

CENTER FOR DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION

WE



ARE



OHSU



CELEBRATING INTERNATIONAL
TRANSGENDER DAY OF VISIBILITY

Each year on March 31, the world observes Transgender Day of Visibility (TDOV) to raise awareness about transgender people. It is a day to celebrate the lives and contributions of trans people, while also drawing attention to the poverty, discrimination, and violence the community faces.

International TDOV was created in 2010 by trans advocate Rachel Crandall. Crandall, the head of Transgender Michigan, created TDOV in response to the overwhelming majority of media stories about transgender people being focused on violence. She hoped to create a day where people could re-focus on celebrating the lives of transgender people, empowering them to live authentically, while still acknowledging that due to discrimination, not every trans person can or wants to be visible.

WE ARE OHSU

OHSU is a diverse campus with members with different identities. Diversity is one of our core values, and we strive to create an environment of respect and inclusion. We acknowledge that diversity is not always seen, and we want to be intentional. The Center for Diversity and Inclusion started an initiative to highlight OHSU members in an interview series named We Are OHSU. This will go on all year long, where we can uplift and celebrate members of all communities, highlighting their impact on campus and their daily lives and showing everyone the wonderful communities we belong to.

WE ARE OHSU ARI RAIN

Ari is the Administrative Assistant for the Center for Diversity and Inclusion. In his role, Ari supports the department stay organized and run smoothly. He has been at OHSU for a little over 2 years.

Is there something that you really enjoy about your role and OHSU?

OHSU is a beautiful amalgamation of educators, learners, and employees who tend to be curious and want to grow and help people within the healthcare setting. There is a wide range of diversity, backgrounds, and lived experiences of the people here. I feel like most of the time I get to meet new people as they are taking trainings or by organizing events here at CDI. I really get to know what people's strengths are and I love being that connecting person to relationship build and create community. We have so many good people at OHSU and being able to introduce people and find those connections warms my heart.

Why is the current state of trans visibility in the media falling short of what is needed for trans liberation and empowerment?

The trans community makes up about 0.5% of the population, that is about 1.6 million people.

The media holds so much power. There has been a slew of disparaging media content over the past few years. At this point there is a huge uptick in hateful rhetoric across news stations, political pundits using trans people as props to make people angry and upset. We talk about the need to protect trans kids, but we have seen that what hurts kids the most is not having access to gender affirming healthcare. In 2021, the CDC data showed that the number 1 cause of death for kids was gun violence, followed up by car accidents, yet there is little focus on what kids actually need to stay safe. What has been presented on the news starts off as this small little point and as it gets to different media outlets and more interviews are done with cisgender, heterosexual pundits, this ball just keeps rolling and growing. Now we have a huge amount of lies and fallacies about the community that are in no way based on science and research. More of this rhetoric causes a huge uptick in violence. We are seeing calls for the eradication of transgender people. As a

trans man myself, I find it quite easy to sort of fall into that fear state. I think many of us do.

For my own health, I regularly need to stop looking at the news and really focus on my own experiences on a day-to-day basis. Remember that I am making a difference in my community around me. I make eye contact with every person that I meet and try to see who they are. They may or may not know that I am trans, but I find that if I am a friend to people that I meet, I might be able to teach them. The media needs to focus on interviewing people who are educated in our community, and less interviews with people who do not have lived experience or are not closely related to transgender people. They need to interview trans people, listen to our stories of triumph and hardship, interview doctors who provide gender affirming care, can legitimize the safety and necessity of transitioning, and focus on peer reviewed studies. Regardless of how hard we must fight against discrimination and violence; we are still here. We always have been here. We are never

going anywhere, regardless of anyone who wants to eradicate our existence. We will never stop fighting and we should not have to prove our worth to exist.

What does it look like to have transgender people represented in healthcare?

I remember the first time I went to the health clinic to inquire about transitioning in a medical sense. Walking in and seeing a trans person there welcoming me, using my correct pronouns, giving me eye contact and respect. That experience has stayed with me. I was so fearful about the hate I might experience. We must navigate the system that has been filled with painful experiences and discrimination. When I see trans providers and employees it makes such a huge difference, I see representation of safety. Here at OHSU, we post discrimination policies, gender diverse imagery, rainbow signs, pronouns, and visible symbols of allyship. These small things do not mean much to most people, but if I see them, I know there are people I can trust more to provide safe spaces. It is imperative that providers be educated and engage in trainings specific to gender

and sexuality, research, ask questions and most importantly trust their patients to know themselves and what they need. We are expected to teach our providers how to care for us, which just increases minority stress. It is an intense responsibility. It is ok to say "I do not know, but I will find out." The power of that statement is huge because it shows that you are willing to learn and grow.

Next question is how do you celebrate yourself?

Every day that I am alive is an act of defiance against those people who have tried to stifle me or suppress who I am and my identities. There is nothing more radical than queer joy. I express my joy through music, dance, humor, and silliness. I love to host get togethers, meet new friends, and make people laugh. For me, I need to physically move my body and to hug

people and smile. Cheering other people on makes me feel brighter. Keeping that softness is important to me. Being curious about other people, as I feel like I have something to learn from every single person. If I can help make someone feel safe, we can have vulnerability, and each of us needs support to build each other up.

Anything you would like to add?

Yes, around allyship. Silence is violence, and I hope that everyone can begin to recognize the ways in which we all wield power. The trans community is only so big. We are small and mighty, but we can only yell so loud for so long before other voices of hatred overtake. We need allies' voices, and we need allies to stand up for us. We need allies to confront hate when they hear it. At times it might be uncomfortable but the more we practice, the easier it gets to advocate against injustice. There are so many ways you can support the community. You can support trans individuals financially, continue educating yourself, vote, send messages of love and so much more. Just a gesture that says I have your back. The smallest token of support can mean the world to a transgender person because we are all struggling right now. We thrive when we work in community and cooperation.



WE ARE OHSU BRAEDON BRADDY

Braedon is an ICU Tech and Health Unit Coordinator. In his role, Braedon supports restocking medical supplies in unit rooms, assists nurses with repositions and other patient care in HC.8C Trauma & Surgical ICU. Braedon starting working at OHSU in early 2021 in transportation doing safe patient mobilization. In mid 2021, he transferred to the ICU to his current role. Braedon is currently continuing his education to become a nurse and once he finishes, he hopes to continue his impact in LGBTQ+ care and hospice.

Is there something that you really enjoy about your job and OHSU?

I really love supporting the nurses in any way I can and helping such a diverse population of patients. I used to be a caregiver before joining OHSU, so still being able to do what may seem like trivial things to us, but valuable and helpful for the patients gives me great purpose. One of my favorite things about being at OHSU is walking around campus and seeing all the Pride themed badge reels that people wear and just seeing the LGBTQ+ staff, it really makes me feel like at home. I have not had this before in previous jobs, I have usually been either the only like gay or trans person at my job. Coming here and seeing how many of us there are, it just feels like an everyday pride for me. It is cool.

Who are you honoring and celebrating for this year's Transgender Day of Visibility?

I am celebrating my trans friends and myself. I plan to attend the PDX March for Queer & Trans Youth Autonomy that is being held on TDoV, then going out to dinner with some friends. I try to attend all the Trans marches when possible, I can feel the passion and heartfelt strength when we are in large numbers. The opportunity of gathering in group with everyone that understands your struggles and doing it in a positive way. I have been hearing a lot of my friends talk about is "trans joy." I have been leaning on that, because we need a lot of that right now and just being able to do that together. It is just a good feeling.

How can places work towards creating a positive trans and gender diverse work culture?

Continuing education in regards to like DEI and having a trauma-informed care approach and applying it. Being a good ally by holding others accountable or

correcting others if someone misgenders staff, patients, or visitors. Just being kind goes along way. In the unit I work with, we get all populations and we do get trans patients, and me being trans; I have always been an advocate in any way because I have seen as a patient myself in other hospitals where I have been seen, where the education lacks and where things can improve. I try to do that in my unit and strive to get it where trans patients can receive the best care possible that we can give.

How do you celebrate yourself?

I prioritize self-care, acknowledge every day that has passed, and that I am making strides towards my life goals that I never thought were attainable or possible when I was younger. I did not expect to make it past 18. I did not take high school towards the end seriously. I struggled for years, just like a lot of people in the trans

community just trying to survive. What made that change for me was I moved up here with my parents from Southern California, specifically for the trans community here. I started going to the Q center. I have met some great friends and great mentors. I was able to co-facilitate and support Trans youth in finding themselves more and get them resources. Just passing on what was given to me and what I learned. Now I am in a good spot of my life. I am back in school; I am working towards being a nurse. With how my schedule is and just how my life is right now, I am just taking one class at a time, but it is like I see my end goal and there is just a lot going

on in my life right now, but it is all positive. I just did not imagine being where I am now and I am happy I kept pushing.

Is there anything you would like to add.

Portland has a very large Trans community, which is why I moved up here and many of my friends that I have met in Oregon have moved here from all over for the same reason. I highly suggest getting involved with Pride ERG, or the Q Center, because it is a fantastic way to meet others and build life-long friendships and a strong community. Having support for one another is the best way to get through difficult

times, but also thrive together in Trans joy! We are here, we have always been here, and are not going anywhere.



WE ARE OHSU KYNDRA WHITE

Kyndra White is a Patient Access Resource Specialist at the Casey Eye Institute. She has been at OHSU for over a year. In her role, Kyndra supports coordinating surgery for up to 5 providers in the glaucoma department. Kyndra assists in scheduling pre and post operation appointments, coordinating medication orders, compiling patient packets to send them home with and making herself available to support patients after surgery.

What do you enjoy most about your job and working at OHSU?

All I have ever wanted to do was make a difference in someone's life. I know what it is like to feel like you have been forgotten or that there is nobody there that you can call. I like to make sure that I can be a person of support, so once your chart hits my desk, you know that you can call me about anything. I love being able to support patients, listen to them and help them get through the emotions of getting surgery. With glaucoma, patients are losing their vision and there is no cure. All we can do is lower the pressure in hopes that it slows down or stops the progression. I enjoy being able to be a part of the process, to be there with them, laugh and cry with them. For me, being able to provide that kind of support is far better than a paycheck because I get to make a difference. I get to touch someone's life and that is the most important thing in the

world to me.

One thing I love is that OHSU is welcoming and inclusive. I do not have to hide who I am; I do not walk around with a big transgender sticker on my forehead, but if anyone asks me, I do not hide it. I know that I can say yes and not get fired. When I first came out, I was fired three days later. Being able to work in an environment where I know that I will not get fired just for being alive is amazing for me. We have transgender patients, and they can see an adult who is trans, who is working and successful. They know that they were safe, I love being able to provide a safe space for them.

What does Transgender Day of Visibility mean to you?

Transgender Day of Visibility to me is important, especially with like the nature of the world today. There are about 500 legislative bills in America to get rid of me. There is a senator talking about the eradication of

transgender people. So, it is more important now, even though it is scary to be myself and to be out there, people need to see me and see that it is OK to be me. There are kids that are hearing these adults talk about eradicating them and killing them, for being who they are. I was looking it up and on average, there are over thirty people are brutally murdered every single year because they are transgender. So, to hold space in this country and in my job and community, it is important. I sometimes feel like I may be the only person that someone knows who is trans and maybe that they are judging my whole community based on just me. I try my hardest to be the best version of me that people see, you know, because I do not want like them to walk away and say, "you know what, that senator was right." For me, it is about holding space and making sure my voice is heard and people are celebrated, for the people that came before me and those coming behind me, and just

try to send out good energy.

Do you have any advice for people who want to be allies to the trans community?

If you want to be an ally. I mean, the best thing you can do is like, let your voice be heard. Ask people what their pronouns are, address people with the correct pronouns, make your voice heard, we need people to stand beside us and fight with us. If you are not saying something, you are hurting us. We see you, just as much as you see us. When something bad is happening and you do not say something, we notice it. Think about the questions you are asking, and if you would want them asked of you? And if you do not, then do not ask them. Your smile can go a long way it might be the only thing that trans person sees that day.

How do you celebrate yourself?

When I first transitioned, I got fired. It was very dark in the beginning and now I like to focus on doing things that make me feel good. I get my nails done all the time. You cannot tell right now, but I was a makeup artist for twenty years and I can sit in the mirror and just look at my face and do makeup on it for hours. I like focusing on the things that I am grateful for. My transition started out very dark, I was single, I was alone, I got fired, and I had to do things that I never thought

I would ever have to do. I look back now, I do not push it away and shut the door on it, I use it to motivate me to move forward and I use those experiences to be able to help the next person. I do not walk around and broadcast it, but I allow people to know who I am that way if they are going through something similar, they know they can come to me for support.

Is there anything you would like to add?

For other trans people, I just want to say that I see you, care for you, and support you in any way I can. If you ever need anything, please know that someone is here for you. Now more than ever we need to lift each other up. In a world where we are being torn down every day, we must support each other. I know it can be hard to come

out and be visible. Doing this interview scared me because in the past I have been put in compromising positions because of who I am, but I hope that by doing this it gives others the courage to live life loud, happy, and authentically.

I would like to tell everyone, thank you. For creating an amazing environment to work in where I know that I am safe. Thank you for being there for my trans brothers and sisters when they come in for services. Thank you for not looking down on us and for celebrating us the way we celebrate you.

