

Part 1: The Area of Inquiry

Combating Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer+ Youth Homelessness

Abstract

Combating Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer + Youth Homelessness will explore many facets of LGBTQ+ life. Specifically, the major will explore the unique challenges and risks that LGBTQ+ homeless youth encounter as a result of social and cultural oppression. Additionally, the major will concentrate on the profound impact of different age groups, religious identity, and geographic location on LGBTQ+ youth homelessness. Finally, the major will look at the mental health impact of being LGBTQ+ and being homeless at a young age. The ultimate goal of my endeavor is to participate in the creation of a Shenandoah Valley organization to provide LGBTQ+ youth with food, shelter, clothing, academic assistance, and therapists and social workers.

Personal Statement

Combating LGBTQ+ youth homelessness is extremely important to me. My interest helping youth extends back to the age of eight, when I saw a commercial about feeding the hungry. It may seem odd, but that commercial had a profound effect on me. Since then I have been running food drives under the title of "Kids Feeding Kids." Over the course of ten years I have collected over two tons of food, five-hundred dollars in support, and forty large boxes of clothing for such organizations as Island Harvest, UJA-Federation, and a local Veteran's Food Pantry. I first became interested in helping LGBTQ+ youth at the young age of fourteen, when I

came out to my family as lesbian. I was luckier than most in that my family was extremely supportive and accepting of my sexual orientation. Unfortunately, other youths are not as fortunate. My vision to combat LGBTQ+ youth homelessness is not to reinvent the wheel, but to further the ongoing good work to provide a safe place in which homeless LGBTQ+ youth reside. Within the envisioned shelter there will be an education program, a clothing exchange program, on-site counseling services, nutritional meals, and clean beds. I hope that this LGBTQ+ youth homeless shelter will positively impact hundreds of youth who are struggling to find a safe place to live, and that the shelter will forever be etched in the minds of those whose lives have been changed for the better through their experiences at the shelter.

Defining the Area of Inquiry

Guiding Questions:

Many questions lie at the heart of my research. Some of the essential questions are: What are the unique challenges and risks that are common among homeless LGBTQ+ youth? How do such factors as sociocultural norms, transition into adulthood from childhood, and racial, cultural, and ethnic identity impact LGBTQ+ youth? How does being homeless, voluntarily or involuntarily, affect LGBTQ+ individuals later on in adulthood? Does youth homelessness lead to chronic homelessness? How do homeless shelters treat LGBTQ+ persons? How can a better system be created in order to provide health and mental health care to LGBTQ+ individuals, one grounded in principles of trauma-informed care (i.e. sexual assault, medical emergencies, and routine doctor's appointments) and integrated across housing, medical care, substance use, and social services?

Pursuing the questions above will allow me to expand my knowledge in three primary areas. The questions will assist me in understanding how LGBTQ+ individuals navigate culture and society as they develop their identities personally and within societal contexts. By understanding the complex identities of LGBTQ+ youth, I will be able to better understand the challenges and opportunities related to creating a shelter program. Understanding the ins and outs of the generations culture will allow for the largest share of LGBTQ+ youth to feel safe and comfortable, as well as, have a place to live. Secondly, by pursuing the guiding questions, I hope to be able to better understand the unique experiences as well as the causes of LGBTQ+ youth homelessness. I hope to use this understanding to tailor the shelter to these youth. Lastly, my inquires will assist me in exploring the multitude of physical and mental health issues LGBTQ+ homeless youth will experience as a result of intolerance and homelessness. I am confident that answering the above questions will be extremely beneficial to providing a safe space for LGBTQ+ youth to live and pursue a better life.

Context:

LGBTQ history features prominently in Women, Gender, and Sexuality Studies. However, the study of LGBTQ youth homelessness is not explored or addressed by many scholars. Through research, I was able to identify many pioneers of the American Gay Rights Movement. For example, Phyllis Lyon and Del Martin are a couple who founded the Daughters of Bilitis in 1955, which is the first lesbian rights organization in the United States. In 1970 Michael McConnell and Jack Baker were the first couple to apply for a same-sex marriage license in Minnesota. Furthermore, Reverend Troy Perry founded the Metropolitan Community Church

in 1968. Rev. Perry's church is the first to specifically minister to LGBTQ people. The right of same-sex couples to wed was recognized in 2015 by the Supreme Court.

Coupled with many pioneers throughout history, there are many individuals who have given their lives or fought on the forefronts of the American Gay Rights Movement. Matthew Shepard was a young twenty-one-year-old who was brutally attacked and left to die in Wyoming. The Matthew Shepard Foundation's mission statement is to erase hate and to replace it with understanding, compassion, and acceptance. The foundation shares Matthew's story to help advocate for the acceptance everyone as they are. Another trailblazer of the LGBTQ community is Ellen DeGeneres. Ellen came out on the front cover of *Time* magazine in 1997. Ellen's charisma, bravery, and influence inspires many to be their authentic selves day in and day out. The individuals named above are only two of the many inspiring trailblazers of the LGBTQ community.

Throughout the history of Women, Gender, and Sexuality studies many topics have been analyzed. UMass Amherst Libraries hosts an open-access online textbook by several of the university's scholars that explains the context of this interdisciplinary approach (<https://open.umn.edu/opentextbooks/textbooks/introduction-to-women-gender-sexuality-studies>). Unit I addresses the conception of power, social constructionism and intersectionality. Unit II challenges the ideas of binary systems, race, gender and class. Unit III looks deeply into institutions, culture, family, and media. Unit IV and V focus on the gender gap and feminist movements. LGBTQ history is extensive, complex, and is understood by many scholars.

As I become an expert in the field, I will need to be up to date on the latest terminology and vocabulary. The new glossary of terms *The A-Z of Gender and Sexuality* is filled with every term used to describe the spectrums of gender and sexuality from ace-xe. I will be reading many

non-fiction books about the culture of the LGBTQ community and how it relates to society. Some of the books I will read to inform me of the intricacies and perspectives of major events in the American Gay Rights Movement are *The Gay Revolution*, *We Make It Better: the LGBTQ Community and Their Positive Contributions to Society*, and *LGBTQ Social Movements*.

While LGBTQ history is widely researched among scholars, LGBTQ homelessness is often overlooked. In 2012, co-authors L.E. Durso and G.J. Gates published a national survey discussing their findings on LGBTQ youth who are homeless or are at risk of homelessness. Through extensive research I have found that there are few scholars addressing the issue of LGBTQ youth homelessness even though the issue is exponentially growing.

Disciplines:

LGBTQ+ youth homelessness is a complex problem that will need to draw from multiple disciplines in order to help me understand its wide range of impacts. I will be drawing upon such disciplines as Social Work, Family Studies, Sociology, Art History, Justice Studies, Women, Gender, and Sexuality Studies, and Graphic Design. Social Work will contribute to my curriculum in many ways. Through the classes I have selected, I will be learning how to effectively work with teenagers, the intricacies of child welfare services and how they affect LGBTQ+ youth, and the violence within families. Social Work defines knowledge as affectively obtaining the ability to apply various methods to helping families and individuals work through daily and life-changing problems. Family Studies will contribute to my curriculum in aspects such as empowering youth and issues regarding LGBTQ+ individuals and their families. With respect to Family Studies, knowledge is gained in understanding the dynamic of families and how to effectively support, empower, and encourage youth to become the best adults they can be.

Sociology will provide insight to many aspects of LGBTQ+ culture. One aspect includes the study of how gender and gender binaries intersect with power, knowledge, science/biology and inequality. Additionally, Sociology will allow for the investigation of sexual behaviors, identities, cultures, and social movements, and how sexuality is shaped by society and social institutions. Lastly, Sociology will provide insight into modern family systems. Looking back into history, art, propaganda, and writing have been essential in capturing a historical view of LGBTQ+ people. The media and artists have made a huge impact on the American Gay Rights Movements. The two groups above have done so by portraying historic Stonewall and Pride festivals variously as riots, celebrations, liberations, and acts against religion. By studying the different framing of the events, I will have a better understanding of the history of LGBTQ+ culture. Understanding LGBTQ+ culture in a more complete way will allow for an effective way to remind youth of their inherent strengths and the new strengths they will gain by coming through on the other side of homelessness as successful individuals. Justice Studies will allow for the legal perspective that goes hand in hand with each social movement and the intricacies of the current and future political policies. Social policies pertaining to the LGBTQ+ will greatly impact how we run the shelter. Knowing the current policies will allow me to protect youth from further discrimination and empower them to push for further equal rights. Additionally, Women, Gender, and Sexuality Studies will be influential to my work. By understanding the inequalities not only among the LGBTQ+ community but other minorities, I will be able to further recognize the best path for the shelter.

Lastly, Graphic Design will be a smaller component of my program but will still be extremely essential to certain aspects of my overall project. Graphic Design will help me develop professional logos, posters, and websites for my portfolio and shelter. All in all, each discipline

is essential to my success as a scholar in gaining knowledge and expertise in my focused area of study.

Justification:

My questions cannot be sufficiently answered in only one major. With that being said, it is essential that I use the interdisciplinary route of putting together a well-rounded program of study. While researching for majors that would fully answer my questions, I was only able to find majors that answered one aspect of my inquiry. In addition, while looking at minors I found one minor that will enhance my understanding of one aspect of my inquiry. However, it will not answer all of my questions. The Family Studies minor will allow me to explore how to help LGBTQ+ youth—after they are kicked out of their homes—cope with their situation, get them back on their feet, and to constantly encourage them to be their best selves. Additionally, while researching courses to include in my program, I encountered many individuals whose focus involves gender, sexuality, and LGBTQ+ social issues. I know it will be extremely beneficial for my inquiries to be answered and pondered in an interdisciplinary setting.

Faculty Mentor:

While looking through the many disciplines encompassed by my coursework, five individuals stood out because of their research and backgrounds. The five individuals I am considering working with as mentors/advisors are Dr. Bethany Bryson, Dr. Christine Robinson, Dr. B.J. Bryson, Dr. Karen Myers, and Dr. Rockwell Parker. Dr. Bethany Bryson is an Associate Professor of Sociology. They are an expert in such relevant topics as social inequality, sexuality, sociology of gender. In terms of my project, they might be mentoring me in such domains as community partnerships, the sociology of sexuality and gender, and queer theory. I have already

met with them and discussed aspects of my project and my ultimate goals. Dr. Christine Robinson is a Professor of Justice Studies. She researches sexual orientation and social policy, and liberation movements and counter movements. In terms of my project, she might help me better understand social movements and social policy in respect to sexual orientation and gender identity. I have already met with Dr. Robinson regarding the above topics as well as to discuss scholarly articles pertaining to my topic. Dr. B.J. Bryson is a Professor of Social Work. She might be able to help me provide aid to homeless LGBTQ+ youths and adolescents who have mental health problems. I have not yet spoken to Dr. Bryson as she is on leave for the spring 2019 semester. Dr. Karen Myers is an Assistant Professor of Social Work. She might be able to mentor me in advocating for youth and understanding the intricacies of the foster care system. I have not yet met with Dr. Myers. Dr. M. Rockwell Parker is an Assistant Professor of Biology. He is part of the Steering Committee at Shenandoah LGBTQ Center and will be extremely helpful in participating in the achievement of my ultimate goal of setting up a shelter LGBTQ+ teen shelter. At this point in time, I am leaning towards having Dr. Bryson and Dr. Parker co-advise me throughout my undergraduate career. Dr. Bryson will advise me on my academics and community partners while Dr. Parker will advise me on the partnering with Shenandoah LGBTQ Center, which will have a strong positive impact on the LGBTQ+ youth community. I will be communicating with all of the above professors to enrich my education throughout my entire undergraduate academic career. Due to the interdisciplinary nature of my Independent Scholars project, I will need to have multiple individuals advising and mentoring me throughout different stages of my project.

Part 2: Curriculum

There are many of classes in the JMU undergraduate catalog that are extremely interesting and will help me further understand my three primary areas of inquiry.

In terms of understanding/navigating how LGBTQ+ individuals navigate culture and society. as they develop personal identities and communities relationships, the following classes are relevant:

- SOCI 347- Queer Theories of Gender and Inequality
- ARTH 390- Independent Study in Art History (My topic is focusing on queer artists, how the media portrays the Gay Rights Movements and pride parades, and how the media influences the culture surrounding LGBTQ+ individuals.)
- WGSS 370/ WGSS 490/ ENG 370/ ENG 423- Queer Literature/ Special Studies in Women's, Gender and Sexuality Studies/ Queer Literature/ Advanced Studies in Gender and Sexuality in Literature
- JUST 386- Sexual Orientation and Social Policy
- SOCI 334- Socialization and Society

In terms of understanding the unique experiences and causes of LGBTQ+ youth homelessness the following are relevant:

- FAM 487- Issues Affecting LGBTQ+ Individuals and Families *I will be a Family Studies Minor as of 3/14/19 and will be taking SOCI 374 concurrently, which was already approved*
- NPS 300- Introduction to Nonprofits (This course will allow me to gain a better understanding of how to run the shelter as a nonprofit organization.)

- FAM 386- Youth Empowerment Strategies

In terms of understanding the physical and mental health issues LGBTQ+ homeless youth as a result of intolerance and homelessness the following classes are relevant:

- SOCI 374- Sociology of the Family
- SOWK 387- Working with Teenagers
- SOWK 340- Violence in Families
- SOWK 342- Child Welfare Services
- SOCI 367- Sociology of Sexuality

The below slots are held so I can take three courses from the LGBTQ+ and Queer Studies Minor. (I have spoken to the minor coordinator and can use three new courses that are made plus three additional courses, I have already taken to double count in order to have the eighteen-credit minor). The courses are held below as:

- Queer Minor Course
- Queer Minor Course
- Queer Minor Course

The below course will help me develop a professional logo, website, as well as advertising for the shelter:

- GRPH 408- Brand Identity *I will be taking the prerequisite, GRPH 306, as a part of the B.F.A. Graphic Design major*

List of Independent Scholars Courses with Descriptions:

The courses are listed by discipline/department. All fourteen of the courses are relevant to my inquiry, therefore, they are in no specific order.

- SOCI 334- Socialization and Society: This course examines socialization in society. Biography, narratives and socialization are examined in relation to issues of personal power, justice, culture, politics, social relations, and other social formations.
- SOCI 347- Queer Theories of Gender and Inequality: Contemporary approaches to the culture and social structure of gender and gender binaries, as they intersect with power, knowledge, science/biology and inequality. Method involves examining and challenging the cultural classification systems that inform knowledge, human action and social institutions. Requires college-level reading, writing and intellectual engagement.
- SOCI 367- Sociology of Sexuality: This course examines sociological theory and research on sexual behaviors, identities, cultures, and social movements, investigating how sexuality is shaped by society and its social institutions. In addition, the course examines how sociological research on sexuality is conducted, how society shapes the sociological study of sexuality, the unique ethical concerns and methodological challenges in researching sexuality, and the place of sociology in shaping discourse and social policy on relevant social issues.
- SOCI 374- Sociology of the Family: Covers the basic concepts and theories in marriage and the family; looks at basic issues in modern family life; examines changes in family

functions and in the various stages of the family life cycle and discusses the future of the family in contemporary society.

- FAM 386- Youth Empowerment Strategies: Students learn to use group activities that include the creative arts, low ropes and self-discovery in youth empowerment. The goal is to help youth build life skills and make informed decisions. Prior to beginning work with youth, students complete 25 hours of training.
- FAM 487- Issues Affecting LGBTQIAP+ Individuals and Families: Examination of selected topics that are of current importance to family studies. Course may be repeated for credit. Prerequisite: FAM 133 or SOCI 374. *I will be a Family Studies Minor as of 3/14/19 and will be taking SOCI 374 concurrently, which was already approved*
- SOWK 340- Violence in Families: Examination of violence in the family, including spouse, sibling, elder and child abuse. Studies the social and cultural patterns and etiology of family violence. Examines programs and services for the abused and the abuser including shelters, support systems and counseling.
- SOWK 342- Child Welfare Services: Study of the basic child welfare services – day care, homemakers, services to unwed parents, protective, foster care and adoption services – and the principle income maintenance programs as they affect children and their families. Analysis of legal framework and court services and such current issues as guardianship, educational and protective services.
- SOWK 387- Working with Teenagers: Survey of physical, psychological and social theories of adolescent development. Examination of service delivery issues in working with teen-agers. Investigation of topical areas of particular relevance to work with

adolescents including sexuality, abuse and neglect, runaways, depression and suicide, and substance abuse.

- NPS 300- Introduction to Nonprofits: An introduction to the development of the nonprofit sector in the American context exploring history, theories, legal issues, governance and ethical considerations. Global nonprofits are also explored. Provides a foundation for subsequent work in the nonprofit studies minor. Prerequisite: Sophomore standing with a declared major.
- WGSS 370/ WGSS 490/ ENG 370/ ENG 423- Queer Literature/ Special Studies in Women's, Gender and Sexuality Studies/ Queer Literature/ Advanced Studies in Gender and Sexuality in Literature: WGSS 370-An exploration of texts and issues in literature written by and about lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and queer writers, including critical and theoretical issues as well as questions of canon. Text studied may include fiction, poetry, drama, essays and memoirs written primarily, but not exclusively, in the 20th century. /WGSS 490- Designed to give capable students in women's, gender and sexuality studies an opportunity to complete independent study under faculty supervision. Prerequisite: Admission by recommendation of the instructor and permission of the program coordinator. / ENG 370- writers, including critical and theoretical issues as well as questions of canon. Text studied may include fiction, poetry, drama, essays and memoirs written primarily, but not exclusively, in the 20th century. / ENG 423- Advanced study of a topic using a gender and sexuality studies approach to literary texts. This course will explore how gender and sexuality and their representation in literature are shaped by social, cultural, historical and political contexts. Course may be repeated as topic changes.

- JUST 386- Sexual Orientation and Social Policy: The concept of sexual orientation is a relatively recent development in academic, legal, medical and other social policy contexts in the U.S. and globally. This course surveys key social policies pertaining to sexual orientation and examines relevant research from multiple disciplines and appeals to classical and contemporary conceptions of justice that shape public debates and policy decisions. Prerequisite: JUST 200 and one other 200-level JUST course, not including JUST 225. (The prerequisites have already been discussed with Dr. Robinson and have a strong potential of being waved.)
- ARTH 390- Independent Study in Art History: Independent activity at the intermediate level, such as research or studio practice, under faculty supervision. Projected studies in any area of the school's offering must be arranged with the instructors who will direct them. Offered only with the consent of the instructor.
- GRPH 408- Brand Identity: Exploration of visual identities utilizing a holistic, systems approach to design. Introduces business strategies and design techniques associated with brand development. Emphasis is placed on methods of thinking, research and implementation. Prerequisite: GRPH 306. *I will be taking the prerequisite, GRPH 306, as a part of the B.F.A. Graphic Design major*

Table of Independent Scholars Courses by Semester:

Summer 2019							
Class Number	Course Number	Course Name			Credit Hours		
1	ANTH 195	Cultural Anthropology			3		
2	PSYC 160	Lifespan Human Development			3		
3	ENG 248	Survey of American Literature: From the Civil War to the Modern Period			3		
Sophomore Year							
Fall 2019			18	Spring 2020			16
Class Number	Course Number	Course Name	Credit Hours	Class Number	Course Number	Course Name	Credit Hours
1	GRPH 200	Image Making	3	1	GRPH 201/ Studio Art Course	Digital Media Design/ Studio Art Course	3
2	GRPH 206	Typography I	3	2	GRPH 208	Portfolio Review	0
3	IND 300		3	3	FAM 133/SOCI 374	Contemporary Family/Sociology of the Family	3
4	FAM 487-Honors Option	Issues Affecting LGBTQIAP+ Individuals and Families	3	4	Studio Art Course	Studio Art Course	3
5	SOCI 367	Sociology of Sexuality	3	5	IND 300		1
6	ART 260	Intro to Photo: Black & White	3	6	ARTH390	Independent Study in Art History	3
				7	SOWK 387	Working with Teenagers	3

Junior Year							
Fall 2020			18	Spring 2021			19
Class Number	Course Number	Course Name	Credit Hours	Class Number	Course Number	Course Name	Credit Hours
1	ARCD 303	History of Design	3	1	GRPH 313	Interactive Media	3
2	GRPH 306	Typography II	3	2	SOWK 342	Child Welfare Services	3
3	GRPH 312	Web Design	3	3	Graphic Concentration Elective	Graphic Concentration Elective	3
4	REL 101H	Religions of the World-Honors	3	4	NPS 300/WGSS 370/WGSS 490/ENG 370/ ENG 423	Introduction to Nonprofits/Queer Literature/ Special Studies in Women's, Gender and Sexuality Studies/ Queer Literature/ Advanced Studies in Gender and Sexuality in Literature	3
5	Studio Art Course/GRPH 201	Studio Art Course/Digital Media Design II	3	5	JUST 386/SOCI 334	Sexual Orientation and Social Policy/Socialization and Society	3
				6	Queer Minor Course	Queer Minor Course	3
6	SOWK 340	Violence in Families	3	7	GRPH/IND/HON 499A	Senior Project	1
Senior Year							
Fall 2021			18	Spring 2022			17
Class Number	Course Number	Course Name	Credit Hours	Class Number	Course Number	Course Name	Credit Hours
1	GRPH 408	Brand Identity	3	1	Graphic Concentration Elective	Graphic Concentration Elective	3
2	Studio Art Course	Studio Art Course	3	2	Graphic Concentration Elective	Graphic Concentration Elective	3
3	Graphic Concentration Elective	Graphic Concentration Elective	3	3	FAM 386	Youth Empowerment Strategies	3
4	SOCI 347	Queer Theories of Gender and Inequality	3	4	FAM 400/Queer Minor Course	Family Issues and Applications/Queer Minor Course	3
5	Queer Minor Course/FAM 400	Queer Minor Course/Family Issues and Applications	3	5	Queer Minor Course	Queer Minor Course	3
6	GRPH/IND/HON 499B	Senior Project	3	6	GRPH/IND/HON 499C	Senior Project	2

Part 3: Experiential Learning

There are multiple internship opportunities that will advance my inquiry and intellectual growth. Two internships I am extremely interested in are both at the Human Rights Campaign (HRC), located in Washington D.C. The first internship that I am interested in is the *All Children, All Families Internship* (ACAF). As an ACAF intern, I would be responsible for a multitude of tasks such as conducting research on various topics (including the experiences of LGBTQ+ youth and adults interacting with social service systems, best practices in child welfare, and child welfare policy) and attending regular ACAF, Children, Youth and Families Program (CYFP) and HRC Foundation meetings. This internship will give me the opportunity to work with a non-profit organization, and to intern in a department that focuses on helping LGBTQ+ youth in foster care to find their forever homes. The second internship opportunity that I would like to have at HRC is titled *Children, Youth and Families Internship* (CYFP). This internship also has such responsibilities as attending to programmatic duties relating to the Parents for Transgender Equality Council and the Youth Ambassador Initiative, assisting in outreach and organization for events such as Time To THRIVE, lobby days, and policy briefings and attending regular CYFP and HRC Foundation meetings. As a CYFP intern, I will have the opportunity to work closely with LGBTQ+ youth and families; engage with local schools to help embrace family diversity, avoid gender stereotyping, and end bias-based bullying; and participate in the Youth Well-Being Project. The Youth Well-Being Project promotes safety, inclusion, and well-being for LGBTQ+ youth. Both of the internships offered through HRC are incredible opportunities and will help me develop expertise to assist LGBTQ+ homeless youth.

In conjunction to my research in the classroom, I will be partnering with Shenandoah LGBTQ Center in Staunton, Virginia. At the center I will be collaborating with the Seeking

Committee and the Founders Circle to create a food bank specifically for the LGBTQ community. As the center planning moves along—and my own credibility increases—I will be able to work towards my ultimate goal of opening up a shelter or working with the foster care system to assist LGBTQ youth.

Lastly, there are two conferences I hope to attend—The True Colors United-Impact Summit in the fall and the Human Rights Campaign -Time to Thrive in the spring. Both of the conferences focus on helping LGBTQ homeless youth and educating schools around the country on how to be a more tolerant and welcoming place for LGBTQ youth. I am extremely excited for the many opportunities I will pursue throughout my academic career.

Part 4: Portfolio

My website portfolio will be powered by WordPress and will have many facets. Specifically, the website will encompass course work relevant to LGBTQ+ culture and community, creative artwork that ties into LGBTQ+ culture, issues, community, and history, a professional persona (which intertwines my professional career as an artist and a scholar), and many journal entries about reading completed outside of the classroom. The structure of the website will have a landing page that is directly linked to my art portfolio and my Independent Scholars portfolio. My art portfolio page will have photographs or file uploads of the works broken down by each art course taken. Additionally, the website will allow visitors to inquire about purchasing my artwork. The Independent Scholars portfolio page will be separated by academic topics and creative artwork relevant to the LGBTQ+ culture, community, and history. The professional persona page will have separate tabs for my resume and my professional Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, and LinkedIn accounts. I will also be presenting my combined

personal statement as an artist and a scholar. Lastly, I would like all of the pages to connect back to their respective home pages, in addition to the main pages connecting to each other and the landing page.

Part 5: Independent Research: The Senior Project

There are two questions I will address in my senior project. The first is, how can LGBTQ+ youth homelessness be combatted? The second question is how does a youth's mental health impact them at both a young age and as an adult? As of now, I am pondering multiple options for my senior project. As per conversations with Dr. Parker, there are multiple opportunities at the Shenandoah LGBTQ Center. The three opportunities that have come my way are setting up a preparation program for GED degrees, partnering with the program coordinator of the life skills program to create classes, or creating a food bank within the center specifically for the LGBTQ+ community. With the need for grants and donations, learning the ins and outs of the legal process and policies of shelters, and the zoning laws of Virginia, my proposed shelter may take a little longer than my undergraduate career to get off the ground. However, the shelter that I envision has the opportunity to be created through Shenandoah LGBTQ Center during my time as a graduate student. Within my proposed LGBTQ+ youth shelter, I would like to include an education center, a clothing exchange program, counseling opportunities, and beds youth can sleep on night after night. This shelter can be made possible by partnering with students from Mary Baldwin University, Washington and Lee University, and the Shenandoah LGBTQ Center. Regardless of which option I take with my senior project, I am determined to begin my journey in starting a LGBTQ+ youth shelter that will make an incredible difference to many LGBTQ+ homeless youth.

Part 6: Reflection on Assessment

Throughout my undergraduate academic career, I will use three markers to track my progress in Independent Scholars. I will track my proficiency in the topics of LGBTQ culture, LGBTQ history (within the United States), and providing direct assistance to LGBTQ youth. I will estimate growth in these areas by attending to increased fluency and expertise seen in my journal entries, creative projects, and course work. I will keep moving forward with my shelter plans by revising, as needed, plans for the shelter itself, shelter programming, budgets, and funding mechanisms.

Further Reading

To further appreciate my topic, I plan to continue non-fiction and fiction reading and will also actively learn from documentaries/movies about LGBTQ culture, history, and youth homelessness.

Journals

Aratani, Yumiko. "Homeless Children and Youth Causes and Consequences." BRIEF, Sept. 2009, pp. 1–14.,

www.researchgate.net/profile/Yumiko_Aratani2/publication/265156110_B_R_I_E_F_Homeless_Children_and_Youth_Causes_and_Consequences/links/54ada3790cf24aca1c6f6958.pdf.

Aratani describes the importance of a stable home to a youth's development. Additionally, the current recession of American economics further puts youth at risk to homelessness. While this article does not focus on LGBTQ youth specifically, it allows for great insight into the importance of a home.

Ashworth, Sam, et al. "The Pernicious Myth of Conversion Therapy: How Love In Action Perpetrated a Fraud on America". McDermott and the Mattachine Society of Washington, DC, 2018.

The Mattachine Society draws upon the growing importance of needing to fight for LGBTQ rights that continuously remain under assault. The journal article focuses on how we as people can catalyze society and law to meaningfully change and end discrimination and intolerance.

Keuroghlian, A. S., Shtasel, D., & Bassuk, E. L. (2014). Out on the street: A public health and policy agenda for lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender youth who are homeless. *American Journal of Orthopsychiatry*, 84(1), 66-72.

<http://dx.doi.org/10.1037/h0098852>

<http://psycnet.apa.org/fulltext/2014-06035-011.pdf>

Keuroghlian, Shtasel, and Bassuk enlightens readers that LGBTQ youth experience homelessness at a much higher rate than their heterosexual peers. Additionally, LGBTQ youth have higher rates of mental health and substance abuse problems, suicidal thoughts and actions, violent victimization, such as rape and sex-trafficking, and a range of diseases such as HIV risk behaviors. Also, the three individuals analyze the complexities of how LGBTQ youth become homeless.

Jack Drescher (2015) Can Sexual Orientation Be Changed?, Journal of Gay & Lesbian Mental Health, 19:1, 84-93, DOI: 10.1080/19359705.2014.944460

Dr. Jack Drescher is an expert in the field of conversion therapy. Drescher describes the intricacies of conversion therapy from the perspective of it being beneficial and harmful.

Kang, Miliann, et al. Introduction to Women, Gender, Sexuality Studies. University of Massachusetts Amherst Libraries, 2017.

This online textbook breaks down the intricacies of intersectionality, binary systems, institutions, culture, gender gap, and feminist movements.

“LGBTQ History Month: Early Pioneers of the Gay Rights Movement.” NBCNews.com, NBCUniversal News Group, www.nbcnews.com/feature/nbc-out/lgbtq-history-month-early-pioneers-gay-rights-movement-n922031.

This article highlights many LGBTQ pioneers of the American Gay Rights Movement from the 1950’s to present.

Markus P. Bidell PhD (2014) Is There an Emotional Cost of Completing High School?

Ecological Factors and Psychological Distress Among LGBT Homeless Youth, Journal of

Homosexuality, 61:3, 366-381, DOI: [10.1080/00918369.2013.842426](https://doi.org/10.1080/00918369.2013.842426)

<https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/00918369.2013.842426?scroll=top&needAccess=true>

Dr. Bidell reflects on the nucleus of the home and school climates that highly influence psychological distress of LGBTQ homeless youth. Furthermore, Bidell states that higher levels of psychological distress were found in LGBTQ high school graduates that reported to be harassed at home.

Non-Fiction

Barker, Meg-John, and Julia Scheele. *Queer: a Graphic History*. Icon Books Ltd, 2016.

DUBERMAN, MARTIN. *STONEWALL: the Definitive Story of the Lgbtq Rights Uprising That Changed America*. PENGUIN BOOKS, 2019.

The novel explores the diverse pop-culture through cartoon graphics. *Queer* explores how culture within the United States came to view sex, gender and sexuality, and how the ideas are tangled within our culture and understanding of psychology, biology, and sexology. Additionally, the two authors explore how the views of culture have been disrupted and challenged.

Berg, R. (2015). *No house to call my home: Love, family, and other transgressions*. New York, NY: Nation Books, a member of the Perseus Books Group.

Berg opens the eyes of society into the gritty, dangerous, and shockingly underreported world of homeless LGBTQ teens in New York. Berg was a caseworker in a group home for disowned LGBTQ youth, allowing him to witness first-hand the struggles, fears, and ambitions of the youth.

Conley, Garrard. *Boy Erased: a Memoir*. William Collins, 2018.

Garrard Conley is the son of a Baptist pastor who was outed to his parents at the age of nineteen forcing him to make a decision: agree to attend conversion therapy or risk losing family and friends. After surviving the Twelve-Step Program, Conley lives to tell his story that love survives against all odds.

Eriksen, Telaina. *Unconditional: a Guide to Loving and Supporting Your LGBTQ Child*. Mango Publishing Group, 2017.

The short guide for parents of LGBTQ children lays the framework for how to help their children navigate through a world that is not always welcoming. This book focuses on how to deal with gay children coming out, confront bullying of gay children, become an advocate, and build a support system within a gay family.

Faderman, Lillian. *The Gay Revolution: The Story of the Struggle*. Simon & Schuster; Reprint Edition, 2016.

The Gay Revolution is a sweeping story of the immense struggle for gay and lesbian rights—based on interviews with politicians, military figures, and members of the entire LGBTQ community.

Holleb. *The A-Z of Gender and Sexuality*. Jessica Kingsley Publishers, 2019.

Holleb created a book of a glossary of terminology for transgender and queer identities. The dictionary guide was created to help to dispel the anxiety around using the “wrong” words and explaining the weight of using certain labels and vocabulary for personal identification.

Jones, Cleve. *When We Rise: My Life in the Movement*. Hachette Books, 2017.

Cleve Jones was one of the key participants of the American Gay Rights Movement. *When We Rise* is an account of Jones’ life and encompasses first-hand accounts of the transformative movements.

Lord, Catherine, and Richard Meyer. *Art & Queer Culture*. Phaidon Press; Revised, Updated Edition, 2019.

Within *Arts and Queer Culture* holds over 250 works that trace the history of queer life and creativity in the modern age. Through the volume, the emergence of homosexuality as an identity (in the late nineteenth century) to the pioneering ‘genderqueers’ (of the early twenty first century) are explored.

Lowrey, Sassafra. *Kicked Out*. Homofactus Press, L.L.C., 2010.

Kicked Out brings together voices of current and former homeless LGBTQ youth and tells their stories. Lowrey gives a voice to the voiceless and challenges the stereotypes of homelessness.

Marcus, Eric, and Eric Marcus. *Making Gay History: the Half-Century Fight for Lesbian and Gay Equal Rights*. Perennial, 2002.

Marcus takes readers back in time to analyze the American Gay Rights Movement throughout history. Marcus focuses on topics such as the Boy Scouts, the U.S. military, and marriage and adoption.

Rosswood, Eric, and M. Kathleen Archambeau. *We Make It Better: the LGBTQ Community and Their Positive Contributions to Society*. Mango Publishing Group, 2019.

Rosswood takes a different approach to covering the complexities of the Gay Rights Movement. *We Make It Better* covers the movements by profiling all of the people, places, and events to show the inspiring paths of the LGBTQ community.

Shepard, Judy Peck., and Jon Barrett. *The Meaning of Matthew: My Sons Murder in Laramie, and a World Transformed*. Plume, 2010.

The memoir reflects upon the struggle of Matthew Shepard's family faced as they grieved his loss in the public spotlight. Additionally, the memoir reflects on how Mr. and Mrs. Shepard gained the courage to help prosecute their sons murderers.

Shilts, Randy. *The Mayor of Castro Street: the Life and Times of Harvey Milk*. St. Martins Press, 2008.

Harvey Milk was elected to the San Francisco Board of Supervisors. He had his personal and political life displayed in the open. The novel allows to reader to see the story full of personal tragedies and political intrigues, assassinations, massive riots in the streets, the miscarriage of justice, and the consolidation of gay power and hope.

Stulberg, L. M. (2018). *LGBTQ Social Movements*. Cambridge: Polity Press.

This informational novel dives into the depths of the LGBTQ Civil Rights Movements in the United States. The novel covers the topics of Stonewall, AIDS politics, queer activism, marriage equality, youth action, and bisexual and transgender justice.

Tannehill, Brynn. *Everything You Ever Wanted to Know about Trans (but Were Afraid to Ask)*. Jessica Kingsley Publishers, 2019.

Brynn Tannehill is an activist, essayist and a retired Navy veteran. The book breaks down deeply held misconceptions about trans people across all aspects of life such as, politics, law and culture, science, religion, and mental health.

Fiction

Danforth, Emily M. *The Miseducation of Cameron Post*. Penguin Books Ltd, 2018.

Danforth creates a novel in which Chloe Grace Moretz is a lesbian teen sent to conversion therapy after being caught on prom night having sex with a same-sex partner. Chloe then goes through the struggle of oppression and intolerance while living with her conservative aunt and grandmother.

Kelling, Lynn. *Bare*. Fantastic Fiction Publishing, 2016.

Ev Myers is a former high school football player and is the Republican Senator's son, raised in a strict Southern Baptist house. Ev stays in the closet while at home but fled to Kansas to attend college in hopes of a more open and accepting atmosphere.

Konigberg, Bill. *Openly Straight*. Arthur A. Levine Books, 2013.

The main character Rafe is known as "that GAY guy." While he is accepted and highly inspirational, he just wishes to be a normal teenager. In search for a new start, Rafe transfers to an all-boys boarding school and decides to keep his sexuality a secret.

Lacour, Nina. *Everything Leads to You*. Penguin Group USA, 2015.

Lacour writes a novel starring Emi Price as a talented set designer who has a fantastic eye for art but not for her own love story. Along the way Emi finds Ava, and at last, Emi's hidden life begins to take bloom.

Levithan, David. *Boy Meets Boy*. Alfred A. Knopf, 2005.

Paul is a high school sophomore at a school like no other. The gay-straight alliance is inviting and accepting but the only thing standing in Paul's way is his infatuation with Noah.

Documentaries/Movies

Michele, director. *Matt Shepard Is a Friend of Mine*. *Matt Shepard Is a Friend of Mine*, Logo Documentary Films and Education, 2015, mattshepardisafriendofmine.com/.

Matthew Shepard Is a Friend of Mine covers the devastating loss of Matthew Shepard after his murder in 1998. Matthew's death inspired many to fight for equal rights for LGBTQ people. The documentary is a story that highlights oppression and intolerance to ensure young people do not fall victim to the same story ending as Matthew.

Newell, Maya, director. *Gayby Baby*. *Gayby Baby*, Charlotte Mclellan, 23 June 2016, www.youtube.com/watch?v=742oWMrUjsQ.

Gayby Baby is a documentary observing the lives of four children whose parents are part of the LGBTQ community. Specifically, the film explores the ways that growing up as a gayby affected them.

Thorpe, David, director. *Do I Sound Gay? Do I Sound Gay?*, 10 July 2015, www.imdb.com/title/tt3997238/.

Thorpe created *Do I Sound Gay?* to analyze the history of the “gay voice.” David Thorpe spoke to many celebrity gay males about their voice and how it developed into its environment and if there was any thought to it being biologically inherent.

“Living Through Gay Conversion Therapy.” *Living Through Gay Conversion Therapy*, Vice, 5 May 2015, www.youtube.com/watch?v=wD4sWQG2DnQ.

VICE created a documentary with exclusive access to one of the hundreds of gay-conversion-therapy organizations, sessions, and groups in the United States. The company also speaks to the founder of reparative therapy, Dr. Joseph Nicolosi and former “ex-gay” leaders including John Smid.