

PALS Program

Stance on LGBTQ+ Lifestyle

<https://www.palsprograms.org/blog/affinity-groups>

As of 2021, the PALS Program has a new group called Affinity, which calls for monthly Zoom meetings to discuss the identity group that participants are a part of and how they can be supported in the group. The Affinity groups contain the following identity groups: “LGBTQ+, BIPOC, siblings of people with Down syndrome, and allies.” PALS Program says the following about these meetings:

These meetings will empower our members to steer the conversation in a direction that best suits their needs, and there will be trained facilitators in each group to ensure the conversation stays safe and supportive for all involved. In order for our groups to be powerful and effective, it’s critical that participants feel comfortable and safe speaking amongst their fellow group members. Therefore, all members of each group must hold the identity of the specific group.

<https://www.palsprograms.org/blog/welcomeandsupport>

In a 2022 post, both the PALS’ program coordinator and advancement manager wrote a blog post to specifically voice their support for transgender youth. Some excerpts from the blog are listed below:

- ◆ “This past month, we read articles, watched news reports, and listened to podcasts about LGBTQ+ rights, and specifically the recent proliferation of anti-trans legislation in local and state governments across the country.”
- ◆ “It is deeply upsetting to see lawmakers target an already marginalized population. It is especially unsettling to see how trans-youth, their families, and caregivers are being targeted by their neighbors in some states.”
- ◆ “When building pairs and teams, our Program Leads consider many factors including age, location, interests, activity levels and more. After piloting mixed gender teams and pairings in 2019 and 2021, PALS is



P.O. Box 6170, Falmouth, VA 22403 • 540-659-4171 • ALL.org • kvandyke@all.org

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confident that gender does not have to be a factor in matching Partners Peers.”



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