



Rural Action

Thriving Communities, Healthy Environments

Rural Action

In 2020-21, Rural Action received a [\\$70,000 grant \(it's first, ever\) from the Catholic Campaign for Human Development \(CCHD\)](#).

CATHOLIC CAMPAIGN FOR HUMAN DEVELOPMENT 2020-2021 GRANTEES			
Diocese	Grantee	Issue Area	Grant
Diocese of Steubenville	Rural Action Inc.	EDP - Business Incubator & Marketplace	70,000.00

Founded in 1991, Rural Action has worked to strengthen community in the foothills of Appalachian Ohio. While from the outset this sounds like a good organization, on its website Rural Action openly supports and promotes homosexual and transgender ideologies.

One event that they host is a workshop called [LGBTQIAAlteration](#) where LGBTQ people are encouraged to come and learn how to make cloths that fit their body and personality.

LGBTQIAAlterations



An opportunity for queer folx to thrift shop and learn how to upcycle their garments in a way that best fits their personal style.

Can't find clothes that are right for you? Let's learn together how to make them right! Bring your clothing or browse [UpCycle Ohio Thrift Store](#) for items to alter. Every Tuesday from 3pm-7pm. \$5 drop-in plus cost of any clothes purchased.

DATE:

Tuesday, Apr 5th, 2022

TIME:

3:00 pm - 7:00 pm

LOCATION:

UpCycle Ohio Community
Makerspace

[Details](#) 

In July 2021, Rural Action's online newsletter featured a man with apparent breast implants named [Emma Loomis-Amrhein](#) who was hired as the new manager of the Community

Makerspace.



HOME

GET TO KNOW US

OUR WORK

SUPPORT OUR WORK

Loomis-Amrhein is new Makerspace Manager

JULY 25, 2021 | BOB BENZ



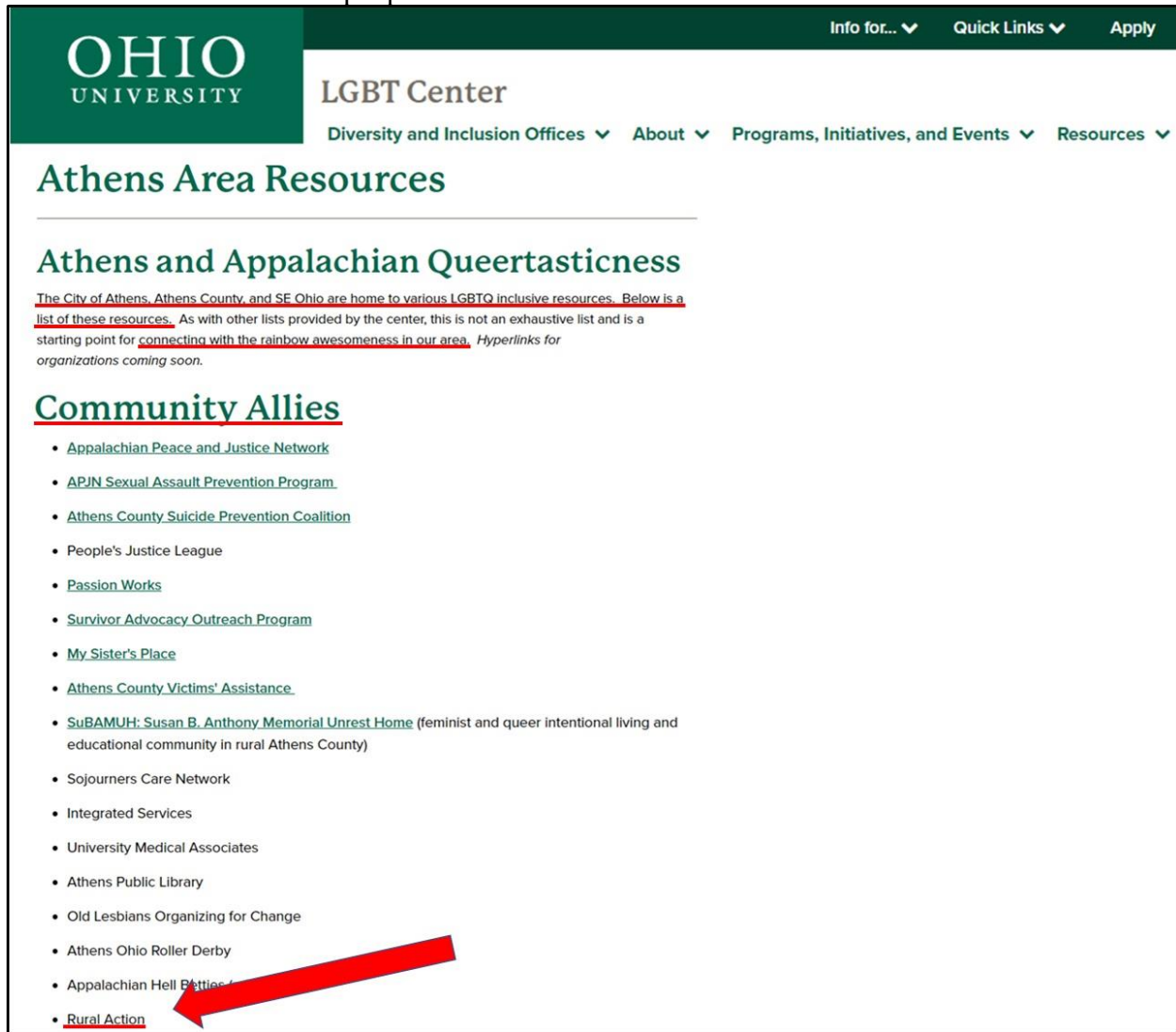
Emma Loomis-Amrhein

Emma Loomis-Amrhein is a maker. She's done straw bale construction. She loves woodworking. And she is a published poet. She's also the new manager of the [Community Makerspace](#).

LGBTQ Center Ally

In addition to promoting LGBTQ events and actions, [Rural Action was named as one of the LGBT Center's "Community Allies"](#). These allies collaborate with the LGBT Center which has a

list of resources that enable people to connect with the “rainbow awesomeness in our area.”



The screenshot shows the Ohio University LGBT Center website. The header includes the Ohio University logo and navigation links for 'Info for...', 'Quick Links', and 'Apply'. Below the header, the page title is 'LGBT Center' with sub-navigation for 'Diversity and Inclusion Offices', 'About', 'Programs, Initiatives, and Events', and 'Resources'. The main content area is titled 'Athens Area Resources' and features a section for 'Athens and Appalachian Queertasticness'. A paragraph of text explains that the list is a starting point for connecting with the rainbow awesomeness in the area. Below this is a section titled 'Community Allies' with a bulleted list of organizations. A red arrow points to 'Rural Action' at the bottom of the list.

OHIO UNIVERSITY Info for... ▾ Quick Links ▾ Apply ▾

LGBT Center

Diversity and Inclusion Offices ▾ About ▾ Programs, Initiatives, and Events ▾ Resources ▾

Athens Area Resources

Athens and Appalachian Queertasticness

The City of Athens, Athens County, and SE Ohio are home to various LGBTQ inclusive resources. Below is a list of these resources. As with other lists provided by the center, this is not an exhaustive list and is a starting point for connecting with the rainbow awesomeness in our area. Hyperlinks for organizations coming soon.

Community Allies

- [Appalachian Peace and Justice Network](#)
- [APJN Sexual Assault Prevention Program](#)
- [Athens County Suicide Prevention Coalition](#)
- People's Justice League
- [Passion Works](#)
- [Survivor Advocacy Outreach Program](#)
- [My Sister's Place](#)
- [Athens County Victims' Assistance](#)
- [SuBAMUH: Susan B. Anthony Memorial Unrest Home](#) (feminist and queer intentional living and educational community in rural Athens County)
- Sojourners Care Network
- Integrated Services
- University Medical Associates
- Athens Public Library
- Old Lesbians Organizing for Change
- Athens Ohio Roller Derby
- [Appalachian Hell Bitches](#)
- [Rural Action](#)

Pride Fest

In June 2017, the [first Pride Rally and 3rd Annual Athens Pride Picnic](#) was hosted by Ohio University LGBT Center celebrating Pride Month. This rally was a chance for LGBTQA+ SE Ohioans to be “loud and proud” as they celebrated “all things rainbow and queer!” Among the list of volunteers at the event, Rural Action was named as the group working with the LGBT Center to provide composting and recycling stations.

Athens Pride Fest Rainbow Finale: Rally and Picnic

June 11, 2017 @ 2:00 pm - 5:00 pm FREE



The Ohio University LGBT Center, Southeast Ohio LGBTQ+ Center and the Southeastern Ohio LGBT Coalition have joined in glittery collaboration to host the first ever Pride Rally and the 3rd Annual Athens Pride Picnic. This is a celebration in honor of Pride Month and an opportunity to come together as a rainbow community. All are welcome to participate in Day 3 of Athens Pride Fest!

The weekend of events, especially the Rally and Picnic, are solidarity events with the National Equality March for Unity and Pride taking place on June 11 in Washington, DC. To learn more about the national march: <http://www.equalitymarch2017.com/>

The Rally will take place at 2pm on College Green by the Civil War Monument and is an opportunity for LGBTQA+ SE Ohioans to be loud and proud as we celebrate all things rainbow and queer! We are lining up different speakers to share at the Rally, if you would like to speak please email lgbt@ohio.edu

The picnic will take place following the Pride Rally also on College Green; guesstimated start time for picnic is 3pm.

The picnic is potluck style and IS A DRY EVENT (NO ALCOHOL WILL BE SERVED). If you cannot bring a dish to share, no problem! Bring yourself and friends to eat and enjoy the festivities and to be in community with others.

To help us track who is bringing what, please fill out our google form (copy and paste link): <https://goo.gl/forms/CNRo9YHTQMix9sAI3>

We are working with Rural Action to make the picnic a Zero Waste event. We are looking for donations of compostable items and if possible for individuals to bring their own reusable cups / plates / etc. Rural Action will be providing stations for composting and recycling.


If you have any questions and/or would like to volunteer in other ways, email lgbt@ohio.edu

According to the [*Perry County Tribune*](#), "*Rural Action and other local groups have approached the organizers asking how they could be involved,*" showing that Rural Action is pro-actively involved in the advancement of LGBTQ ideologies.

Leadership

Not only does Rural Action support these issues that are contrary to the teachings of the Catholic Church, but those in leadership positions for Rural Actions are openly supportive of these and other immoral issues, as well.

One of the founders of Rural Action was Mary Anne Flournoy. While many people saw in her a woman of love who sacrificed so much of her time and energy to helping other people, an [article on the Rural Action website](#) acknowledged that “local organizations ranging from Rural Action to Planned Parenthood to Christ Lutheran Church all benefited from her tireless effort.”



The screenshot shows the Rural Action website header with the logo "Rural Action" and the tagline "Thriving Communities, Healthy Environments". A green "DONATE" button is in the top right. The navigation menu includes "HOME", "GET TO KNOW US", "OUR WORK", "SUPPORT OUR WORK", "UPCOMING EVENTS", and a search icon. Below the menu is a large photograph of an elderly woman (Mary Anne) and an elderly man (Don) standing in front of a brick building with large windows.

Mary Anne passed away on Oct. 23, leaving a legacy of service, caring, and wisdom. She accomplished much and touched many people throughout her 79 years. She taught in inner-city and Appalachian schools. She served as the associate director for International Studies at Ohio University. She and Don founded the Sugar Bush Foundation in 2005 to advocate for collaboration between OU and the community in driving sustainable economic development in Appalachian Ohio. Local organizations ranging from Rural Action to Planned Parenthood to Christ Lutheran Church all benefited from her tireless efforts. And she didn't limit her good works to Ohio. She thought locally *and* globally, running teacher exchanges to Southern Africa and helping in the creation of the Zienzele Foundation for AIDs orphans and widows in Zimbabwe.

Currently, the [Chief Executive Officer of Rural Action](#) is Debbie Phillips whose social media accounts display an open support for LGBTQ.



The screenshot shows a profile page for Debbie Phillips on the Rural Action website. The breadcrumb trail reads "RURAL ACTION > GET TO KNOW US > OUR TEAM > DEBBIE PHILLIPS". On the left is a portrait of Debbie Phillips, a woman with glasses and a dark blazer. To the right is a text block describing her background and role.

Debbie Phillips was named as CEO of Rural Action in 2018, after having helped to grow the organization as its Development Director. She previously served as the area's State Representative in the Ohio House from 2009-2016, until term limits kicked in. While in office, she served on the House Finance Committee, House Education Committee, House Agriculture & Rural Development Committee, the Joint Legislative Ethics Commission and the Joint Committee on Agency Rule Review. Phillips is particularly proud of having successfully changed Ohio law to prevent schools from charging low-income students for the materials necessary for their participation. Phillips served as a member of Athens City Council from 2003-2008, when she was elected to the House. While on Council she chaired the Planning and Development Committee.

She was the founding Executive Director of the [Ohio Fair Schools Campaign](#), which grew out of a program of Rural Action's, the Community and School Connection, and focused on promoting quality public education for all K-12 students. Debbie is a graduate of Ohio University and lives near Albany.

Debbie's core purpose is to help connect people to a sense of agency and joy. She loves our region and its smart and resilient people.

Debbie Phillips
Chief Executive Officer
✉ debbie@ruralaction.org

In June 2015, a Facebook post by [David Donofrio](#) thanked [Debbie Phillips](#) and others for their [legislative effort to ban conversion therapies for kids](#).

David Donofrio
June 15, 2015 · 🌐

What good news for Pride Week. Thank you Reps. [Denise Driehaus](#) and [Debbie Phillips](#) and Sen. Charleta B. Tavares for sponsoring this legislation!

DISPATCH.COM

Some Ohio legislators want to ban conversion therapy for gay, transgender teens
Twice a week, Delfin Bautista was reminded by a Roman Catholic therapist that being gay was ...

According to the article:

"Sen. Charleta B. Tavares, D-Columbus, reintroduced an Ohio Senate bill in February that would **ban reparative or conversion therapy for minors** after a similar measure failed in 2013. Last week, a **companion House bill** was **introduced by Rep. Debbie Phillips**, D-Albany, and Rep. Denise Driehaus, D-Cincinnati.

...

Phillips said she realizes that the ban wouldn't stop reparative therapy for children in Ohio, but **she hopes it would start a valuable conversation on its more-negative effects.**

"**It is brutal, and torture in a way, to get people to change their behavior,**" Bautista said. That therapy "for an adolescent, I just think adds more to the confusion. Here I am in my 30s, and I'm still figuring things out."

Phillips is also openly supportive of Planned Parenthood.

On April 18, 2012, a [press conference was held by the Ohio Democratic Women's Caucus](#) in support of Planned Parenthood.




Phillips was seen standing with and supporting [Rep. Nickie Antonio](#) who informed the press that: “more than 90% of what Planned Parenthood does is provide life-saving cancer screenings, breast exams, sex education, birth control, and counseling to more than 100,000 Ohio women and families.”



Another post on Ohio Democratic Women's Caucus Facebook page show Phillips standing with [Rep. Kathleen Clyde](#) who talked about the states that have already defunded Planned Parenthood, and that Ohio was becoming the ‘epicenter of GOP attacks on women's health.’”



 Ohio Democratic Women's Caucus ...
April 18, 2012 · Columbus, OH ·


Rep. Kathleen Clyde talking about the 9 other states that have defunded Planned Parenthood so far, and how Ohio has become the new (?) epicenter of GOP attacks on women's health. — with Nancy Garland and 7 others at Ohio Statehouse.

2

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Additionally, Phillips was pictured with [Laura Smales](#), an OSU student and PPOH student who talked at the conference about how she received preventive health care services at Planned Parenthood clinics.



 Ohio Democratic Women's Caucus ...
April 18, 2012 · Columbus, OH ·

OSU student and PPOH patient Laura Smales discussing her experiences receiving preventive health care services at Planned Parenthood clinics. — with Nancy Garland and 7 others at Ohio Statehouse.

2

Like Comment Share

The fact the Phillips openly supports organizations that attack the right to life shows that Catholic funds should not be going to her nor Rural Action.

In 2012, the Heartbeat Bill died in the Senate. The bill would have made abortion illegal if the heartbeat of the fetus was detected. However, as other states were passing the same bill, some in Ohio thought that another similar bill might come up again soon. In an [April 2013 article published](#) in the Petersburg News and Sentinel, State Rep. Phillips, admitted that she had voted against the bill on the grounds that it was “controversial.” She said:

“It seemed like it posed some very deep questions about constitutionality under (Roe v. Wade). And the Right to Life community was deeply divided because of concerns that it could end up in the Supreme Court and the outcome there would be impossible to tell.”

She furthermore hoped that more would be done to help prevent “unintentional pregnancies.”

On Nov 2, 2012, the [Athens Messenger had an article](#) covering the event when President Obama spoke in Athens, Ohio. He was welcomed by many people, including Debbie Phillips. According to the article, Phillips voiced her support for Planned Parenthood while being joined by NARAL Pro-Choice and other radical abortion advocates:

“I think it’s really neat actually that we’re having this visit with a focus on women’s issues here in this office because we’re standing in the same building that houses the Planned Parenthood here in Athens,” said State Rep. Debbie Phillips (D-Albany).

Phillips and Strickland were joined by Nancy Keenan, president of National Association for the Repeal of Abortion Laws (NARAL) — Pro-Choice America, and democratic strategist Valerie Jarrett.

Phillips said that access to basic healthcare for women has been under attack by the far right. “That’s one of the reasons it is so incredibly important that we re-elect President Obama, Senator Sherrod Brown and other folks that are going to stand up for women,” she said.

In 2013, there was talk in Ohio that a Bill might come up which would place bans on abortion rights. [Protesters rallied on the Statehouse](#) to voice their opposing view. In discussing this issue in a debate, Phillips, who was then State Representative, said “It forces the government into the most private and difficult situation a woman could face.”

Ohio abortion-rights group protests restrictions

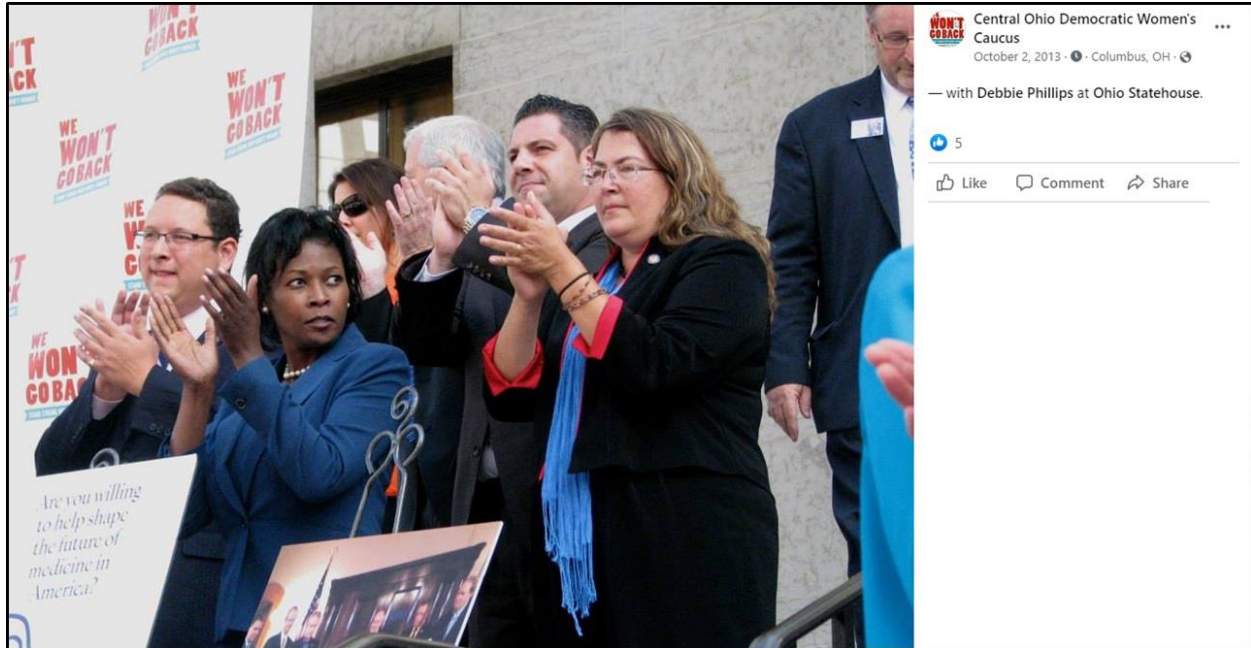
Staff Writer Akron Beacon Journal

Published 11:00 a.m. ET June 27, 2013

[View Comments](#)



Furthermore, Phillips also supported those protesting the bill in Ohio that defunded Planned Parenthood. This bill also placed restrictions on other abortion laws. In October 2013, Phillips attended a [rally that spoke out against the Bill](#) at the "We Won't Go Back" rally.



Phillips was also very active in the same-sex marriage movement. In 2012, she was named as a supporter of the [Freedom to Marry organization](#) in Ohio which promoted the legislation needed to make same-sex marriages legal. According to the article published in The New Political:

State Rep. Debbie Phillips (D) believes the voters of Ohio will play a strong role in deciding whether the amendment will be on the November 2013 ballot. “[Marriage equality] will be in the hands of the people through ballot initiative,” said Phillips.

A [tweet from Phillips in June 2015](#), shows her supporting the SCOTUS decision that would make same-sex marriages legal and protect them under the 14th Amendment.



Debbie Phillips
@DebPhillipsOhio

...

Waiting for [#SCOTUS](#) decision. [#equality](#).



9:38 AM · Jun 26, 2015 · Twitter for Android

Conclusion

Rural Action is directly involved in the promotion of homosexual and transgender ideologies, including through its participation in PRIDE events. Furthermore, while proudly employing a man with apparent breast implants, it is endorsed by the LGBTQ Center and is named an ally of the Center. In addition to this, Rural Action's founder and current CEO are active supporters of Planned Parenthood, abortion, and homosexual and transgender ideologies. As such, Rural Action should not be given support from the Catholic Church, nor should it be given a grant by the CCHD.