

SAFE SPACE NOVA NEWS & HIGHLIGHTS



Safe Space NOVA | Quarterly Newsletter

VOL.3 SUMMER 2022



The Success of Once Upon a Prom (and Party)

This year we relaunched the regional pride prom after a 2-year pandemic hiatus. That means that prior to this year, the last students who could have attended the pride prom were freshman in 2019. As a cross-county event that is not affiliated with any schools, we had to get the word out to students who may not have known what pride prom was or that it existed and was available to them. Challenge accepted!

Our Pride Prom is unique in that it combines:

- **EDUCATION** – Students have the unique opportunity to connect with LGBTQ-affirming organizations which provide social, medical, and mental health support to youth in Northern Virginia and beyond.
- **COMPASSION** – We ensure a quieter space for students who need to take a break or speak to our volunteer mental health professionals. Anxiety has been reported by students attending their first dance or experiencing dysphoria and we want to provide for psychological safety.
- **ACTION** – Students apply to serve as Pride Prom Leaders who work from December through May creating their prom while learning advocacy skills which they are encouraged to turn into action within their communities.
- **CELEBRATION** – Pride Prom is fun! Students routinely report that it is their favorite day of the year and that they cannot wait for next year's event! Adult chaperones and volunteers are equally delighted watching the attendees have the time of their lives.

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@safespacenova



Message from the Executive Director

**JORDAN
COSTEN-SUMPTER, MSW**

Hello All,

Summer is in full swing and I am excited about what's been happening. This past quarter alone, we have partnered with different organizations during pride month, hosted our first ever LGBTQ+ prom, signed a lease for our first physical space, and continued spreading the message of Safe Space NOVA at different outreach events. In short, our team continues to do the work and offer programs essential to the well-being of our LGBTQ+ youth. Additionally, we continue raising money to expand our reach and service offering.

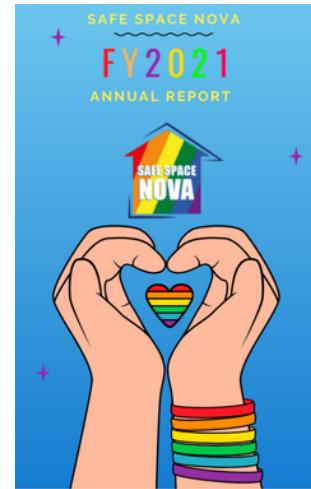
First, there are the pride month events that Safe Space NOVA was a part of. In June, we presented at Alexandria Pride, Reston Pride, Arlington Pride, Pride at the Garden, and the Portside in Alexandria Family Festival. As part of the events, we offered family-friendly activities such as connect four and tick tac toe.

The Safe Space NOVA Team also started offering LGBTQ+ specific flags in addition to our branded buttons, bracelets, and pamphlets. We use these opportunities to share with the community why Safe Space NOVA's programs are essential.

Our most significant event during pride month was the LGBTQ+ prom, which was themed "Once Upon a Prom." This was the first time Safe Space NOVA had hosted and coordinated an event of that size, with over 120 students in attendance. The prom was held at St James in Fairfax County. Activities available to attendees included a trampoline park, board games, a ballroom with a DJ, obstacle courses, virtual reality games, and drag performances.

Download our FY2021 Annual Report!

This year was a year full of great accomplishments! In 2021, we successfully launched our inclusive sex education series called "You + Me =We: Queer Sex Ed" in partnership with Doorways of Arlington. Additionally, Safe Space NOVA launched the LGBTQ+ Social Support Group in partnership with Pride Liberation Project, a student lead advocacy organization.



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There was also food available and community organizers. The prom was well received by all those who attended. We cannot wait to put it on next year.

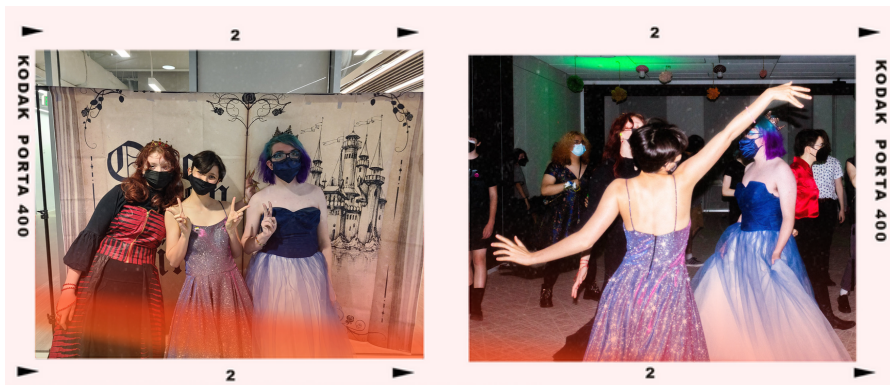
Another milestone surpassed by Safe Space NOVA was the addition of a new physical space. We fully expect to start offering some in-person programs in the third quarter of this year. More details about the location will be shared at a later date. From an outreach standpoint, our operations team continues spreading the word about Safe Space NOVA at community events, including Alexandria Cookouts, podcasts, and area high school symposiums.

As I always say, none of this would be possible without our excellent staff, volunteers, and supporters like you. Thank you for believing in the work of Safe Space NOVA.

Thank you,
Jordan L. Costen-Sumpter
Founding Executive Director

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Once Upon a Prom welcomed 150 students from all over the DMV (Alexandria City; Arlington; Fairfax; Falls Church; Loudoun; Prince William; Manassas; Washington, DC; Montgomery County; Private Schools, Home Schools), 50+ chaperones, 15 LGBTQ+ affirming vendors, our favorite emcee on the planet, a DJ, a drag performer, three volunteer photographers, and several thousands of dollars in door prizes and donated items to create a magical experience! The attendees enjoyed dancing, food, the most amazing Nothing Bundt Cakes, a drag performance (and pep talk), trampolines, obstacle course complete with Nerf guns, VR games, e-Sports, overhead ninja course, climbing walls, a quiet game room, crisis counseling, and the ability to learn about the affirming resources in the area.



Once Upon a Prom in the Media

- [Tysons Today](#)
- [Happening Next](#)
- [Sun Gazette](#)
- [DC News Now](#)
- [WJLA News](#)
- [NBC Washington](#)
- [Arlington Magazine](#)



Once Upon a Prom