



**THE
CENTER**
thecenterorlando.org

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**LGBT+ CENTER ORLANDO, INC. WILL MANAGE AND SUPPORT
THE COMMUNITY IMPACTED BY PULSE TRAGEDY**

The Center Orlando will seamlessly incorporate the current Orlando United Assistance Center service continuum with its own existing services

ORLANDO, FLA. (October 28, 2020) – Orlando United Assistance Center (OUAC) today announces The LGBT+_Center Orlando, Inc. “The Center Orlando” will be the new managing entity to serve and support immediate family members of the 49 taken in the Pulse tragedy and the survivors.

“It was a privilege for the Heart of Florida United Way to manage the OUAC for the past four years. We are so pleased to transition the OUAC to such an esteemed organization with a vision for taking the OUAC to the next level,” says Ray Larsen, Vice President of Community Impact for the Heart of Florida United Way. “We are confident The Center Orlando’s focus on resiliency, which centers on an individual’s whole health in their healing, will ensure the impacted community continues to receive the care and support they need.”

“The Center humbly serves and is connected with the impacted community in many capacities already, and we are grateful to the collaborative’s trust in serving this communities’ future needs,” says Dr. George Wallace, Executive Director of The Center Orlando. “This community is resilient, and they will always be supported. To continue the amazing work of the OUAC is a humbling honor.”

In February 2020, the OUAC, a collaboration between the Heart of Florida United Way, City of Orlando, Orange County Government and Osceola County Government, with support from the Central Florida Foundation, commissioned formal research including a survey outreach initiative in order to identify and better understand the long-term needs of the impacted community.

The [research team’s findings](#) revealed that a large majority wanted services to continue for at least the next five years in the following areas:

- Mental and Physical Health: Sustained mental health services; primary care; dental services; physical therapy for injuries
- Monetary: financial assistance, job assistance; housing assistance
- Support groups: Group therapy; music therapy; health and fitness; spiritual guidance

“The Center’s vision was perfectly in alignment with the core areas the collaborative outlined – based on the research findings,” says Larsen. “We are excited for this next chapter.”

The Center will utilize the help of community research volunteers Dr. Erica Fissel of the University of Central Florida and Zachary Murray, M.S., who will lead focus groups beginning in early 2021. The focus groups will help The Center continue to learn more, anticipate and understand how they can best serve the impacted community moving forward.

To learn more about the OUAC, please [visit our website](#).

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About the Center: Founded in 1978, the mission of The Center is to promote and empower the LGBT community and its allies through information, education, advocacy and support. The dedicated staff are diverse, culturally experienced, trauma-informed, LGBTQ-affirming representatives of the Hispanic community.

About the OUAC: A collaboration between the Heart of Florida United Way, City of Orlando, Orange County Government, Osceola County Government with advisement from the Central Florida Foundation, the OUAC connects individuals and families to critical community resources. The Orlando United Assistance Center (OUAC) was established in the immediate aftermath of the Pulse tragedy, offering robust information, support and resources to those directly affected.

About the Heart of Florida United Way: Founded in 1939, Heart of Florida United Way is Central Florida's largest supporter of local health and human service agencies. United Way is focused on prevention and finding long-term solutions for pressing problems. Known as *Investing in Results*, this philosophy is guiding our work to move the needle in four critical impact areas: education, health, financial stability and basic needs.