



THE **OUT** FOUNDATION



## OUR STORY

In the spring of 2017, three gay men, all of whom had graduated several years earlier from the LDS Church-owned Brigham Young University, came together with the same thought: we knew we weren't the first gay people to graduate from BYU, so where were the others? After spending several years in the workforce, we saw that there was no formal organization to help queer alumni from BYU. We had all gone to BYU and made it out alive; not all were as lucky.

We started asking questions, and what we found was astounding. We heard stories from alumni who had graduated during the 90s, the 80s, and the 70s. We were already too familiar with these stories—people getting kicked out of school, losing their education, their housing, their families, their faith. Some stories were even worse, of young men being coerced into receiving reparative electroshock therapy as late as the mid-90s, even when the greater psychological community had stopped such barbaric practices two decades earlier.

As we met with more queer alumni, we realized something we already knew—going to a Church-owned school as a queer person of faith, is a uniquely traumatic experience. This trauma ends up leaving the BYU LGBTQ+ community fragmented, perpetuating feelings of isolation and hopelessness among both alumni and students, especially among those who are rejected by their family and faith community. More than that, we realized there were hundreds—if not thousands—of people who were just like us, and no one knew their stories. Our stories.

We created The OUT Foundation to collect, preserve, and celebrate the queer culture of BYU. The OUT Foundation provides a community. We advocate for change in order to help the current queer students on campus. Our mission is to empower the LGBTQ+ alumni and current students of BYU, both now and for generations to come.