

# BUILDING RURAL PRIDE

Merging Pockets of Influence for Greater Change



# SET-UP: WHERE OUR STORY TAKES PLACE



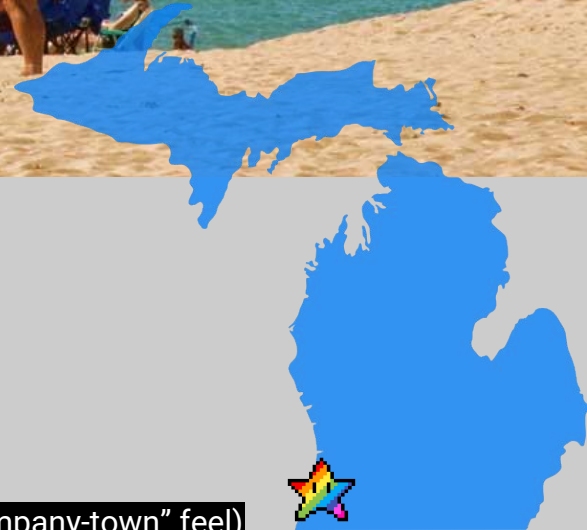
Saint Joseph / Benton Harbor (combined population < 20,000)

County population ~150,000, very conservative, rural

Closest Major City is Chicago (~90 miles)

Tourism boom in the summer season causes population to nearly double

Major employers are a regional hospital and Whirlpool Corporation (has a “company-town” feel)



# SET-UP: WHO WE ARE



\*Whirlpool Corporation ownership of the *Hotpoint* brand in EMEA and Asia Pacific regions is not affiliated with the *Hotpoint* brand sold in the Americas.





## Chris Forbes

{ Originally From: Jamaica  
Current Role: Business HR  
Previous Role: Diversity & Inclusion



## Randy Maples

{ Originally From: Tennessee  
Current Role: Enterprise Ops Mgr.  
Previous Role: Training Manager

pride  
Whirlpool Corporation



## Tim Buszka-Hoehn

{ Originally From: Indianapolis  
Current Role: Product Marketing Mgr.  
Previous Role: Brand Manager, Asso.



## Greg Fulmer

{ Originally From: Hoosierland  
Current Role: Senior Engineer  
Previous Role: Chemist

# WHIRLPOOL CELEBRATES ALL DIMENSIONS OF DIVERSITY



WHIRLPOOL ASIAN COMMUNITY



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**BUT WE KNOW THAT WE'VE COME VERY FAR...**



# **Timeline of OUR GROWTH**





# LONG HISTORY OF SUCCESS... FOCUSED ON EMPLOYEES



15 YEARS



HOW DO WE IMPROVE OUR COMMUNITY OUTSIDE THE WALLS OF WHIRLPOOL WHILE  
RESPECTING THE COMMUNITY THAT ALREADY EXISTS?

# AND THEN WE REALIZED WE HAD MUCH MORE TO DO

TOP STORY

## OutCenter a target of threats

LGBT nonprofit to take extra safety precautions

By ALEXANDRA NEWMAN - HP Staff Writer Feb 10, 2018



TOP STORY

## Raining on his rainbow flag

Fulmer says theft of his flag won't stop him from being an ally

By LOUISE WREGE - HP Staff Writer Jun 29, 2017



**Harassment in Public Spaces**

**Lack of City Support**

**Unequal Protections Across City**



# SO WE TOOK A HARD LOOK AT OURSELVES...

- #1** We'd made so much progress in the walls of Whirlpool, had we strayed from our early focus on community?
- #2** What improvements do our LGBTQ+ citizens need? (Not just Whirlpool employees)
- #3** Were we equipped to tackle the larger issues in our community?
- #4** Do we have the competencies to make change?

And we set off on a mission:

**No one else was going to be a catalyst, so even with our gaps, we needed to inspire and motivate the change.**

# **IDENTIFY POCKETS OF INFLUENCE**

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## Step 1

*Cities aren't the only ones with like-minded advocates...*

**Reach out to Regional LGBTQ Centers in other nearby towns/cities**

- Resource centers in Grand Rapids, Holland, Kalamazoo, Battle Creek, South Bend, Chicago

**Identify other LGBTQ ERGs at corporations/companies in your area/state**

- Out & Equal Attendees from companies in your area
- Look for pro-LGBTQ statements on social media
- NGLCC-certified businesses

**Gain insight from other LGBTQ-Friendly Municipalities in your area/state**

- Look for cities/towns who have NDOs with SOGI protections



# SEEK OUT THE OBVIOUS

## Local/Regional LGBTQ+ Centers



*Find ALL near you at [centerlink.com](https://www.centerlink.com)\**

## Regional/National LGBTQ+ Organizations



# THEN LOOK AGAIN, AND LOOK DEEPER



## Corporate Senior Leadership

- Executive Sponsors / Champions
- Corporate Communications
- Brand Leaders
- HR Leads



## Local Community Leadership

- City Commission / Local Government
- Department of Public Safety
- State-level Government Officials
- LGBTQ-Friendly / Owned Businesses



## Faith / Spiritual Centers & Leaders



## Resource Centers with LGBTQ+ Population as Secondary Beneficiaries

- Offers peer support to people impacted by HIV or AIDS
- the only community-based non-profit AIDS organization in our area
- serves 10 counties in Southwest Michigan



## Gay-Straight Alliances (GSAs)/Youth Groups

- Student/youth-led LGBTQ+ clubs
- Sponsored by a teacher in the school system

# **DEFINE YOUR PORTFOLIO OF COMPETENCIES**

## Step 2



## *We needed to enlighten key city officials through education*

The nation's largest family and ally organization.

- Annual ally training hosted by PFLAG at Whirlpool Corporate Offices
  - Invitations extended to key city leaders
    - City Commissioners
    - Department of Public Safety
    - Cornerstone Chamber of Commerce (small business owners)



## COMPETENCY PROFILE #2: THE OUTCENTER

*We needed real stories from those with feet on the ground*

Community resources that foster LGBTQ+ equality in our community

- Teen Pride,
- Moms are IN (... and so are guardians, dads, friends, neighbors, etc)
- The Pastor is IN
- The League of Extraordinary Genders)

Crisis Counseling

Experience influencing local policy initiatives and volunteer support



*We needed someone with experience on how to activate*

Michigan's statewide LGBTQ political advocacy organization

- They have an “off-the-shelf” kind of package that can help small municipalities craft the correct NDO.
- Advise the city commissioners on what to expect.
- Assist with city attorney to help write ironclad NDO verbiage.
- Tap into grassroots energy to mobilize engaged citizens



# KEEP THE PUMP PRIMED

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Step 3

# DO WHAT YOU DO BEST - HELP THEM EARN MONEY AND PRIME THE PUMP

## OutCenter

### Cross-leverage corporate activities with United Way

- United Way donations - Annual Pride Party
- United Way Day of Caring
- Whirlpool Foundation Matching
- Yearly Sponsorship, etc.

## Cares of SW Michigan



### Active Sponsorship





- Give-back Night: Dining Out for Life
- Mister Friendly Pint Night @ The Livery
- Fire and Ice Event
- Angel Tree

# BUILD AWARENESS AND DESIRE WITH SENIOR LEADERSHIP - PRIME THE PUMP

WITH INTERNAL STAKEHOLDERS

INTERNAL SENIOR LEADERS

-  Be creative
-  Create and communicate your own internal success measure

-  USE THEM
-  As a Sponsor
-  As a voice of influence - internally or externally
-  As a bank





# WHAT HAPPENED?

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# SO WHAT FINALLY HAPPENED?

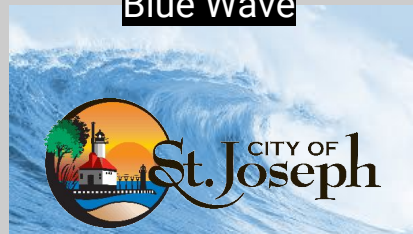


Blue Wave

Rallied our Regional Summit

Educated the Comm.

Pitch



OutCenter



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**SUCCESS!**



CITY OF  
**St. Joseph**

**NDO w/ SOGI Protections\***

\*coming soon



# 2018 - Greg Fulmer - OutCenter Community Champion Award

# WHAT WE LEARNED THAT YOU CAN USE TOO

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# WHAT YOU CAN DO TOMORROW

1. Leverage executive leadership and community influences to support a cause, whether through funding, public statements, or action.
2. Build a regional business coalition of neighboring corporations to share the burden of driving progress.
3. Intrinsically inspire your local government into providing LGBTQ+ protections and support.



# QUESTIONS



# THANK YOU!

## JOIN THE CONVERSATION

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 @WhirlpoolCorp #WhatMatters

 [LinkedIn.com/company/Whirlpool-Corporation](https://www.linkedin.com/company/Whirlpool-Corporation)  
[WhirlpoolCorp.com](https://www.WhirlpoolCorp.com)