desi RAINBOW PARENTS & ALLIES

2023 ANNUAL REPORT

About

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Building a community where diversity of sexual orientation and gender identity are valued, affirmed and celebrated by all.

Desi Rainbow Parents & Allies was started in Fall 2020 by a Desi parent of an LGBTQIA+ child, who saw the need for **culturally competent support** for **Desi LGBTQIA+ people and their families.**

The South Asian population in the USA is more than 5.4 million strong. However, **the South Asian LGBTQIA+ population and their families are vastly underserved**, at immense risk of depression, anxiety and suicide due to social stigma and misinformation about LGBTQIA+ identity.

Our work has filled a vacuum in the South Asian diaspora, as **there is no other organization with a national focus on providing this safe and nurturing space**. As anti-LGBTQIA+ rhetoric and attacks grow, Desi Rainbow is working for change at all levels - within our families, our religious communities, government and institutions.

Our programming provides **direct peer support** and **educates the community** on **allyship**.



THANK YOU!



We are so grateful to have such supportive and generous community members! Through your support as donors, volunteers, and engaged community members, we have been able to work together toward our mission. We are excited to share **our accomplishments this year**, via the **themes to the right:**

Building a community... .
COMMUNITY EVENTS

where LGBTQIA+ identities are valued, affirmed...
SUPPORT PROGRAMS

and celebrated by all.
ALLYSHIP & OUTREACH

Director's Note



Dear Desi Rainbow Friends and Family,

Desi Rainbow Parents & Allies celebrates its **fourth anniversary** as a nonprofit organization in 2024. I am deeply grateful to all who have supported this extraordinary journey. In 2018, **as an Indian American mother of a queer and trans child,** I felt **alone and adrift** and **I was looking for resources.** I was filled with dread rather than hope for my child's future. Today, I am secure in the knowledge that I am part of a **warm, loving, affirming community** that uplifts families like mine.

On a personal note - I was diagnosed with breast cancer in June, and the **support of the Desi Rainbow community** has been **invaluable in my recovery**. I am grateful for the support of **Sapna Pandya,** who served as the Interim Executive Director this fall, as well as the **extraordinary staff and volunteers** who serve with such **dedication and love** to keep the organization running smoothly.

Desi Rainbow's mission is to build a community where **people of all sexual orientations and gender identities** are **valued, affirmed and celebrated by all**. There are still many challenges ahead, but the **essential work** of building a **Desi Diaspora resource** for **LGBTQIA+ folks and their families, education on allyship** and **advocating for equality,** is firmly on track, with plans to expand significantly in 2024. In just four years, the organization has grown from a handful of people to a **40 member team** running support groups, organizing events and advocating for change. We have proved that **a small group of dedicated people can change the lives** of **South Asian American LGBTQIA+ children and their families**.

We have **big and ambitious dreams,** and we are clear eyed about the obstacles we face in actualizing them. The **rights of trans people are at tremendous risk**, LGBTQIA+ people and their families are experiencing **huge mental health challenges, access to affirming health care and safe community spaces** is **increasingly restricted**, and there is an **alarming rise in hate & violence** against the backdrop of **war and trauma across the globe**. In this fractured landscape, Desi Rainbow's work in **creating a safe community** that emphasizes the power of **intergenerational allyship** is **more essential than ever.**

We invest the bulk of our energies into **building on our innovative ideas** and **doing the grassroots work of community organizing and education.** As donors, volunteers and community allies., we ask for your support in **helping us expand our capacity in 2024** to serve many more in need through education, outreach, and inter-generational community.

DONATE TODAY:

Wishing you Happy Holidays and a Happy New Year!

Aruna Rao

Aruna Rao (she/her)
Executive Director

Events



ADVOCATING FOR LGBTQIA+ EQUALITY

We co-hosted the historic **Pyar is Pyar** celebration of the **Respect for Marriage Act**, bringing together celebrities, business leaders and activists to make a powerful statement of South Asian support for LGBTQIA+ rights, and hosted screenings of the trans affirming film **Joyland** in **NYC** and **LA**

CREATING COMMUNITY ACROSS THE COUNTRY

We have built **intergenerational LGBTQIA+ and allied community** in **Atlanta, California Bay Area, Chicago** and **New Jersey** through grassroots organizing.





SHARING OUR EXPERTISE

We are proud to have presented on our work at many **national conferences**, including at **Creating Change, South Asian Youth Initiative Conference,** and the **IA MPACT Summit**. We have collaborated with **The Culture Tree** for **Raas Garba** and **Diwali/Deepavali** and **TAGMO** for **Raksha Bandhan**, and provided allyship training for **Jahajee.**

Building a community... .
COMMUNITY EVENTS

MONTHLY PEER SUPPORT DISCUSSION GROUPS

LGBTQIA+ PARENTS/FAMILY DADS

Support Groups

FEEDBACK WE HAVE RECEIVED FROM ATTENDEES IN 2023:

97% agreed it was helpful to talk to others who understand their situation.

90% agreed it was helpful to meet (other) parents/ elders from our community.

94% agreed attending the group made them feel hopeful.

99% agreed that group leaders were respectful and supportive.

98% would recommend this support group to a friend.

Our **support groups** have served over

188

LGBTQIA+ individuals, and

133

parents and family members.

ATTENDEES SHARED IN THEIR OWN WORDS:

"It's very helpful to hear other people have similar issues to us."

"This group provides community, hope, and a safe space."

"I have so much hope after joining the support group especially with the parent leader."

"Very helpful and supportive to navigate our kid's transition."

where LGBTQIA+ identities are valued, affirmed...
SUPPORT PROGRAMS

Saathi

OUR ONE-ON-ONE PEER SUPPORT PROGRAM CONNECTS OUR VOLUNTEERS TO ANYONE IN NEED OF A SAATHI, OR FRIEND.

In 2023:

We have **trained**

40

support group facilitators and peer support volunteers, and provided ongoing training on trans allyship, having difficult conversations, and supporting mental health needs of our community.

Our **Saathi program** has responded to

52

requests, and counting!

PARTICIPANTS SHARED FEEDBACK:

100% said their Saathi was kind and compassionate.

100% said speaking to their Desi Rainbow Saathi made them feel better.

100% said their Saathi provided helpful information.

100% would refer a friend or family member to Saathi Peer Support.

94% felt better prepared to address their challenges after speaking to their Saathi.

SUPPORT RECIPIENTS SHARED IN THEIR OWN WORDS:

"I felt seen and heard in my experiences."

"My anxiety reduced greatly after this meeting with Saathi."

"Prior to finding Desi Rainbow and Saathi, I had never felt like I belonged or had a space to express my true identity."

"After talking with Saathi, it gave us hope that we are not alone in this journey."

where LGBTQIA+ identities are valued, affirmed...
SUPPORT PROGRAMS

Events

Our goal is to create **welcoming, affirming spaces** for **LGBTQIA+ Desis and their families,** no matter where in North America they live. Learn more below about the **diverse educational and community events** Desi Rainbow has hosted this year, both **in-person** and **virtually**!

ACROSS THE NATION

We have made our presence felt at events around the country, including **White House Pride 2023** and **Pride marches** from Boston to .Portland!



SOCIAL MEDIA GROWTH

Through **Instagram, Facebook, Twitter/X,** and **LinkedIn**, more people are finding out about the **loving, affirming community** of Desi Rainbow every day!

322K Total profile interactions

Our posts reached over **162K** people this year.

7.2K Total fans & followers

DESIRAINBOWPARENTS

@DESIRAINBOW1

VIRTUAL COMMUNITY

We offered a variety of **community educational events** virtually for allies looking to learn more about various LGBTQIA+ topics, including **A is for Allyship: A Discussion with Children's Book Author, Sheetal Sheth** and **Gender Affirming Care: An Educational Session for Desi Rainbow Parents**. We continued to create **supportive virtual forums** for community members to participate more casually and frequently, such as our **WhatsApp community**, no matter where in the country they are located.

We have grown to **293** WhatsApp members.



We also organized **inclusive virtual community events** accessible to LGBTQIA+ folks and their families across North America. We held multiple episodes of our **Proud Possibilities** series, including **Keerti Kumar**'s story with **gender-affirming healthcare**, and **Vybhav's release of the UGLIES music video**. Learn more about our Proud Possibilities series at **desirainbow.org/proud-possibiilities**

We held **Faith and Family** events this year as well, including **Ramadan Reflections** and **Buddha Jayanti,** which create warm, affirming spaces for LGBTQIA+ Desis and allies to gather. Learn more at **desirainbow.org/faith-family**



In 2023, we received over **428** unique event registrations.

and celebrated by all.
ALLYSHIP & OUTREACH

Support Us



2024 GOALS

We are committed to creating change on all levels - family, community, faith, government and institutions. Our Goals for the next year include:

- **Expanding our Support Network** to meet the growing demand for direct support.
- **Initiating a Youth Affinity Group & leadership program** for Desi LGBTQIA+ youth.
- **Improving educational programs for families and allies to combat misinformation** about LGBTQIA+ identity.
- **Expanding Desi Rainbow Community Gatherings** across the country to locations in the **Midwest, South and Northeast and West Coast.**

Donate today to help more LGBTQIA+ South Asians and their families access our affirming inter-generational community!

100% **of our funding** comes from **individual contributions** from community members,, including family members of LGBTQIA+ loved ones and allies who feel the impact of our work. **Help Desi Rainbow expand** our reach and support LGBTQIA+ folks and families in need. **We can't do it without you,** and we **thank you for your support!**

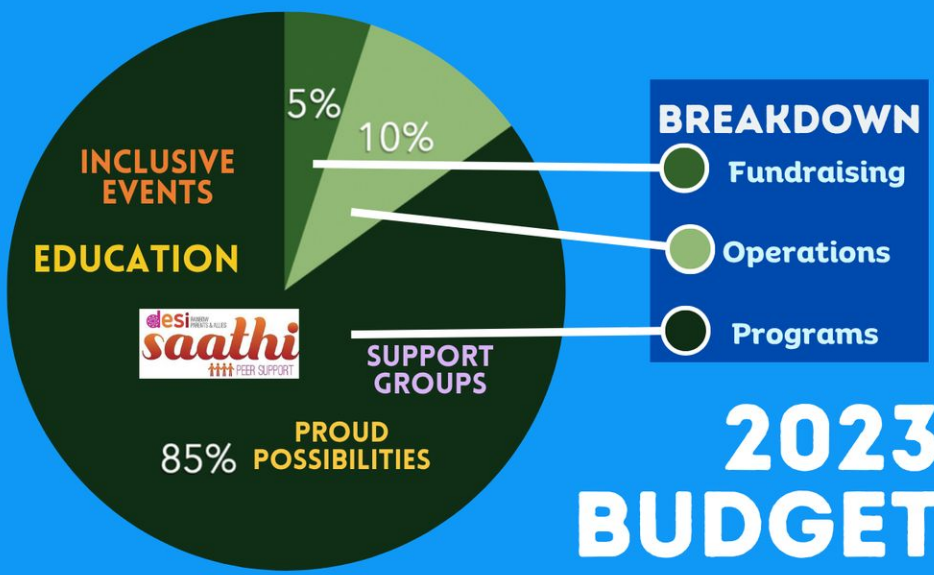
DONATE

www.desirainbow.org/donate

Donate with your employer matching: EIN: 85-3352073

Checks can be mailed to:
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2023 BUDGET

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