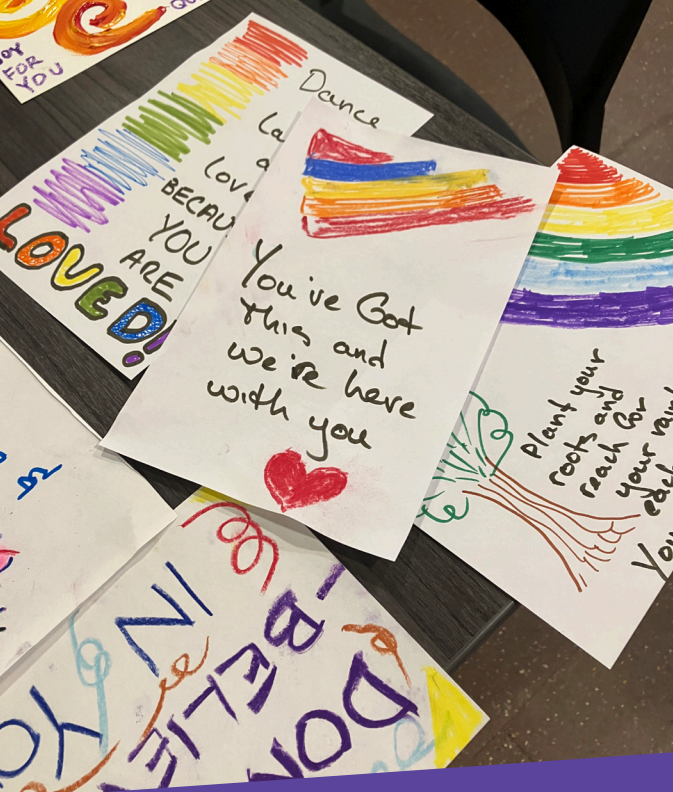




Sharing joy Across Generations

Outright's **Heck Yeah** Handbook



OUTRIGHT
VERMONT

We all want youth to be happy, healthy, and know that they **belong.**

But no matter where they live in Vermont, LGBTQ+ youth experience violence and a constant threat of harm daily. There's also a continuous barrage of messages telling them they're not valued, cared for, or allowed to exist.

We know that these messages are not true: queer and trans youth are brilliant, powerful, and belong here!

That's why we deliver **Heck Yeahs** to queer and trans youth: Notes of affirmation that remind LGBTQ+ youth that they are fabulous and welcome, just as they are.

For more than fifteen years, Heck Yeahs have been a beloved tradition, created by young people at Camp Outright and carried forward by generations of campers. Throughout camp, young people would write and draw notes to fellow campers, celebrating their strengths or capturing a memory of queer joy shared together during the week. Youth would leave camp with a bundle of Heck Yeahs in hand: powerful reminders about the joy community and the magic within themselves.

Since then, we've created hundreds of Heck Yeahs for LGBTQ+ youth in schools, GSAs, youth

Belonging improves life outcomes

LGBTQ+ youth who feel they matter to people in their community are more than three times less likely to make a suicide plan.

Do not feel they matter 40%

12% Feel they matter

Data: 2025 VT Youth Risk Behavior Survey

programs, and more. Heck Yeahs help youth experience belonging, where they see their identity as a superpower — a source of inner strength — that's celebrated, embraced, and powers them through life.

What started as a camp tradition is now an opportunity to follow the leadership of young people. This toolkit is an invitation to YOU to support LGBTQ+ youth by writing Heck Yeahs. When youth are flooded with harmful messages, YOU have the power to remind them that they are valued. They are cared for. They are free to exist fully and authentically. They belong — exactly as they are.

Heck Yeah affirmations are a key way to support LGBTQ+ youth in the face of violence. Adults can write Heck Yeahs to remind LGBTQ+ youth that they are a vital part of their community and deserve to thrive.

"Everyone went home with a bag full of Heck Yeahs from people in the program. **I could look back through them when I was struggling, or felt isolated, or just wanted a little pick-me-up** when the world felt hostile."

—Emmett, Outright Vermont Youth

You don't have to make Heck Yeahs alone! **Host a party and spread queer joy together.** A Heck Yeah party is also the perfect addition to an after-service coffee hour, book club gathering, knitting circle, or even a team-building activity at work. The possibilities are endless!

Here are 12 steps to hosting your own party.

How to host a Heck Yeah party

1 Decide on a date, time, and location. Location matters — what space will welcome your community and be most accessible? Consider lighting, noise level, and mobility access like navigating stairs.

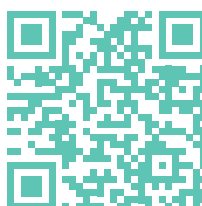
2 Let us know that you are going to host a party! Get in touch with Outright Vermont using the QR code below. We're here to answer questions, brainstorm ideas, and can even send you materials like stickers, zines, coloring pages, and program fliers to share at your event.

3 Invite your people: friends, family, and community members. Make a poster, send an email. Don't forget to explain why Heck Yeahs are so important:

"Heck Yeahs are life-changing because 60% of queer and trans youth in Vermont **don't feel like they matter** in their communities. We can make a difference by making Heck Yeahs and reminding them that they do matter: that they are seen, loved, and celebrated exactly for who they are."*

4 Gather supplies. Your materials can be as simple as pens and paper, but we encourage you to get colorful and creative with your supplies. Also, within this toolkit, we provide decorative pages you can copy and use, decorating them as you like. Here are some other suggestions:

- Multi-colored paper
- Art supplies— various media, like paint, markers, stickers, stamps, etc.
- Outright materials (Use the **QR code** to request stickers, zines, coloring pages and more from us!)



*"The unexpectedness of the Heck Yeah Party was that it wasn't just a happy, fun party. **There was enough space for authentic, wide-ranging feelings** as we made Heck Yeahs for our youth."*

—Adult host of a Heck Yeah Party



5 Bring the music, bubbles, food and fun! Ask for volunteers to bring snacks and drinks, or supply your own.

6 On the day of the event, **set up the space** with tables and comfortable chairs where guests can write and draw.

7 Welcome folks and orient them to the space.

8 Explain how to make Heck Yeahs. Show examples and instructions from this toolkit. Invite folks to share ideas of Heck Yeah messages with each other.

9 Make the Heck Yeahs — and remember to have fun!

10 Close the party with gratitude for each other and the time spent together. Offer a parting reflection where attendees can share a few words, like:

- What was this experience [of writing Heck Yeahs] like for you?
- What are you leaving this event with today?
- Share one word that you're feeling as we close this event.

In case you didn't know....
Through all of history queer + trans people have been here, good times and bad. We aren't going anywhere. You are not alone.

PRECIOUS
= YOU!
IRREPLACEABLE
= YOU!
THANK YOU
FOR BEING.



Who me?
I'm just busy being mythical and GAY



"I think it was a tender space. There were moments where a young person walked in and the energy went up and there was smiling."
—Adult host of a Heck Yeah Party

11 Remind folks that there are many ways to support queer and trans youth! Sign

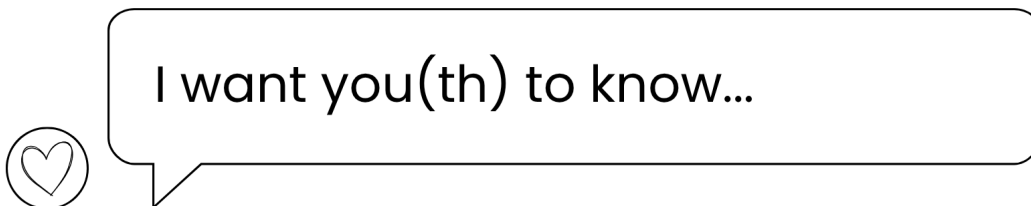
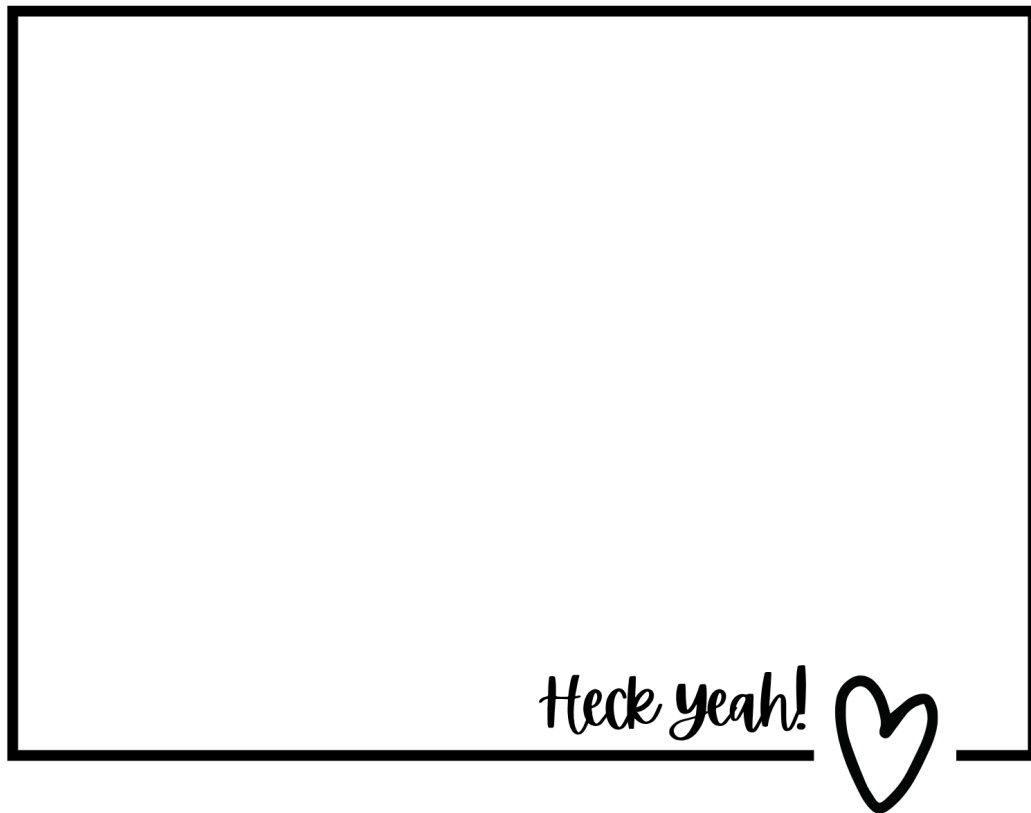
up for our solidarity pledge at the QR code below and make a commitment to stand up, speak out, volunteer your time, donate resources, and, most importantly, show up for LGBTQ+ youth when it matters. Learn more and how to get involved at outrightvt.org.

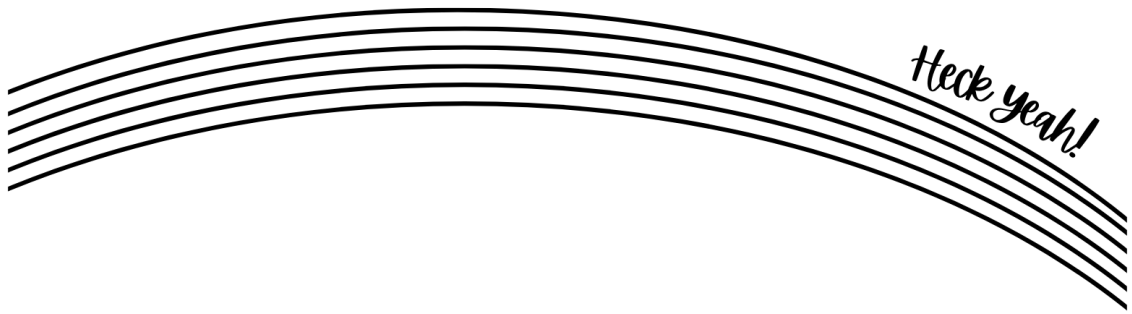


12 Mail your Heck Yeahs to the Outright Vermont office at:

Outright Vermont
PO Box 5235
Burlington, VT 05402

Templates to use & color





Heck yeah!

Here's how to write your own **Heck Yeah** to an LGBTQ+ youth:



Brainstorm your message:

- ✦ Close your eyes. **Imagine a person you want to support.** Picture them and what makes them awesome. What affirmations come up?
- ✦ Think of things you heard as a young person that helped you know you belonged. **What made you feel respected, validated, and welcomed for who you are?**
- ✦ **Write it down!**
- ✦ **Add art** to your message: Color, collage, paint, draw it out!
- ✦ Share from the heart, **be yourself**, and have fun!



"I was a queer youth that wasn't out. So I was thinking about the small [person I was as] I was doing [the Heck Yeah.] **What would I have written to her?**"

—Adult host of a Heck Yeah Party





"There is always a beautiful, vibrant community surrounding you, even if you can't see them . . . **There is a whole community of people who want me to thrive.**"

—Outright Vermont Youth

Outright Vermont's mission is to build a Vermont where all LGBTQ+ youth have **hope**, **equity**, and **power**!

outrightvt.org | info@outrightvt.org

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