



# Why I became a Safe Zone Ally..

By definition, to be an ally is to become someone who connects oneself with others to advocate for common interests. I became an ally to be an advocate of individuality, empathy, liberation, and most importantly humanity. In my experience, there are many allies who work alongside the LGBTQIA+ community that support the person, but maybe not the lifestyle. The idea behind Inclusion, Diversity, Equity and Awareness is the ability to embody pure altruism toward a group or culture that may not be understood, but shares a common human experience. Love and the journey to acceptance of self is the goal for my human experience. I know I could reach more people through authenticity and showing up as myself in turn giving them courage to do the same. Becoming an ally helped me remember that I am standing up with those who are marginalized and not given equal opportunities to live audaciously in a world that chooses to miss the message. By mistreating an entire community with no reprieve based on misinformation leads to misunderstanding and missed opportunities to grow and expand in the name of love for humanity. -Natasha Alexander

I became an ally because I wanted to have the correct information to use to address people in the way they want and appreciate, not what I thought through my own knowledge, and to have a better understanding for the LGBTQIA+ community. I wanted to better understand all types of communication and be able to assist and address people in a kind and supportive way. -Tiffany Cox

I became an ally years ago because of my uncle Bruce. He died of AIDS in 1987 and this set me on a journey to better understand his disease as well as his life. As an ally, I am not saying I am perfect and without bias, rather I am aware of the gap between what I should do and how I actually feel and do. I am working towards closing that gap by educating myself and sharing this knowledge with others when asked. Allyship means going beyond passive support, knowing that larger networks of allies can bring about meaningful change. -Rachel Garcia Poore

I became an ally because I believe in treating everyone with dignity and respect. I believe that everyone should be able to be their authentic selves. Many within the LGBTQIA+ community have been through some extremely traumatic experiences surrounding other people's opinions about their sexuality and gender, which has led to a lot of fear surrounding seeking treatment not only for mental health issues but overall health issues. I think that if more people in this world were educated about those that are different from them, there would be more empathy and compassion in this world. The Safe Zone Ally program is promoting that necessary education and awareness, which will hopefully help contribute to some much-needed change within our communities. -Tiffany Honrada

If you are interested in becoming a Safe Zone Ally, please contact the I.D.E.A. Committee at [safezone@bridgeway.org](mailto:safezone@bridgeway.org).