

As You Are: Building Understanding of Gender and Family Diversity

**Presented by Erica Christie, Kelly Bradbury,
and Stephanie Becher**

Introductions and Contact Information

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Who is the Joseph Maley Foundation?

- We are a non-profit organization founded in 2008.
- Our mission is celebrating differences and cultivating an inclusive community through education and service of youth in Greater Indianapolis.



What does the Joseph Maley Foundation do?

We teach youth through our unique education programs:

- Disability Awareness
- Hope
- As You Are
- Joseph Maley Foundation Puppets

We empower middle and high school students to:

- Volunteer as Puppeteers
- Serve on our Junior Board of Directors

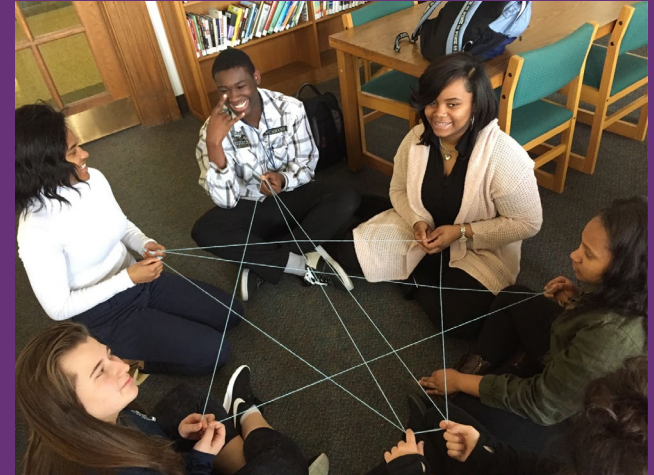
We serve families with children who have disabilities through:

- Sibling Support Camps
- Family Fun Days featuring inclusive activities
- run2gether and tri2gether adaptive athletic programs
- Training and connecting attorneys to families needing support navigating the special education system

Our Programs Teach



Respect
Acceptance
Empathy
Inclusion



We envision a community where differences are celebrated, and all people are valued, accepted, and belong.

2021 Program Impact

- ★ Our education programs served **35,353 youth in 63 schools** across Indiana in 2021!

According to our 2021-2022 Program Evaluation:

- 99% of respondents said that programming was effective at educating youth to be inclusive and accepting of all.
- 97% of respondents reported that students were engaged during their Joseph Maley Foundation programming.
- 98% of respondents are interested in participating in Joseph Maley Foundation programming again next year.

What is the As You Are program?



What is the rationale behind this program?

- Education about gender, sexual identity, and family diversity is overlooked or ignored in our schools.
- Research shows the critical importance of LGBTQ-affirming schools.
- All students benefit when they see windows and mirrors of themselves at school.



As You Are Program Goals

1. Build awareness and understanding of gender and family diversity.
1. Foster respect, empathy, and a sense of belonging, emphasizing that we are all valued as we are.
1. Provide a developmentally-appropriate, standards-based curriculum for students in preKindergarten through twelfth grade.
1. Support educators and families in cultivating more inclusive, welcoming schools and communities for all.



A Community Effort

Thank you to following organizations for their support, feedback, and guidance in developing this program.

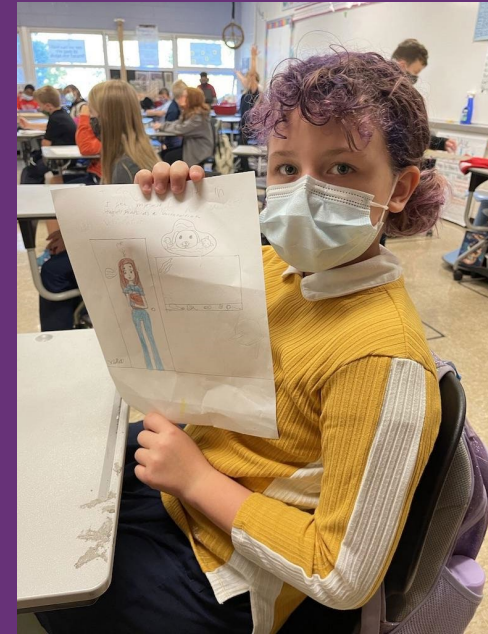
- Indiana Youth Group
- Lilly's PRIDE Employee Resource Group
- Trinity Haven
- Indy PRIDE
- Shelly's Voice
- GEKCO Gender Expansive Kids and Co



Additional thanks to **Center for Inquiry School 2** for piloting this program in October 2021.

As You Are Grade Level Themes

- PreKindergarten: *Everybody Can Play*
- Kindergarten: *All Kinds of Families*
- First Grade: *Express Yourself*
- Second Grade: *Uniquely Me*
- Third Grade: *All Are Welcome Here*
- Fourth Grade: *Defying Stereotypes*
- Fifth Grade: *Be The Change*
- Sixth Grade: *Pride Milestones*
- Seventh Grade: *The Power of Words*
- Eighth Grade: *How to Be An Ally*
- High School: *Coming Soon!*



As You Are Curriculum Components

Curriculum features the following elements:

- Thematic, holistic teacher guides for preK-8th grade. High school curriculum coming soon!
- Developmentally-appropriate lesson plans incorporating puppet shows, read alouds, videos, hands-on lessons, and speakers
- Next Steps for Educators
- FAQ documents to support Families and Educators
- Aligned to Indiana Academic Standards, Indiana Social-Emotional Learning Competencies, Learning for Justice Social Justice Standards
- All materials delivered digitally via Google Drive

Student Feedback from As You Are

- “I learned how to treat my classmates better. I learned how to treat myself better.” *7th Grade Student*
- “I am a male but often when I have my hair braided people make fun of me for it and I think this program will help.” *5th Grade Student*
- “It will improve our school by making sure there is gender equality!” *5th Grade Student*
- “This will probably lower the bullying in our school.” *5th Grade Student*
- “I think this might impact our community by teaching kids that it's ok to be who you are and that they will have support no matter what.” *7th Grade Student*
- “Now people know how to ask to know someones’ pronouns and call them by their preferred name.” *7th Grade Student*

How can we make
schools more
affirming for LGBTQ+
students?



Words Matter

- Use non-gender specific descriptors that are inclusive of all people.
- Use the names and pronouns someone uses.
- Provide opportunities for people to share their preferred pronouns.
- Interrupt name-calling and slurs.
- Remember that language is constantly changing. We must keep learning!

PRONOUNS
MATTER

pronouns



pronouns are **personal**

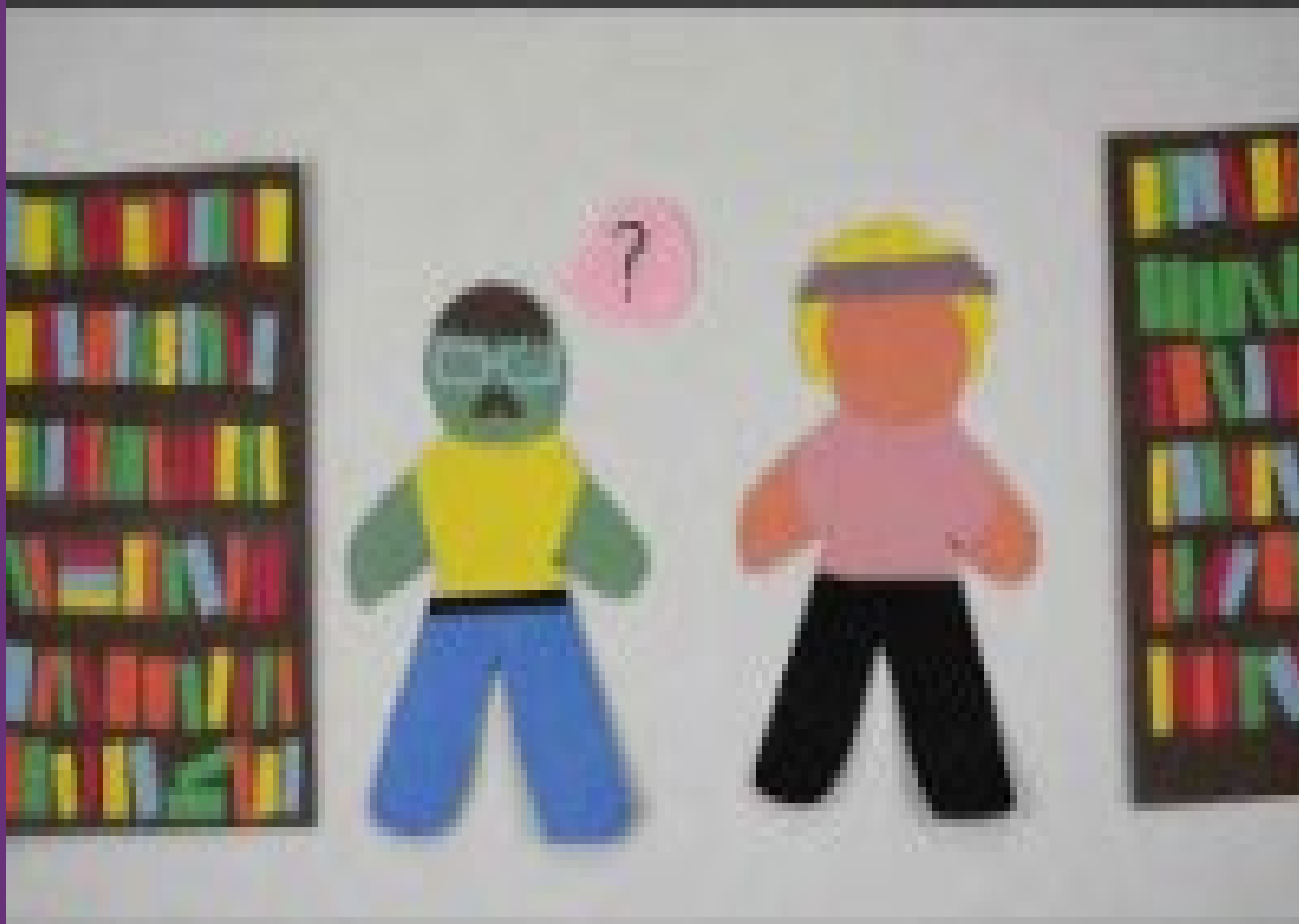
pronouns are **important**

pronouns are **not a preference**

pronouns matter

Try it Out!

Activity Featured in
Seventh Grade
Curriculum
“Power of Words”



As You Are Speaker Example

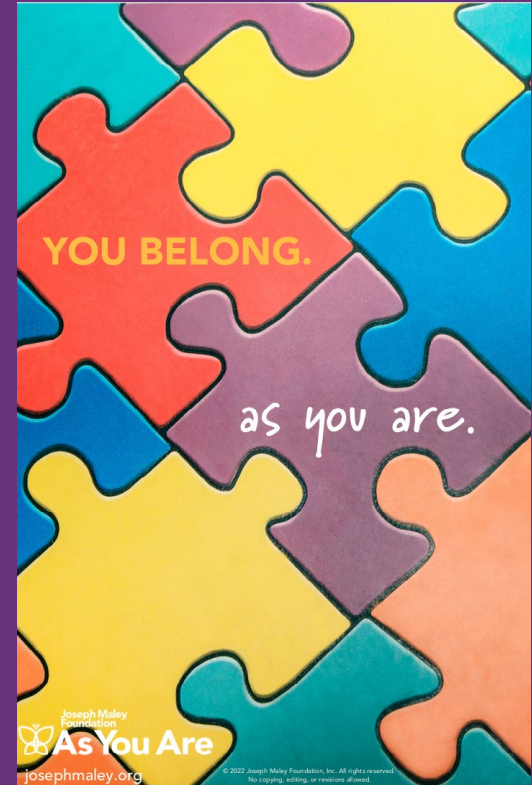
Speaker Lily Freeman is
Featured in Seventh
Grade Curriculum “The
Power of Words”

A young woman with long brown hair, wearing a yellow shirt, is smiling and making peace signs with both hands. A black text box is overlaid at the bottom of the image.

and I was forced to do the sports because that was
quite unlike the more “masculine” thing to do.

Diversify Books and Resources

- Feature books and resources with diverse characters, stories, and histories in your classroom and library.
 - Diverse books can provide “windows” and “mirrors” to students.
- Hang signs, flags, and posters with inclusive messages in your classroom.
 - This small action can send a powerful message to students and families that your school loves and accepts all.



As You Are Read Aloud Example

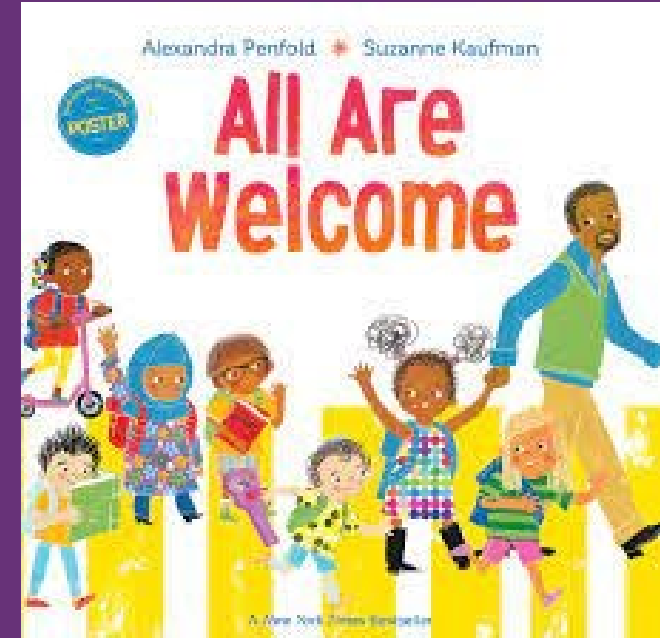
Annie's Plaid Shirt,
Featured in First Grade
Curriculum "Express
Yourself"



When they arrived home, Annie took the book and climbed the door.

Cultivate a Welcoming Community

- Set clear and inclusive norms and expectations for your school, such as:
 - Respect others.
 - Be open-minded.
 - Respect confidentiality.
- Celebrate the diversity of your school and community.
 - Diversity is an asset!



Book Featured in
Third Grade Curriculum

As You Are Puppet Show Example

“Welcome to the
Neighborhood” is
Featured in Third Grade
Curriculum “All Are
Welcome Here”



Break Gender Stereotypes

- When you come across a gender stereotype, address it!
- Rethink activities like “Muffins with Mom,” and “Father-Daughter Dance.”
- Avoid using gendered language to describe clothes, toys, colors, or activities.
- Use inclusive language to describe families.
- Assign classroom jobs and tasks to your students in an equitable manner.
- Debunk traditional stereotypes of all genders!

As You Are Speaker Example

Paige Maroska, Featured
in Fourth Grade
Curriculum “Defying
Stereotypes”



Be An Ally

- Understand your own privilege.
- Educate yourself.
- Speak up, but not over!
- Be willing to listen, even when it feels uncomfortable.
- Apologies when you make mistakes.



As You Are Speaker Example

Claire Curran, Featured
in Eighth Grade
Curriculum “How to Be
An Ally”

A young woman with dark hair, wearing a patterned sweater and a red lanyard, stands in a classroom. She is smiling and looking towards the camera. In the background, there are rows of blue school desks and a computer monitor on a desk. The room has large windows and wooden cabinets.

I've found power in the general sense. Because
you're straight, you fit into the norm as an ally

Overcome Fears and Misconceptions

- Encourage adults not to project their own experiences, worries, or fears from growing up onto a younger generation.
- Teaching about the LGBTQ+ community is not pushing an agenda.
- When gender is not addressed in schools, students will look to other sources for information, such as social media.
- Create a forum for parents and teachers to learn more about programming and ask questions.

Be Patient and Positive

- All schools are unique and different.
- Change takes time.
- Small changes can make a big difference.

“I think this will give children at many schools a perspective that they have not yet known about. I think this may change generations to come.”

5th Grade As You Are Participant



Resources We Recommend

- GLSEN, <https://www.glsen.org/>
- Welcoming Schools, <https://welcomingschools.org/>
- Safe Zone Project, <https://thesafezoneproject.com/>
- The Trevor Project, <https://www.thetrevorproject.org/>
- Learning for Justice, <https://www.learningforjustice.org/>
- Facing History and Ourselves, <https://www.facinghistory.org/>
- Anti-Defamation League, <https://www.adl.org/>
- It Gets Better Project, <https://itgetsbetter.org/>

Questions?



For More Information

Please contact Erica Christie, Director of Education at erica@josephmaley.org.

Visit our website at <https://www.josephmaley.org/> and follow us on Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, and LinkedIn!





Thank you!

