Dear Friends of BSA,

March 2022 marked five years since I announced the founding of Brave Space Alliance on a frigid March evening, at the conclusion of the Trans Liberation March in the Loop— at the time the largest demonstration for trans rights in Midwest history.

These five years have been both magical and trying. We’ve gone from a two-person organization run out of a closet to a staff of twenty with a permanent location on the South Side. At the same time, we’ve seen a global pandemic ravage our city, with predictably disproportionate effects on Black and Brown queer people. We’ve also been faced with exacerbated violence against our community and continued inequity.

In the face of these challenges, BSA’s capacity to react bravely, dynamically, and innovatively have been crucial to our success. It’s the essence of what makes us unique.

Indeed, each time a crisis has emerged, Brave Space Alliance has been there on the frontline for our community, reacting in real-time to the evolving needs of our people and doing the work that needs to be done. In the pages that follow, you’ll see just some of the many things our team does on a daily basis to advance our community—from our Community Pantry, which has served over 400,000 Chicagoans and become a permanent institution since its launch in 2020, to our first-in-the-country gender-affirming rooms (which provide free items like makeup, wigs, binders, packers, and more to Black and Brown trans people), to our Employment Justice Program.

There’s a lot that we don’t know about how the next five years will look. But one thing’s for sure—whatever happens, BSA will be there for our community, on the ground doing the work that needs to be done.

Love and Light,

LaSaia Wade, MBA
she/they
CEO
# BSA's Approach to Care

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Mission

Brave Space Alliance is the first Black-led, trans-led LGBTQ+ Center located on the South Side of Chicago, dedicated to creating and providing affirming, culturally competent, for-us-by-us resources, programming, and services for LGBTQ+ individuals on the South and West sides of the city. We strive to empower, embolden, and educate each other through mutual aid, knowledge-sharing, and the creation of community-sourced resources as we build toward the liberation of all oppressed peoples.

Strategic Priorities

Health and Wellness
We view health and wellness as broad concepts, reaching far beyond getting tested or focusing on medical services. Queer and trans people face unique barriers to living full, healthy lives. We break down these barriers by offering programs that focus on the needs in our community, such as food insecurity, housing insecurity, and economic justice.

Visibility and Expansion
We want Black and Brown queer and trans people to be seen, wherever and however they want to be seen. And we know our community deserves services that are accessible to them, in the neighborhoods in which they live. Brave Space is striving to expand our programming to all parts of the South and West sides; if you are located there and want to partner with us, please reach out!

Bravery and Solidarity
We step away from the language of safety because we know that queer and trans people can never truly be safe in spaces and communities that are not of our own making. We instead emphasize bravery—living one’s fullest, truest, and best life in the face of oppression—and solidarity as ideals for the longevity of our communities and the best hopes for queer and trans liberation.

Mutual Aid as an Organizing Strategy

All of BSA’s programs, services, and resources utilize a mutual aid framework. Mutual aid understands that systems and institutions can’t and won’t sustain us, but WE can. BIPOC communities and community members have everything they need to sustain themselves when given the same access to resources and skills needed to ensure they create a life of their choosing.

We’re an LGBTQ+ center that serves the entire community but we prioritize BIPOC transgender and gender-nonconforming (TGNC) individuals because they are most marginalized and vulnerable of the LGBTQ+ community. Most programs, services, and resources geared towards BIPOC TGNC individuals provide temporary solutions that do not address the root of their problems.

As BIPOC individuals of trans experience, we believe that we are the experts on our lived experiences and can better identify our needs which is why all programming, services, and resource provided by BSA give community members an active hand in development and implementation.
## Staff, Consultants, and Interns

### Staff
- **LaSaia Wade (she/they)**
  CEO, Founder
- **Stephanie Skora (she/her)**
  COO
- **Brittney Thomas (they/them)**
  Director of Programs
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- **Reyna Ortiz (she/her)**
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  Community Pantry Manager
- **Niya Rechiche (she/her)**
  Mutual Aid Programs Manager
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  Community Pantry Manager
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  Office Manager
- **Niya Rechiche (she/her)**
  Mutual Aid Programs Manager
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- **Channyn Parker**
BSA provides a wide variety of culturally competent, for-us by-us community programs and services. 2021 saw the expansion of our existing programs as well as the launch of several new programs.

Trans Relief & Funeral Fund

It is no secret that LGBTQ+ people are more likely than the general population to be jobless, homeless and poor. In fact, a recent study from the Black Futures’ Lab showed more than 90% of LGBTQ+ respondents named low wages as their biggest problem. Studies and statistics continually show that of the LGBTQ+ population, Black, Brown, and Indigenous individuals bear the brunt of this economic disparity.

The Trans Relief Fund provides direct financial assistance to BIPOC trans and non-binary Chicagoans who are in need. Each recipient goes through an intake and interview process with the Community Outreach Coordinator, after which they receive a $200 micro-grant.

The payments are used for a variety of vital purposes, from paying rent and bills, to purchasing groceries, to covering the cost of public transportation, to helping pay for medical expenses.

In order to better support our community, BSA will be increasing the micro-grant size for the Trans Relief Fund from $200 to $400 in 2022.

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Testimonial

'A'reyonna is a Black trans woman. She resides on the South Side of Chicago, and was born and raised in Englewood.

'A'reyonna describes herself as a beautiful, independent, and self-made woman. But when COVID-19 hit, money became hard for A’reyonna to come by. It was then that A’reyonna heard about Brave Space Alliance and the Trans Relief Fund. She applied and received $200, which she used to pay outstanding bills. Since then, A’reyonna has continued to come to Brave Space Alliance to access services, especially the Makeup room.

“Just to know that the trans community has a strong support system helps,” says A'reyonna. “It might not be much, but it helps. I've had a great experience with BSA and its programs. It's great that it's nearby too.”

“I just wish there was something like this when I first started transitioning. At the time, it was so hard. It felt like nobody loved me, and nobody should ever have to feel that way.”

Funeral Fund

There continues to be an epidemic of violence and murder with respect to Black and Brown trans and non-binary people, because our lives are devalued, our power is feared, and our truth is revolutionary. Indeed, there were fifty-three murders of trans and gender-nonconforming people in the United States in 2021, and five in the Chicago area alone. (Source: https://www.statista.com/statistics/944726/murders-transgender-gender-diverse-people-us/)

Moreover, many of the victims’ families either cannot afford a funeral, or are unwilling to bury the victim in a way that is affirming to their identity (for example, burying them under their dead name).

The Funeral Fund supports families of murdered trans people while ensuring that our siblings have a proper and affirming burial. This includes providing monetary support for the burial under the right name, wake, funeral home costs, reception, and flowers.

In 2021, the Funeral Fund ensured five transgender and non-binary Chicagoans a proper, respectful, and affirming burial.

In 2021, BSA provided $46,200 in emergency financial assistance from the Trans Relief Fund to 231 Black and Brown trans Chicagoans.

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Other Direct Mutual Aid

Brave Space Alliance is always looking for ways to support our community on the ground—to make sure that our siblings can not only survive, but thrive. In 2021, BSA additionally provided $100,000 to 20 BIPOC trans people for assistance with monthly rent, keeping people housed and fed.

Community Pantry Program

Food insecurity has long been an issue that disproportionately affects Black and Brown people. But its effect on Black and Brown trans people is even more pronounced. According to the Williams Institute, 36% of transgender people of color experience food insufficiency, when compared to 13% of cisgender people of color.

We at BSA find both of these percentages to be unacceptable; for that reason, we launched our Community Pantry Program back in 2020, with the aim of driving these numbers down for all Black and Brown Chicagoans, both cis and trans.

“There are so many things this $200 can go towards. You never know where someone is at in life, and this money can really help them get back up on their feet”

- Courtney McKinney, Community Outreach Coordinator
The Community Pantry Network

To expand our reach and ensure that we are able to serve all Chicagoans in a culturally competent and affirming manner, the Community Pantry maintains a network of partnerships with other community organizations throughout Chicago. BSA recognizes the amazing work that each of our partners have been doing, and knows that together we are able to do so much more than we could as individual organizations.

Brave Space Alliance's Community Pantry serves as the primary supplier for each of our network members. In addition, BSA provides back-end operational support, from managing inventory, to providing critical infrastructure like storage space, shelves, and refrigerators.

We are so proud to announce that 2021 saw new partnerships with Renaissance Social Services and Taskforce Prevention and Community Services. These partnerships have doubled our capacity, and enabled us to reach thousands of more people who are food insecure.

**Suppliers:**
Vegan Outreach, Method, Donation Pods

**Back to school drive:**
During August and September, the Community Pantry Network organized a back-to-school drive to provide Chicago students with backpacks and school supplies. In total, 425 backpacks were distributed, with each backpack containing $40 worth of supplies.

**Fixed Partners:**
• Rincon Family Services
• Renaissance Social Services
• Taskforce Prevention and Community Services
• Project VIDA
• Chicago Food Sovereignty Coalition

**Mobile and Pop-up Pantry Partners:**
• Thankful for Chicago
• Pride, Proud, and Fed
• Mobilize Creative Collaborative

BSA is also thrilled to announce that we are purchasing and renovating an additional warehouse in the South Side’s Chatham neighborhood. The warehouse will allow us to streamline our processes, increase our capacity, and reach the South Side more effectively.

A map of our current fixed distribution sites, along with our warehouse. In addition to our permanent locations, we also partner with a number of pop-up pantry sites!

The network served 102,456 individuals in 2021.
The Delivery Program

In addition to the network, BSA’s Community Pantry also operates a Delivery Program for all Chicagoans who are in need of food assistance. On a weekly basis, volunteers deliver bags containing shelf-stable pantry items to community members’ doorstops. When available, fresh produce is also included as a part of the deliveries.

The Delivery Program is designed to prioritize the needs of immunocompromised, elderly, and/or disabled folks, as well as people who lack access to transportation. These are community members who are not adequately served by traditional food pantry setups, which generally require recipients to show up at a physical location to pick up goods at a specified time.

In 2021, the Delivery Program fed 3,790 Chicagoans, through the support of 40 volunteer drivers. In 2022, we will be switching our delivery day to Saturday, in order to allow for an easier delivery process for both our volunteers and our recipients.

Many thanks to Taskforce Prevention and Community Services for helping us continue to operate this program while the elevator at our Hyde Park location was broken.

Testimonials For Delivery Program

“Oftentimes, I don’t know where my next meal is coming from. Having to live on the streets doesn’t help the problem. Even though I receive Food Stamp Assistance, spending it at these local food desert convenience stores doesn’t allow me to have adequate food throughout the month. I’m grateful for Taskforce and BSA because that meal and those snacks help me get through the times when I have to go without food. A lot of people don’t look at it like “it’s just food” especially when that need has to be met by the hands of someone else. Thank you Taskforce & BSA.”
- Taskforce Prevention and Community Services Youth Participant

“Just wanted to say thank you - this partnership has been monumental for us in terms of how we can support our clients! Y’all are wonderful.”
- Renaissance Social Services Staff Member

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- Taskforce Prevention and Community Services Youth Participant

“Thank you so much for making food accessible to my partner and I! We appreciate the delivery because we don’t have a car. Y’all are amazing!”
- Taskforce Prevention and Community Services Youth Participant

“This work is absolutely necessary. There are so many families out there who depend on us to put food on the table each week. Even though we can’t fully supply a family, we are a critical part of the support and safety net that is keeping people fed.”
- Jacoby Johnson, Community Pantry Delivery Program Coordinator
Gender-Affirming Services

Transitioning is a necessity for many trans and non-binary folks, as it is what enables us to finally express our true and authentic selves. Nevertheless, the costs associated with transition often mean that it is out of reach for many Black and Brown trans people. The Makeup Room, the Den, and the QT Shop are designed to help close this gap.

The Makeup Room & The Den

The Makeup Room is a trans-feminine affirming room open for BIPOC trans and queer folks and sex workers to pick up makeup for free, while The Den is a trans-masculine gender-affirming room open for BIPOC trans and queer folks and sex workers to pick up free items. These two gender-affirming rooms are open Wednesday – Friday from 12 pm to 5 pm and Saturdays from 10 am to 3 pm for pickups at our Hyde Park office.

The Makeup Room and The Den were founded in late 2020 as part of a makeup drive for sex workers, done in collaboration with the Chicago Black Drag Council. Since then, it has grown to become a permanent fixture at BSA, and remains the only service of its kind in the country.

Items in the Makeup Room include wigs, makeup, and sports bras. Items in The Den include binders, packers, harnesses, ties, cufflinks, and beard oil.

The two gender-affirming rooms served 803 community members at our Hyde Park office in 2021, with the assistance of 4 volunteers.

The QT Shop

After having been paused in 2020 due to the ongoing pandemic, the QT (Queer & Trans) Shop reopened in October 2021 and served over 150 community members. The QT Shop is open and free to community every Saturday from 10 am to 3pm, and is a free clothing and accessory resource for community members. Items available include jackets, blazers, pants, dresses, skirts, shoes, scarves, hats, and so much more!

We were so excited to be able to extend the hours for both rooms to four days a week, a move that was crucial towards allowing us to reach this incredible number of individuals served.

In addition, 10-20 pre-made Makeup Room bags were given away monthly to community members at Vogue Knights (a popular community gathering event), serving another 150 community members.
Brave Space Alliance was created to fill a gap in the organizing of and services to trans and gender-nonconforming people. Currently, very few LGBTQ+ social services or advocacy networks exist on the South and West Sides of Chicago. Furthermore, the few trans-specific resources in the city are located in majority-white neighborhoods on the North Side, which are inaccessible geographically, and also regularly result in the hyper-policing of trans people of color who attempt to access them. BSA’s support groups were created to provide a safe space for members of the LGBTQIA+ community to meet people who identify like them and share their experiences.

Each support group functions as places for socializing and community building, where people can find others who have been in similar situations, share resources, and bond. These groups are entirely free and there is no waitlist to join/capacity limit. Each support group occurs twice a month, and is run by a dedicated facilitator.

In addition to our three already established support groups, 2021 saw the launch of Queery, our support group dedicated to building community for folks who are questioning their gender and/or sexuality.

Brave Space Alliance’s Employment Justice Program is a mutual aid and public health program that works to align trans people with jobs and opportunities in union/protected workplaces throughout the Chicago area, while simultaneously focusing on HIV prevention and education as a tool for self-empowerment and self-advocacy.

Throughout the course of an intensive eight-month program, participants were given basic training on finding and maintaining a job, ranging from resume and cover-letter writing workshops to building time management and conflict resolution skills. In addition, participants were connected to free HIV testing, and received assistance with signing up for Medicaid.

In total, the Employment Justice Program helped 34 community members find and maintain a job in 2021.

In 2021, our support groups reached over 100 community members, with each group having roughly 10-12 regular attendees. Although we hope to begin meeting in person again when conditions allow, the virtual nature of the groups has actually also allowed the groups to expand their reach, with many of the groups having attendees who join meetings from across the country!
Full list of the groups that we offer:

A social support group for trans women, trans feminine people, AMAB people, and those that are questioning.

A social group for trans men, trans masculine people, AFAB people, and those that are questioning. This support group is a space for finding community and friendship with people who identify as you.

A social support group for non-binary, gender-queer, gender-fluid, other individuals who identify outside of the gender binary and those that are questioning. This support group is a space for finding community and friendship with people who identify as you.

A social support group for non-binary, gender-queer, gender-fluid, other individuals who identify outside of the gender binary and those that are questioning. This support group is a space for finding community and friendship with people who identify as you.

These spaces are body-positive, LGBTQ-friendly, and welcoming to people of all genders and gender expressions. Sexism, homophobia, and gender policing are not tolerated.

Testimonials

"I’m always listened to here when I’m being vulnerable. I always leave the group with new tools or perspectives on what identity can mean and I really appreciate that."

-Queery Participant

"It was so great to have a Black facilitator and another Black person in the group. I almost didn’t join on bc i was like theres not about to be any black folks anyway...but im so glad i did!"

-Fluid AF Participant

"Bai Talk Participant: It was really nice to finally be in a space with other trans-masculine people in real time. It was very healing, and I’m excited to come back in a few weeks"

-Bai Talk Participant

"This space felt many times safer & more open than trans community groups I’ve attended at predominantly white affluent Pride Centers."

-Fluid AF Participant
Check out the Beet Street Zine created by the Food Insecurity Mutual Aid Group! The Zine is a collaborative project that tells the story of our food system through artwork, poems, love letters, calls to action, recipes, and various other mediums. It provides a platform or Queer, Trans, and/or BIPOC folks to dream about and build towards a more radical and liberated food system. The first edition featured a resource guide, interviews and recipes from longtime BSA supporter and community pillar Chef Fresh, a recipe for corn pone, a tutorial on measuring quantities with your hands, and more!

## Mutual Aid Program

Our Mutual Aid Program is an 8–month long program with a suite of subprograms designed to promote access, resources, justice, and health within our communities by providing people with the tools and skills they need to create community-oriented solutions for the barriers they face in their everyday lives.

These mutual aid groups are part of Brave Space Alliance’s VAMP (HIV AIDS Manifesting Prevention) program. VAMP is an innovative program aimed at reducing or eliminating new HIV infections among Black and Brown transgender and gender-nonconforming people in Chicago, IL. The philosophy of VAMP is that if we help our communities improve all parts of our lives, our health will improve as well.

Each mutual aid group is part support group and part actionable community outreach and empowerment. The goal of each group is to provide continuous social support and educational resources to members while developing and implementing an initiative that addresses the group’s chosen issue in their general focus area. The three focus areas addressed by the groups are food insecurity, housing insecurity, and sex work safety and advocacy. Each cohort consists of 10-12 participants.

In 2021, BSA welcomed our second cohorts for each of our three mutual aid groups. Each group met regularly to share knowledge, build community, and strategize to keep our communities safe and cared for.

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### An update regarding the future of the Mutual Aid Program

The original vision for the Mutual Aid Program when it was launched in 2019 was for each of the three mutual aid circles to meet, organize, and design a unique program that could serve as an important piece of community infrastructure and mutual aid in each area of need, areas of need that were all identified as critical social determinants of health, in particular with respect to HIV. In 2022, this vision has come to fruition. The work of our Food Insecurity Group directly led to the creation of our Community Pantry; the countless hours put in by our Housing Insecurity Group has resulted in the creation of the Lucy Hicks Anderson Housing Program (launching in 2023), which you can read more about below; and last, but certainly not least, our Sex Worker Safety and Advocacy Group has led to the creation of not only The Makeup Room and The Den, but also the Trans Relief and Funeral Fund.

With the program’s purpose now complete, BSA will be shifting in 2022 to focusing entirely on the amazing programs created and envisioned by our mutual aid groups. In addition, we will be launching a revamped HIV Program, which will focus on connecting Black Trans Women and Sex Workers to education and care around both living with HIV and HIV prevention.
7 Housing Programs

Housing insecurity is a critical problem faced by many Black and Brown trans people. Not having a place to call home makes almost every other part of health, wellness, and self-care impossible to carry out, from getting a job to getting tested for HIV. In recognition of this pivotal issue, Brave Space Alliance has adopted a multi-pronged approach to both preventing and ending housing insecurity in our community.

Emergency Rental Assistance Program

In late 2021, BSA participated in the second round of the City of Chicago’s Emergency Rapid Rental in partnership with The Resurrection Project. Our efforts ensured that city-allocated funds got into the hands of LGBTQ+ folks who needed it to stay housed, and who weren’t being adequately reached by the city prior to our involvement.

All told, BSA was able to link 34 BIPOC LGBTQ+ people to $272,000 of rental assistance. This money helped with back-rent, overdue bills, and also gave them a three months head start on rent to make sure they can stay on their feet.

Housing Referral Services

In addition, Brave Space Alliance worked to match BIPOC LGBTQ+ community members actively experiencing homelessness with trans friendly shelters and other housing resources. Towards that end, BSA created a trans friendly resource guide after thoroughly vetting partner orgs, in order to ensure that our clients find safe and affirming care.

Before making a referral, BSA staff conduct a thorough interview with clients in which we get to the root of a person’s struggles so we can understand what kind of support they need to really begin thriving, and make sure that we connect them to the right resources, both here at Brave Space Alliance and at other organizations.
Nevertheless, it became apparent in 2021 that Black and Brown trans Chicagoans need a housing program that is dedicated to our specific population, and which has the unique factors influencing our lives built into its very program structure.

For that reason, Brave Space Alliance is excited to announce the Lucy Hicks Anderson Housing Program, a transitional housing program for BIPOC trans people that will launch in 2023.

This program will be Black, Indigenous, and trans-led, and will utilize BSA’s own specially designed Transcendence Intensive Empowerment Initiative. The program is an 18-month long intervention, during which participants receive not just housing, but intensive coaching and support that address the root causes of homelessness. The first cohort in 2023 will aim to serve 12 BIPOC transgender people, with another 12 per cohort thereafter.

Most of the program design work was done in 2021, and our main goal in 2022 will be purchasing and renovating a space to house the program and its residents.

Special thanks to the JB and MK Pritzker Foundation and also Blue Cross Blue Shield of Illinois for making this project a reality.

“Brave Space Alliance is committed to engaging our community while also advocating for meaningful policy changes.

In 2021, we hosted and/or sponsored 33 community events, while also accomplishing meaningful legislative change that will have ripple effects across Illinois.”
The Ballroom scene has long functioned not only as a place for Black and Brown trans people to express their artistic genius and creative prowess, but also as a site for community-building and mutual aid. Brave Space Alliance honors this legacy through its ongoing support of the Chicago ballroom community. In 2021, BSA provided over $80,000 in support to Chicago’s vibrant ballroom scene, with funds being used for space rentals, prize money, and more.

Supporting Black and Brown Art:

Ballroom Events Sponsored by BSA

Virtual Blackout Ball
March 4th, 2021

Pride Ball
June 26th, 2021

Sneaker Ball

Chicago Awards Ball
December 11th, 2021

Virtual Black Out Ball

Pride Ball 2021

My Time to Shine Mini Ball with Legendary Pooda 007

7 Vogue Knights with Legendary Kentrele Gorgeous Gucci

5 Taskforce Mini Balls with Legendary Demario Khan

External events hosted in our space

Trans woman meetups

Plant Swap

Other Community Events and Outreach

Protect Trans Folks at CCJ (Protest) #ACTCCJ (Affirming Care for Trans People at Cook County Jail)

Trans day of Visibility 3/31/2021

COVID-19 Vaccination Information Session and Event (5/17 and 5/22)

Mural Unveiling

Brave Beat Makeup Classes @ The Makeup Room and The Den

Market Days (8/6 to 8/8)

Mutual Aid Program Outing to Plant Chicago (8/7/21)

Community Days at Overton (8/28 and 9/12)

Trans Beach Pride Day (8/28)

Talks with Toni (9/14)

National Coming Out Week (10/11 to 10/16) / Game Night

Trans Day of Remembrance Community Gathering and Town Hall (11/20/21)

Sex worker group events hosted by Lynzo. Recurring Wednesday at 3pm
Trainings

Brave Space Alliance offers a comprehensive suite of training for organizations, groups, collectives, and individuals who are looking to learn. We support individuals and organizations who are hoping to build networks and strategies to dismantle oppression in all forms.

Workshops are available on a sliding scale depending on the length of training, the number of people who are planning to attend, and the budget of the organization requesting the training.

Human Resources and Liberation in the Workplace: Anti-Racist and Pro-Trans HR Training

This training tackles how to address a key problem in hiring and workplace culture: White and Cis Supremacy. The workshop breaks down how to develop an actively anti-racist and pro-trans hiring process, and how to create a workplace culture that centers the needs of Black and Brown queer and trans people.

Brave Space Alliance provided 21 trainings in 2021. In 2022, BSA is excited to begin offering a Sexual Assault and Consent Training, and a Sexual Harassment Compliance Training!

Out of the Closet and Into The Streets: A Comprehensive Sexuality 101

This training is ideal for an organization needing help with both truly beginner-level concepts of LGBTQ identity and diversity, and one looking to refresh their sexuality training. The workshop takes a traditional LGBTQ 101 and conducts it from a sexuality analysis, breaking down identities, LGBTQ history, and sexuality as it relates to gender.

Understanding Transness: A Comprehensive Trans 101 (best if done in conjunction with Trans 201)

This training is ideal for an organization looking to create a culture of trans affirmation and centered around the unique needs of trans people in service provision, in the workplace, and in everyday life. The workshop breaks down basic ideas about gender, dos and don’ts of interacting with trans people, the difference between sex and gender, and the diversity of trans experience.

Understanding Trans Lives and Liberation: A Trans 201 (best if done in conjunction with Trans 101)

This training is ideal for an audience looking to advance their trans competence, or gain a deeper understanding of the lived experiences of trans people. It is an ideal companion training for our Trans 101, described above. The workshop addresses the complexities of transphobia and how the world is built to cater to cisgender people, as well as breaking down how to achieve trans liberation, and a history of the trans liberation movement.

Anti-Racism from a Black Trans Liberation Perspective

This training is aimed at building an anti-racist praxis specifically by dismantling anti-Blackness societally and interpersonally, and addressing racism through a trans liberation lens. The workshop addresses the foundational history of race, gender, racism, and gender policing, and how to effectively fight back against those forms of oppression.

Decolonization from a Pan-Africanist, Trans Liberatory Perspective

This training looks at the construction of power structures and expands on how a decolonized mindset is a medium for expanding a personal and collective vision for a new world independent of what we know and experience today. The training is an ideal complement to our anti-racism training above.
Name Change Clinics

Having our chosen names recognized and reflected on government documentation is vital for all trans people.

In collaboration with the Transformative Justice Law Project, Brave Space Alliance hosted two name-change clinics at our Hyde Park Office. Over the course of two sessions, we helped 27 community members file paperwork and begin the process of getting their name legally changed.

We are excited to announce that due to the success of our first two clinics, BSA and TJLP will begin hosting monthly name change clinics in 2022 at our Hyde Park Office. Follow us on social media for announcements regarding exact dates!
2021 Highlights

Years of Brave Space Alliance advocacy led to Governor JB Pritzker’s signing of HB1063, which ended criminal penalties for people living with HIV in Illinois. The passage of this law is a crucial step towards decreasing stigma around HIV positivity and increasing access to testing and care.

In addition to HB 1063, BSA advocacy also led to the concurrent signing of the three following pieces of legislation, each of which represents an important step in:

HB 3709 - diagnosis and treatment of infertility shall be provided without discrimination based on age, gender identity, sexuality, etc.

HB 2590 - creates a process for Illinoisans to correct or remove gender-identifying language on their marriage certificate

SB 13 - Creates a streamlined process for county clerks to issue new marriage certificates when a person has a legal name change

Full decriminalization of sex work

Expungement of cannabis-related offenses from criminal records

Our focuses in 2022

HB 2542 - This piece of legislation, sponsored by BSA, will repeal and amend restrictions and outdated provisions in Illinois’ name change law, which is one of the most restrictive in the nation, and allows for Illinoisans with felony convictions to be denied the ability to legally change their names.

Brave Business Network

2021 also saw the launch of BSA’s Brave Business Network, an alliance of eight Chicago-based businesses dedicated to increasing trans inclusivity and hiring across the city. The Network works in conjunction with our Employment Justice Program, with network members providing mentoring and training to EJP participants, while also informing them about any available job opportunities.
Announcing a special and new partnership with Taskforce Prevention and Community Services!

Founded in 1990, Taskforce, located on Chicago's West Side in the Austin neighborhood has been a pillar for Chicago's BIPOC queer community for over thirty years. TaskForce Prevention & Community Services is a grassroots organization committed to improving the sexual health and wellbeing of LGBTQ+ youth of color in Chicago by providing a safe space for fellowship, HIV/STI screening and education, and on-site referrals to medical, housing, and other social services. Many staples of the Chicago queer community, including the Vogue School, were begun by Taskforce and are still hosted by them today.

Under this exciting new arrangement, Taskforce will become an autonomous subsidiary of Brave Space Alliance, with BSA providing financial and administrative support, in addition to our already existing partnership with them through the Pantry Network. This partnership will not only help BSA build a stronger presence on the West Side, but will also enable us to more actively serve LGBTQ+ youth.

We are so excited to announce that, beginning in late 2021, Brave Space Alliance became the fiscal sponsor of Taskforce Prevention and Community Services.
Demographic Breakdown of Community Pantry Participants

108,804
Total Number of People Served

Network

Delivery Program:

- **LGBT** 48%
- **Non-LGBT** 13.23%
- **Other POCs** 3.82%
- **Black** 22.12%
- **White** 13.23%
- **Latinx** 60.83%

- **3,791 served**

- **Other POCs** 15.62%
- **Latinx** 32%
- **White** 8.9%
- **Black** 44%

- **3,791 served**

- **Other POCs** 24%
- **Trans & Non-Binary** 24%
- **Cis** 76%

- **3,791 served**
All Other Programs:
(Gender-Affirming Rooms, Trans Relief/Funeral Fund, Support Groups, Mutual Aid Groups, Direct Mutual Aid, Housing Programs, Name Change Clinics):

- LGBT: 64%
- Non-LGBT: 36%

2,557 served

Finances
**Revenue**

- **Grant Revenue**: $895,500.00 (27%)
- **Non-Grant Donations**: $2,361,352.88 (71%)
- **Non-Donation Payments**: $64,966.30 (2%)

- **Total Revenue**: $3,321,819.18

**In-Kind Donations**

- **Gender-Affirming Rooms**: $49,592.17 (18.2%)
- **Community Pantry**: $218,469.62 (79.9%)
- **Other**: $5,310.00 (1.9%)

- **Total In-Kind Donations**: $273,321.79

**Expenses**

- **Outreach**: $51,934 (2.04%)
- **Overhead**: $91,544 (3.6%)
- **Salaries and Fringe**: $713,583 (28.07%)
- **Creation of a Reserve**: $700,000 (27.54%)
- **Events**: $80,000 (3.15%)
- **Development**: $11,953 (0.47%)
- **Programs**: $892,861 (35.13%)

- **Total Expenses**: $2,541,855
Organization Giving Recognition

(Internal Cutoff >= $10,000)
Blue Cross Blue Shield of Illinois
Black Lives Matter Foundation
Howard Brown Health Center
JB and MK Pritzker Family Foundation
Chicago Community Trust Foundation
Groundswell Fund
AIDS United
Chicago Foundation for Women
Kraft Heinz
Rockefeller Philanthropy Advisors
Forefront
Chicago Region Food Systems
AIDS Foundation of Chicago
Elton John AIDS Foundation
Conagra Brands Foundation
Woods Fund of Chicago
The Nature Conservancy
The Field Foundation of Illinois
Joyce Foundation
Jackson National Life Insurance Company
DTS Chicago Inc.
Polk Brothers Foundation
Ms. Foundation
Markel Corporation
Amalgamated Foundation
Alphawood Foundation Chicago
Art Institute of Chicago
Julian Grace Foundation
Kirkland & Ellis LLP
Three Floyds Brewing

Individual Donor Recognition

> $20,000
David Stanford
Maria Plaxco
Steve and Shannon Elkins

$10,000 to $19,999
T.A.G. Fund
Martha and Donald Farley
Tyrell Huey
Anonymous
Patti Clower
David and Bici Pritzker
Spencer Neiman
David Stanford

$5000 to $9999
Brent and Luis Holman-Gomez
Mark Liberson
Eric Pynnonen
Kara Lessin

Cody Scott
Elizabeth Howard

Bold Business Network Members
The Neofuturists
Reverb.com
MUSE Community Design
Woman Made Gallery
Skeleton Key Brewery
Early to Bed
Hopewell Brewing
Eye Eaters LLC

Leslie Feinberg Advocate Level
Unicorn Ball Sponsors
Blue Cross Blue Shield of Illinois
Practical Audacity LLC

Anonymous
Martha Stair
Todd Herbert and Jody Mandel-Herbert
Peter and Stacey Chieng

$2500 to $4999
Jordan Harrison
Rebecca Norling-Ruggles
Mike Shively
Steve and Jessica Sarowitz
Richard Stewart
Abby McEnany
Dan Roller
Brandon Hunter-Haydon
David and Erin Solow and Yancey
Daniel Rothschild
Cheryl Lulias
Jeff Grigsby
Anonymous
Elyse Schauer
Erica Mazza
Brandon Thomas
Matthew and Tina Schubert
Anmarie Kolinski
Our Vision
for 2022

As we celebrate our fifth year anniversary as an organization, Brave Space Alliance is excited to continue rapidly expanding and growing.

2022 will see the final preparations for our Lucy Hicks Anderson Housing Program, which will begin accepting clients in 2023, and will provide a critical housing and support resource to Black and Brown trans Chicagoans. In addition, our Community Pantry will launch its warehouse location in the South Side’s Chatham neighborhood, a move that will exponentially increase our capacity to feed our people. We will also be adding to our suite of gender-affirming services with the launch of a laser and electrolysis room at our Hyde Park office, which will provide free hair removal services to our community.

In even more exciting news, Brave Space Alliance is currently looking to purchase an additional location on the South Side to house our Programs Department, as we are quickly running out of space in our Hyde Park location. This new space will function as a community drop-in center, and will significantly increase our reach across the South Side. We also plan to expand our mental health programs—stay tuned for more information!

In addition, Brave Space Alliance looks forward to growing our partnership with Taskforce Prevention and Community Services (see above for more details). This partnership is both crucial and groundbreaking for queer Chicagoans on the West Side, as well as LGBTQ+ youth across the city. 2021 has already seen many amazing points of collaboration between our two organizations, and we are confident that 2022 will bring even more.

Finally, as always, BSA will continue its commitment and dedication to the well-being and growth of its Black and Brown trans staff by emphasizing self-care and providing funding for professional development opportunities.