

AWARD NOMINATION

Award Category **Employee Group of the Year**

2021
Business & Community
**EXCELLENCE
AWARDS**



Nominated Business: **UNITY**

DETAILS

EY's Dallas Unity (LGBT+ Professional Network) Chapter had a banner year as we shifted to a fully virtual environment during these unusual times. We focused our efforts on areas that would continue to engage and inspire our members while encouraging a sense of community and sharing opportunities to support non-profits, in the spirit of "Building a Better Working World". *Please note that all activities and outreach referenced are at the local level and are in addition to any national or global sponsorships at EY..*

Our general efforts for fostering inclusivity and community outreach since 2020 include:

- Ongoing membership with North Texas LGBT Employee Resource Group Coalition (NTC)
- Sponsorship of Youth First, which offers LGBT+ youth services and support in connection with Resource Center of Dallas through:
 - Encouraging financial donations and support by our membership
 - Providing and serving the Friday Family Dinners 3-4 times each year (prior to the pandemic)
- Developing a mentorship program with local high school and/or colleges to encourage LGBT+ youth
 - This program is currently under discussion to determine feasibility as we work to incorporate ongoing pandemic precautions and the level of involvement that we will be able to foster with these young adults.
- Sharing LGBT+ and cultural events as well as opportunities for civic mindedness, including:
 - Hosting a Virtual March on Washington watch party
 - Supporting Human Rights Campaign events throughout the year
 - Sponsoring Upstander Speaker series from the Dallas Holocaust & Human Rights Museum and encouraging participation
 - Supporting the Equality Act
 - Speaking out against anti-LGBT+ legislation in Texas, etc.
- Sponsoring the annual Black-Tie Dinner
- Advising and supporting the North Texas LGBT Chamber of Commerce's inaugural 2019 - 2020 LGBT Leadership Institute
- Providing scholarship application reviewers for the North Texas LGBT Foundation's scholarship program
- Adopting Unity chapters for smaller EY offices in Arkansas, Oklahoma, Texas, and Arizona into our new virtual environment
- Participating in the 2020 & 2021 Dallas Pride virtual vendor marketplace in lieu of in person parades

Starting with the most recent, please see below for a brief recap of our events over the past 18+ months:

1. **June 26, 2021** – Pride Picnic at Flag Pole Hill Park in Dallas, open to all Unity members and their families to come together in person for the first time since March 2020 AND to celebrate Pride!
2. **June 25, 2021** – Monthly Virtual Coffee Chat, an informal time for Unity members to share personal achievements, interests, and opportunities to volunteer or support various community-based non-profits. Participation in this event grew during the pandemic lockdown to an average of 25 people each month, allowing our members an opportunity to connect, socialize, and share during these unprecedented times.
 - a. **Additional 2021 occurrences for this virtual coffee chat:** May 21, April 9, March 12, February 19, January 29
 - b. **2020 Virtual:** December 11, November 20, June 26, May 15, April 17
 - c. **2020 In Person:** February 14, January 17
3. **June 15 – 17, 2021** – Sponsorship of the Texas DEI Conference and presentation of 2 conference sessions including:
 - a. Pathways to Transition
 - b. Neurodiversity - A Microcosm for Belonging and Equity
4. **June 15, 2021** – EY Toastmasters featured speakers for Pride month - Members of our leadership team were invited by the Toastmasters team to share LGBT+ history, landmark moments, legal achievements, personal coming out stories, and how to be an ally with the group. We were able to create a safe space for open dialog that resulted in participants asking pointed questions on how they could best support pre-teens in their families who were questioning their own gender orientation and/or sexual orientation. This led to putting those folks in touch with local resources and support groups that could help them on their journey.
5. **June 10, 2021** – Painting with Pride, a guided group painting session for members and their families to paint a version of “Rainbow Starry Night” from home and was attended by over 25 children and adults
6. **May 20, 2021** – Film & Conversation Series Kick-off, a bi-monthly series designed to enhance open conversations around LGBT+ issues, social justice, racial inequality, environment & climate change, etc. This inaugural event in the series, attended by 23 people, revolved around the film, The Prom. Future movies/documentaries will include: Disclosure, Just Mercy, and Seaspiracy.

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May 18, 2021 – United Way Virtual Reading Day participants for Mi Escualita in Cockrell Hill in conjunction with our EY Dallas Latinx Professional Network, reading books to Pre-K and Kindergarten classes via Zoom

March 25 to April 29, 2021 – Inclusiveness and Belonging Learning Series, designed and led by Dallas Unity members, these 6 weekly sessions (plus 3 add-ons) were open to all EY personnel to facilitate learning in the Inclusiveness and Belonging area. Open dialog was encouraged for each topic including unconscious biases, insider/outsider dynamics, emotional intelligence, good leaders, etc. These sessions averaged 40 attendees each week during the pandemic.

October 15, 2020 – Pathway to Parenthood Discussion Panel held in partnership with EY's Today's Families Professional Network to converse on experiences and personal stories from EY employees who have used Assisted Reproductive Technology (IVF, IUI, surrogacy, etc.) and/or adoption to create their families.

a. 3 of the 4 featured panelists were members of Unity and were able to share their joy in successfully starting their families as well as the struggles along the road to having children. Additionally, our Unity panelists spoke about the specific barriers they faced legally, financially, and emotionally, as part of the LGBT+ community.

10. October 5 – 9, 2020 – Sponsored 2 attendees to the 2020 Out & Equal Virtual Workplace Summit Conference

11. October 2, 2020 – Hosted the Human Rights Campaign (HRC) to share the “Get Out the Vote” presentation designed to increase voter turnout and emphasize the importance of supporting LGBT+ policies prior to the 2020 presidential election. This was important considering so much anti-LGBT+ legislation being introduced in many state legislatures. This was a national campaign sponsored by our National Unity Leadership and our locally sponsored event had the largest attendance of any other session.

12. September 9, 2020 - Inclusiveness Recruiting Summer Series panel discussion - Out at EY and Allies. Our members served as panelist for an EY's recruiting professionals in order to have raise awareness about being out at EY, being an ally, how to recruit LGBT+ talent, and being inclusive throughout the recruiting process.

13. June 5, 2020 – Hosted Dr. Sidney Gardner, Director of Women and LGBT Center at Southern Methodist University, to speak on “Ally Starts with All”, with a focus on using inclusive and appropriate language around gender identity, sexual orientation, pronouns, etc. This was an excellent program from Dr. Gardner that allowed for open discussion with attendees, more than 55 people, many of whom identify as straight allies.