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**AIDS  
WALK  
ARIZONA  
TUCSON  
SUNDAY  
OCTOBER 9  
2016**

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# The SAAF CONNECTION

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE SOUTHERN ARIZONA AIDS FOUNDATION

**SUMMER 2016**

Volume 3, Issue 3



## Tucson Stands With Orlando

By Ethan Smith Cox, Director of Development

On Sunday June 12, we all awoke to the horrible news of the tragedy in Orlando. 49 killed and another 53 injured at Pulse, a gay nightclub. It was the worst massacre in modern US history and it took the lives of many young people whose potential was only beginning to be realized.

Those of us at SAAF immediately knew that something must be done for the local community and quickly organized a candlelight vigil for that evening. Tempest DuJour emceed and more than 1,000 people were in attendance to show their solidarity with the Orlando victims. Featured speakers included Tucson Vice Mayor Karin Uhlich;

Tucson Police Chief Chris Magnus; SAAF Executive Director Wendell Hicks; Pima County Supervisor Richard Elias; and Ben's Bells representative Michael Bilharz. In one of the more emotional aspects of the evening, Tempest spoke poignantly of her friend, Edward Sotomayor, Jr., one of those killed in the attack.

While so many of us struggle to understand how this sort of tragic event could happen, this vigil and the many others that were held in the days that followed, helped to unite one another in a bond of brotherhood, proving that love continues to conquer all.

Thanks to all who joined us for this special event and to everyone who made the night such a special one.

# 2016-2017 SAAF Board of Directors

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## OUR MISSION:

To cultivate  
a healthy,  
stigma-free society  
through  
transformative  
action.

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# What Happened In Orlando...

By Wendell Hicks, Executive Director

These last few weeks have been tough ones at SAAF. After the largest mass-shooting in modern American history was perpetrated against 49 of our brothers and sisters at Orlando nightclub, Pulse, I and much of the SAAF staff have been in a funk. After the initial questions of "Why?" and "How could this happen, again?" have been asked and gone unanswered, many of us find ourselves angry, sad, and feeling a little hopeless.

Sadly, Tucson is no stranger to mass shootings. In 2002, 3 lives were taken when a shooter opened fire at the School of Nursing on the University of Arizona campus. In 2011, outside of a Safeway during US Representative Gabby Giffords' community event, a killer took 6 lives including the life of a 9 year old girl. These 2 incidents shook our community to the core and forced us to realize that gun violence wasn't something that just happened on the nightly news, it was something that was happening right here in Tucson, a place we love and cherish and call "home".

If I wanted to, I could easily choose to be pessimistic and believe that the world is a violent and cold place. But that's not me. In fact, over the past several weeks since that horrible shooting in Orlando, I have seen people coming together, speaking out, and standing up against the atrocities that this event and too many others like it have visited upon our society.



On Sunday June 12, SAAF organized a vigil for the victims of the Orlando shooting and more than 1,000 people showed up to show their unity with those who were killed or injured (see story page 1). A few days later, SAAF learned that it would receive a grant from the Alliance Fund (see story page 7) to create and sustain a virtual LGBTQ resource center, something lacking in our community since the closing of Wingspan in 2014. And in early May, SAAF hired on Adam Ragan to serve as Associate Director of LGBTQ Initiatives (see story page 3). This move will help SAAF to further establish itself as the go-to place for all things LGBTQ in our community and will help to significantly expand resources for all of us.

I'm still saddened by what happened in Orlando. But to see the country's response to this event and to know how our own community is rising up to the challenge gives me great hope and reason to believe that things will get better.

Yours in the fight against stigma and hate,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Wendell Hicks".

Wendell Hicks

# Adam Ragan joins SAAF in Newly Created Role

By Ethan Smith Cox, Director of Development



SAAF has hired Adam Ragan to serve in the position of Associate Director of LGBTQ (lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, & queer) Initiatives. This newly created position was approved by the SAAF Board of Directors in March and will serve to further promote and grow programming and resources for the LGBTQ community in Tucson and southern Arizona.

In 2014, SAAF acquired Wingspan, southern Arizona's LGBTQ community center for more than a quarter century, as well as many of its programs and initiatives when they were forced to close their doors due to a lack of stable funding. Since that time, SAAF has grown funding support and services for 2 Wingspan programs, the Anti-Violence Project (AVP) and the Eon Youth Program, serving LGBTQ youth ages 13-23 and their allies. SAAF also acts as the umbrella organization for 4 Wingspan community groups: Camp Born This Way; Senior Pride; Puertas Abiertas; and the Multi-Faith Working Group. According to

SAAF Executive Director Wendell Hicks, "This newly created position will allow us to take all of the great work that Wingspan was doing when they closed and bring it to brand new levels. Just because Wingspan went away does not mean that the overwhelming need for LGBTQ-specific resources has vanished. In fact, we have seen a growth in requests for certain services over the past 2 years and our commitment is to meet as many community needs as possible."

Ragan, a graduate of Arizona State University where he received his Master's degree in English Linguistics, has a long history of community involvement and activism.

Ragan currently serves on the City of Tucson Commission on GLBT issues; the Planned Parenthood Advocates of Arizona Board of Directors; and as co-chair of the Arizona Cesar E. Chavez Holiday Coalition. Ragan was also one of the organizers behind last year's Engage Rally in downtown Tucson celebrating the Supreme Court's decision to legalize same-sex marriage.

Ragan states, "I am so excited to be joining an organization like SAAF, which has such a strong and proven reputation. I can't wait to get to work on finding out more about the needs of the LGBTQ community and addressing those needs, head on."



Visit [saaf.org](http://saaf.org) to link to the LGBTQ Community survey or scan the QR Code.

Adam Ragan can be reached directly at [aragan@saaf.org](mailto:aragan@saaf.org) or (520) 547-6171.



## SAAF CARE SERVICES

Services Available for People Living with HIV/AIDS Include:

### CLINICAL SERVICES

- Case Management
- Peer Counseling

### SUPPORT SERVICES

- Complementary Therapies
- Dental Care
- Food Programs
- Holiday Project
- Medical Benefits Cost Sharing Assistance for those enrolled in statewide ADAP Assist
- Medications Assistance
- Support Groups
- Transportation
- Wellness and Buyers' Club
- Other Personal Support Services

### HOUSING SERVICES

- Housing Units Owned by SAAF
- Community-Based Subsidized Housing
- Emergency Rent, Mortgage, and Utility Assistance
- Move-in Deposits

### PREVENTION SERVICES

- Risk-Reduction Counseling

Don't forget to register for AIDSWALK 2016, one of Tucson's ONLY pet-friendly walks!

Entering is quick and easy:

1. Go to [www.aidswalktucson.com](http://www.aidswalktucson.com)
2. Click on Register Now button
3. Set up your AIDSWALK fundraising page and start fundraising!

Every paid registrant through September 3 will be entered into a drawing for a Fitbit Activity Tracker or tickets to Festival for Life.



Register today for YOUR chance to win!!!



## It's Time For AIDSWALK!

By Monique Vallery, CTA, Associate Director of Development



Presents

**AIDS  
WALK  
ARIZONA  
TUCSON**



AIDSWALK Arizona-Tucson is almost here, taking place on Sunday October 9 and 2016 will mark the 28th anniversary of SAAF's flagship event!

We hope that you will join us a Walker or Runner this year in downtown Tucson on Jacome Plaza in front of the Main Library. SAAF is again teaming up with one of Tucson's most beloved cultural events, Tucson Meet Yourself. What a great way to spend the day downtown...morning at AIDSWALK and then spending the afternoon enjoying all that Tucson Meet Yourself has to offer.

Visit [www.aidswalktucson.com](http://www.aidswalktucson.com) for complete information and to register TODAY!



10 amazing teams entered the pit this year to help raise over \$37,000 for SAAF!



Photos by Scott Gressel, Creatista

## Jell-O Wrestling Made A Splash on 4th Avenue!

By Monique Vallery, CTA, Associate Director of Development

The Reno Gannon Memorial Jell-O Wrestling Extravaganza and Benefit Auction was held on Saturday April 23, 2016. We were excited about our new partnership with the Fourth Avenue Merchants Association (FAMA) and it did not let us down.

With a new location, a new community partnership, and a new beginning for SAAF's oldest event, success and a good time was had by all who attended. This year marked 29 years that Jell-O Wrestling has been raising money in support of the programs and services of SAAF.

10 amazing teams entered the pit this year to help raise over \$37,000 for SAAF. Teams included the ladies of Moulin Rouge, mighty Luchadores, Lumberjacks,

### 29th Anniversary Reno Gannon Memorial **Jell-O** wrestling

*Extravaganza and Benefit Auction!*

and Jurassic Park featuring a 17 foot T-Rex named Trix. We were also honored to recognize Jell-O referee Joe Roos for 20 years of service and emcee Lucinda Holliday for 25 years of volunteering at Jell-O Wrestling.

We are excited to celebrate the 30th Anniversary on Saturday May 6, 2017!

Contact Monique Vallery at [mvallery@saaf.org](mailto:mvallery@saaf.org) or visit [www.jello-wrestling.org](http://www.jello-wrestling.org) for more information.



## FUNDRAISING EVENTS

### AIDSWALK TUCSON

Sunday October 9, 2016  
Downtown Tucson  
[www.aidswalktucson.com](http://www.aidswalktucson.com)

### 28TH ANNUAL JERÔME BEILLARD FESTIVAL FOR LIFE

Saturday November 19, 2016  
NEW LOCATION!  
Desert Diamond Casino  
7350 South Nogales Highway  
[www.festivalforlife.org](http://www.festivalforlife.org)

### BOWLING FOR TOMMY

Saturday January 21, 2017  
Fiesta Bowl  
501 West River Road  
[www.saaf.org](http://www.saaf.org)

### 14th Annual Mōda Provōcateūr

Date TBD  
Tucson Convention Center  
Grand Ballroom  
[www.saafmoda.org](http://www.saafmoda.org)

### 30TH ANNUAL RENO GANNON MEMORIAL JELL-O WRESTLING

Saturday May 6, 2017  
NEW LOCATION!  
4th Avenue & 7th Street  
[www.jello-wrestling.org](http://www.jello-wrestling.org)



## TO YOUR HEALTH

### Travis Wright Memorial Buyers' Club

Purchase vitamins and supplements for HIV/AIDS care and general health at the lowest possible cost.

**Cactus Drug**  
305 S. Euclid Ave, next to SAAF  
Monday-Friday: 9:00am to 6:00pm

## Staff Spotlight: Jai Smith

By Lauren Lederman, Development Associate

Jai Smith\* is SAAF's Youth Life Project Program Manager, a project aimed at preventing intimate partner violence and sexual violence with young people ages 13-24.

The Youth Life Project is made up of four components to help succeed in this endeavor: classes that are taught to youth in several high schools around Tucson; capacity building trainings for service providers who work with youth; coalition work with key stakeholders in the Tucson community to increase sexual violence prevention messaging; and outreach and training to local alcohol-serving establishments with the Arizona Safer Bars Alliance.

The Youth Life Project is SAAF's first effort at work that is this strongly intersectional and comprehensive surrounding intimate partner violence and sexual violence. Jai hopes that this program is able to thrive and that collaborations with the state of AZ will help ensure that this stellar program provides youth with the necessary tools to build healthy relationships and advocate for their needs. He also hopes that SAAF continues to grow in a direction that looks at the various factors that may cause behavioral risk for HIV, and that those factors, much

like in the program he's currently running, are brought to the forefront.

Since she began working for SAAF in 2011, Jai has had a diverse career. Before taking on her current role, Jai worked as a Health Education Specialist in the Eon Youth Lounge; in the Arizona Life Links for Youth (ALLY) program focusing on suicide prevention; and in the Reaching Adolescents Prevention Project (RAPP) program focusing on substance abuse prevention and healthy communication. Her relationship with SAAF goes even farther back – she began volunteering at SAAF at age 13, and walked in her first AIDS WALK in 2001! Before joining SAAF professionally, Jai worked at the University of Arizona as a student leader focusing on sexual health education and LGBTQ equity and leadership.

Jai enjoys working directly with people – teaching someone new skills or talking about the importance of taking ownership of one's actions can be transformative. He finds being present to help youth learn how to best reduce their risk and make informed decisions to be incredibly rewarding. Moving to a management position has meant that he's out of the classroom doing behind the scenes work more frequently. While it's challenging to not be working directly with youth, Jai still enjoys what he's doing and knows that he is making a difference.

When she's not doing amazing work at SAAF, Jai can be found on her bike, long-distance cycling – she just successfully completed the 2016 AIDS LifeCycle! A native Tucsonan, you might spot her at El Tiradito Shrine, one of her favorite locations. Jai loves to perform and is a singer with the Reveille Men's Chorus. She's supported by a most caring, supportive, and, often times, patient partner, Sasha. She is the proud pet co-parent of Indy, their dog, and Camila and Charles Phillip Arthur George, their two guinea pigs.

*\*Jai uses masculine and feminine pronouns, as reflected in this profile.*

# Foundation Spotlight: The Alliance Fund

By Ethan Smith Cox, Director of Development

Last month, SAAF learned that it would receive 3 significant awards from the Alliance Fund. These awards will support 2 existing youth initiatives (the Eon Youth program and ALLY, a program focused on reducing the rate of completed and attempted suicides by LGBTQ youth) as well as a virtual community center that will serve our as a go-to resource for LGBTQ friendly businesses, organizations, and services.

**The Alliance Fund (AF)** was formed in 1999 when the Community Foundation for Southern Arizona was awarded a two-year, \$100,000 challenge grant from the National Lesbian and Gay Community Funding Partnership. The Fund was established to expand funding opportunities and resources for LGBT organizations in Tucson and rural southern Arizona (Pima, Cochise and Santa



Cruz counties) and to create linkages with straight allies. Since its inception, the Fund has awarded more than 144 grants to 56 different organizations totaling over \$614,712.

SAAF is incredibly grateful the Alliance Fund's support of both existing programs and new initiatives and considers AF a key partner in helping to accomplish the goal of creating, sustaining, and expanding services for the LGBTQ community in southern Arizona.

In addition to the 3 awards that were directly made to SAAF, both Southern Arizona Senior Pride and Camp Born This Way were recipients of AF funding this year. SAAF acts as fiscal agent for both groups.

## Foundations For SAAF's Mission

By Tony Bruno, SAAF Grants Coordinator

The **Meals on Wheels Loves Pets** initiative provided funding to purchase pet food and pay for emergency veterinarian care for our client's companion animals. This is their first award to SAAF.

The **Richard Grand Foundation** continues to provide generous support to SAAF, supporting general operations.

The **Arizona Community Foundation** works to provide additional funding to support basic needs: housing, food, prevention services, and health education services for high-risk individuals, as well as youth prevention programs.



Richard Grand Foundation



SAAF relies on the compassion of community, corporate, and private foundations to support programs and services that improve the health and quality of life for people living with, affected by, or at risk for HIV/AIDS and those negatively affected by stigma.



## VOLUNTEER ORIENTATION

### Get involved with SAAF!

Join us for an upcoming volunteer orientation, the first step for anyone wanting to volunteer at SAAF.\* Orientations take place at the SAAF office building located at 375 South Euclid Avenue.

**Tuesday July 19, 2016**  
5:30 pm – 8:30 pm

**Tuesday August 23, 2016**  
5:30 pm – 8:30 pm

**Saturday September 17, 2016**  
10:00 am – 2:00 pm

*(\*No orientation is necessary for those volunteering for fundraising events and Walk-in Wednesdays.)*

To sign up for Volunteer Orientation, contact Jason Cuneo, SAAF's Volunteer Coordinator, at (520) 547-6101 or [jasoncuneo@saaf.org](mailto:jasoncuneo@saaf.org) or visit [www.saaf.org/volunteer/overview](http://www.saaf.org/volunteer/overview)

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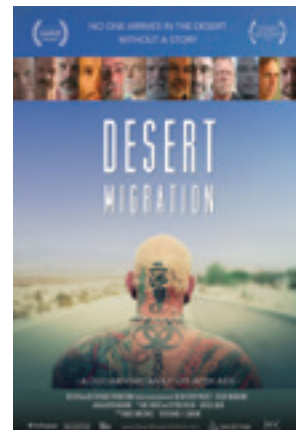
## Desert Migration Screening At The Loft

By Ethan Smith Cox, Director of Development

On Sunday September 18, SAAF and the Loft Cinema will team up for a special, one-time only screening of the documentary *Desert Migration*. September 18 is National HIV/AIDS Aging Awareness Day.

Saved by the introduction of protease inhibitors in the mid-1990s, many HIV positive men needed to rebuild lives they thought they would not live. In an effort to make peace with the virus inside them, some migrated to California's Palm Springs in the hope of finding a healing desert oasis. But is this environment, with its tolerant population and constant sunshine, enough to heal their shattered bodies and dispel their lingering grief? *Desert Migration* attempts to answer this question and shed more light on the 1,000s of people who are living long lives with HIV or AIDS.

Called "A sweeping and enthralling testament of hope" by the Seattle Gay News, the screening will take place at the Loft Cinema (located at 3233 East Speedway) beginning at 2:00pm and will be followed by a Q & A with Director Daniel Cardone, via Skype.



Tickets are \$8 for Loft members and \$10 for general admission. All proceeds benefit SAAF and the Loft. To learn more and to purchase tickets, visit [www.loftcinema.org](http://www.loftcinema.org).