. We also returned for the third year with #QueerBook, a back-to-school glow-up campaign to remind queer teens to embrace their best selves, featuring popular TikTok creators including @NaturallyCharity, @elliot_enbyy and @julianburzynski. The TikTok exclusive effort garnered 37.7 million impressions.

"There is no right or wrong way to be queer/transgender.

Just be yourself."

-Elliot, Youth Voices member, 14, excerpt from #Queerbook campaign

Moments in Our History



For National Coming Out
Day and LGBT History
Month, we collaborated
with longtime brand partner
Converse on a "Moments in
Our History" campaign. The
TikTok exclusive strategy
prompted LGBTQ+ microinfluencers to highlight the
most impactful, significant,
or surprising moments that
stick out to them in LGBTQ+
history. The campaign
attracted over 400,000
views.

I don't plan on coming out anytime soon but I do like learning about stuff like this

2021/10-11 Reply

If Gets Better - Creator

That's okay tool On your terms only, if and when you feel ready

2021/10-11 Reply

PARTNER SPOTLIGHT:



A new supporter of the It Gets Better Project, the Howmet Aerospace Foundation centers on a commitment to education, workforce development and access to the fields of science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM).

As part of this commitment, the Howmet Aerospace Foundation continues to prioritize finding new ways to diversify these fields and has partnered with the It Gets Better Project on an original content series, *Industry*. This series follows the experiences of LGBTQ+ professionals in STEM and is intended to inspire a plethora of potential career pathways available to LGBTQ+ youth.

Coming November 2022





It Gets Better EDU

From our Youth Voices ambassador program to our growing library of free-for-download educational resources delving into the LGBTQ+ experience, It Gets Better EDU continues to ensure the uplifting stories crafted and collected by the It Gets Better Project reach queer youth around the world. It Gets Better EDU materials and resources reached thousands of educators and parents in 2021, keeping the stories and experiences of LGBTQ+ people front and center wherever learning takes place.

SPOTLIGHT Youth Voices



Now in its second year, the It Gets Better Project's Youth Voices ambassador program continues to illustrate the immeasurable energy and passion young LGBTQ+ people have for creating a world that accepts them as they are. During the 2021/2022 academic vear, we welcomed 13 passionate LGBTQ+ youth to the program.

These exceptional young people have worked with the It Gets Better Project on a variety of projects, including:

- Live conversations on Instagram, Twitch, and YouTube with influencers like JoJo Siwa, Blair Imani, Jackie Cox and Francia Raisa.
- Activations with brand partners including Mattel, Converse, Clean & Clear and American Eagle.
- The creation of an original Zine for Trans Awareness Week.
- Participation in an original op-ed on chosen family for Newsweek.



"I am so happy I applied and that I get to be a member of Youth Voices. These other LGBTQ+ kids feel like family to me. We all support each other. We can understand and relate to each other's experiences. We're there for each other."

-Elliot, 14, Texas

50 States, 50 Grants, 5,000 Voices



In November 2022, the It Gets Better Project, in partnership with American Eagle and Aerie, launched 50 States 50 Grants 5.000 Voices, a \$500K grant initiative to support LGBTQ+ inclusion in middle and high schools across the US. The program will fund 1-2 projects aimed at improving the experience of LGBTQ+ students at school in all 50 states plus Washington D.C. and US territories. Grants will be valued at up to \$10K each and will be awarded and distributed for the 2022-2023 academic year.

"We thank you from the bottom of our hearts. The students will be very excited to get to work on this [grant project], and to affect positive change for the LGBTQ+ community throughout the state of New Hampshire."

-Surry Village, Charter School

Working It Out



It Gets Better EDU introduced <u>Working It Out: An LGBTQ+ Employee</u>
<u>Resource Series</u> to support our corporate partner's efforts to authentically address the needs of LGBTQ+ employees in the workplace. The six-part series is designed to foster a deeper understanding of the LGBTQ+ experience and to support stronger allyship. In its inaugural year, <u>Working It Out</u> reached nearly 1,000 employees in 2021 and was presented to companies including TikTok, e.l.f. Cosmetics and Funimation.

"This was an amazing and easy-to-understand basic breakdown that I really hope opens the door to more understanding of the LGBTQ+ community within [my company]!!"

-Employee at Funko

New EduGuides



We added three new free-to-download EduGuides to our growing library of educational resources. We introduced materials to accompany our original series' Out in Front: Queer Youth Changing the World, Passion Power Performance: Out & Training for the 2022 Tokyo Olympics, and Writing Our Own Dictionary.

"Discussion is more important—and harder to have—than ever in today's political climate. Without it, we cannot solve the problems in the world around us. We hope this series and its accompanying EduGuide help you spark conversations about these important issues in your classroom. Above all, our goal is to inspire, motivate, and bring hope to students by shining a light on Andrea, Jude, Stephon, Victor, and Cynthia's stories and their incredible activism.

-Andrea Castro, Curriculum Developer

Humble Bundle

Humble Bundle rallies its community in support of the It Gets Better Project's life-affirming programs.

With support from the Humble Bundle community, the It Gets Better Project has developed the LGBTQ+ Fundamentals content series to accompany our popular digital glossary of LGBTQ+ terms. Additionally, Humble Bundle's contributions supported the development of an It Gets Better vodcast on Twitch called *Perfectly Queer, which began airing in Spring, 2022*.





It Gets Better Global

Bolstered by a robust global grantmaking effort and a Global Affiliate Network that spans 19 countries across four continents, It Gets Better Global brings the spirit of the It Gets Better Project to communities around the world.

SPOTLIGHT Global Grantmaking

Since 2016, the It Gets Better Project has <u>awarded more than \$200K in</u> grants to international organizations serving the needs of LGBTQ+ youth.
 Grantmaking totaled \$84,500 in 2021 and included awards to organizations in Canada, Colombia, Guatemala, Hungary, Mexico, and Taiwan.



"With the support of a global grant, we were able to film and produce a video that gives hope to LGBT youth in Asia who can view people encouraging them to 'just keep riding.' It Gets Better makes projects like ours possible — projects that make a huge impact abroad where resources are limited."

-Jenni and Lisa Dazols

Grantee Highlight: Taiwan Equality Campaign

As Taiwan remained largely locked down from the rest of the world in the midst of a global pandemic, a group of activist friends organized the Asia Rainbow Ride, a three-day cycling event along Taiwan's northern coast. An It Gets Better Global Grant supported the production of a promotional video to elevate the visibility of the 2021 event, which in turn raised critical funds for LGBTQ+ youth-focused initiatives in the country.

Grantee Highlight: It Gets Better Guatemala

Grant dollars supported the acquisition of video equipment, the launch of a social media strategy, and a series of testimonial videos highlighting LGBTQ+ Guatemalans who have overcome challenges associated with the COVID-19 pandemic.

Additional funds were awarded to It Gets Better Project affiliates in Mexico, Canada, and Colombia to support general operations and to support the launch of a new affiliate, It Gets Better Hungary, including the production of three It Gets Better videos.

2021 Global Summit



On June 21 and 22, we hosted a digital gathering for 125 queer activists representing 16 countries within the It Gets Better Global Affiliate Network. The 2021 Global Summit featured eight sessions with 30 panelists including our Youth Voices ambassadors, mental health experts, nonprofit professionals, social activists, and influencers covering topics of global interest like mental health and well-being, immigration reform, and racial justice.

"The 2021 Global Summit was incredible. There really are no barriers that a diverse and inspired team cannot

(It Gets Better Brasil)

It Gets Better Canada



With content accessible in both English and French, It Gets Better Canada saw impressive growth in 2021. The organization launched its presence on <u>TikTok</u>, posting dozens of clips to inspire LGBTQ+ youth; formed partnerships with brands like NYX Cosmetics; and engaged in meaningful conversations on Instagram with the cast of Canada's Drag Race. It Gets Better Canada ended the year on a high when Canada finally voted to end conversion therapy, thanks in large part to the original petition launched by the organization back in 2018.

"Listen... we all know I'm a Drag Race gay. I LOVED talking to the Drag Race teens... This program has connected me

> -Cal. 16. Pennsylvania (Youth Voices)

Discretionary Microgrants



The It Gets Better Project awarded staff-selected, discretionary microgrants to organizations in the United States, including the Queer Women of Color Media Arts Project, Keshet, Black AIDS Institute, Latino Equality Alliance, National Queer and Trans Therapists of Color Network, United We Dream (pictured), Waves Ahead, and BreakOUT!

















-Bruno Ferreira



It Gets Better in the Media



Jan 15

Jackie Cox Discusses Importance of Mental Health. It Gets Better Link

Feb 8

Saturday Niaht Live Revisits the It Gets Better Project a Decade Later Link



Mar 24

Watch: Margaret Cho Celebrates the It Gets Better Project's 10th Anniversary

Link

Apr 22

Kvle Dean Massev Partners with It Gets Better For Final 10 Years Better Video

Link



May 11

Uno Launches Pride-Themed Deck. Donates \$50k to It Gets Better Project Link



Jun 8

Todrick Hall and Montana Tucker team up with Zumba and It Gets Better for #BeMvself Challenge Link



Aug 23

Paralympian Courtney Ryan Reveals How Career-**Ending Injury** Inspired Her To Train For Tokyo Games Link



Gavmina Magazine and Playtra Games join forces in new LGBTO+ indies festival: Indie Games Make It Better Link

Oct 7



Better Project Announces \$500K Grant Initiative Benefiting LGBTO+ Youth with Support from American Eagle and Aerie Brands

Link



Dec 15

Chosen Family Matters More Than Ever for LGBTO+ Youth This Holiday Season I Opinion Link

JAN

FEB

MAR

APR

MAY

JUN

JUL

AUG

SEP

PLAYTRA

GAMES

OCT

NOV

DEC

Feb 19

It Gets Better's Dan Levy-Inspired Pin Sells Out in 24 Hours Link



Jun 23

Alv & AJ Talk About LGBTO+ Support Ahead Of 'It Gets Better' Concert Set Link

Jun 24

Joe Biden delivers urgent message to under-attack LGBT+ youth

Link

Jul 14

Shutterstock Launches Global Grant In Partnership With the It Gets Better Project To Empower and Authentically Portray LGBTQ+ Communities

Link



AMERICAN EAGLE



IT GETS BETTER PROJECT.

It Gets Better Project 2021 Financials

Statement of Activities for the Year Ended December 31, 2021

with comparative totals for the year ended December 31, 2020

	2021	2020
Revenue & Support	\$3,982,695	\$2,302,564
Expenses	\$2,388,858	\$1,541,130
Change in Net Assets	\$1,681,234	\$761,434
Net Assets - Beginning of Year	\$1,681,234	\$1,466,700
Net Assets - End of Year	\$3,909,368	\$2,228,134

STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL POSITION, DECEMBER 31, 2021

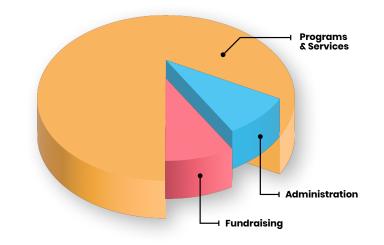
with comparative totals at December 31, 2020

	2021	2020
Assets	\$3,984,891	\$2,369,845
Liabilities	\$75,523	\$141,711
Net Assets	\$3,909,368	\$2,228,134

Statement of Functional Expenses for the Year Ended December 31, 2021

with comparative totals for the year ended December 31, 2020

		2021	2020
P	rograms & Services	\$1,977,732	\$1,279,523
A	dministration	\$204,857	\$145,183
F	undraising	\$206,269	\$116,424
Т	OTAL	\$2,228,134	\$1.541.130



Catalyst Club by Level

Ground Shaker

(\$100,000+)

American Eagle Outfitters & Aerie

Bungie Inc.
Converse Inc

HowMet Aerospace

Foundation
Humble Bundle

TikTok

Thought Leader

(\$50.000 - \$99.999)

AbbVie Foundation
Benevity
Funko Pop
Oribe
Zenni

Social Innovator

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

Banter by Piercing Pagoda ChapStick County of LA Funimation GANT AB Hulu

Jack & Jones Lexus

State Farm
Stream Elements

The Rona Jaffe Foundation

Catalyst

(\$10.0000 - \$24.999)

AZ Factory
BooHoo & BooHoo Man
Bright Cellars
Clean & Clear
Corsair
Crate & Barrel
e.l.f. Cosmetics
Ernst & Young
Good Pop
LEVO
Mondelēz International - Ritz
PBS
Pledgeling Foundation

Robert Half International

Sigma Beauty

Change Agent

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

7 For All Mankind Arthur J Gallagher Co. Baltimore County Fire Department DavidsTea Inc. Each & Every Orbitz **PopSockets** Rastaclat Riot Games Inc. Sam Edelman Scapa Tapes North America Ltd Selina SOREL Footwear Symetra The GoodCoin Foundation The T&L Family Fund

Universal Music

Influencer

(\$1,200 - \$4,999)

Archie Comic Publications, INC Beachwayer Co Bill Childs **BJG** Giving **Buddah Jewlery** CAA Foundation Certarus (USA) Ltd. Chewy.com Christine Barbour **CINK Fundraising** Clorox Scentiva DentaQuest Disney Worldwide Services Inc. **Equator Coffees Evolent Health** First Parish Unitarian Universalist of Arlington MA Getaway House Jeffrey & Susan Lubetkin Justin Wee & Timothy Ito Lion Brand Yarn Company

Macquarie
Nelco Foundation Inc

OFRA Cosmetics
Pacific Shaving Company
Peprotech, Inc
PricewaterhouseCoopers LLP
RuckingFotten.com
Samantha Miles
Scott & Jairo Parra-Matthews
Second Life
Snyder New York
Stonewall Community
Foundation
TAIT Towers
Tarte Cosmetics
The Tappan Collective
Toddland & Bob's Burgers



The Year Ahead

2021 Annual Report

Although the future is unpredictable on most fronts, I know it is bright—especially for LGBTQ+ youth. More and more young people are living their truths and openly and proudly identifying as LGBTQ+, with nearly one in five Gen Z adults identifying as such. This says to me that we are on the right path, despite the recent wave of anti-LGBTQ+ legislation targeting everything from public education to athletics to the medical care of our beloved transgender community.

LGBTQ+ people have seen their share of setbacks, and in some regions of the world still just beginning to claim our voice. But the LGBTQ+ community has proven itself resilient and unwavering in its pursuit of equality. We will persevere and, because of our determination, we will emerge a stronger, more self-aware and formidable force against those who seek to trivialize our humanity.

I am blessed to be part of an organization charged with amplifying LGBTQ+ voices through storytelling, education, and community building. We will not stop until every single young queer person can access the same opportunities their cisgender and heterosexual peers take for granted. At the absolute minimum, that means being given the freedom to explore their sexual orientation and gender identity unfettered by outdated social norms that continue to bury the truth of our existence: we are beautiful, inside and out,

and deserving of love and the pursuit of joy. It will get better, because we will accept nothing less.

So get ready world, the It Gets Better Project has the wind at its back. With more than a decade of momentum behind us, we are making unprecedented investments in creating a world that today's youth will be proud to call home. The coming year will be marked by major grantmaking initiatives, powerful and compelling storytelling campaigns, and the expansion of our work in Latin America and around the world. We've got this, and we're going to do it together!

Brian Wenke

Executive Director It Gets Better Project