

Education

- **Master of Social Work** - University of North Carolina at Charlotte
 - Capstone: “Addressing HIV Risk Behaviors Among Transgender Youth: A Harm Reduction Approach”
- **Bachelor of Social Work** - University of North Carolina at Charlotte
- **Religious Studies, Minor: Non-Profit Administration** (degree coursework completed) - Gardner-Webb University
- **Liberation Theology and LGBT Studies Courses**, Chicago Theological Seminary

SKILLS

- Policy tracking, research, analysis
- Community Organizing
- Issue Advocacy
- Supervision and management
- Interpreting, and making complex information accessible
- Training and workshop development
- Technological applications and platforms:
 - Microsoft Office, Google Suite, SPSS, Canva, video editing software
- Program and organizational development
- Meeting and facilitating meetings and retreats
- Rapid response tactics and external communication
- Power and resource mapping
- Coalition development and participation
- Writing and education for diverse audiences
- Press relations:
 - pitching op-eds
 - editorial board training
 - planning press conferences
 - media advisories
- Grant writing and reports
- Interpersonal communications
- Understanding and explaining social behavior

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

Research and Writing Consultant, *Blueprint North Carolina: Code Red Threat Map*, May 2023-Present

- Monitoring the movements of extremist groups in North Carolina through infiltration
- Researching extremist groups in collaboration with universities and coalition partners
- Providing education about threat groups and organizational and event safety
- Working with Code the Dream to develop a public-facing user interface for individuals and organizations to understand the basic operations of threat groups and how they are connected to one another, legislators, and national organizations

Expert Facilitator, *Human Rights Campaign Foundation - All Children All Families*. October 2022-Present

- Facilitating and training child welfare organizations on best practices with LGBTQ+ youth and families
- Leading organizations through self-assessments on current LGBTQ+-related practices and policies

Director of Strategic Initiatives, *Equality North Carolina*. March 2022-Present

Advocacy and Elections Strategist, *Equality North Carolina*. March 2020-March 2022

Lead Organizer, *Equality North Carolina*, March 2019-March 2020

- Strategy
 - Served as strategic planning staff liaison, helping author mission, vision, and values, and partnering in development of the plan, making it tangible for directors and departments, assisting them in operationalizing the plan through their work plans
 - Introduce and maintain strategy screening and continuing strategic relationship principles between organizational programs to maintain alignment with mission and vision
 - Drive equity goals in hiring, program implementation, and program evaluation
 - Develop strategy to respond to or promote legislative action, rapid response, and organizing tactics
 - Develop and facilitate staff and directors meeting agendas and staff retreats
 - Manage work plans and ensure equity principles throughout, including in program evaluation
 - Create and implement skills assessment for staff in order to determine areas of growth and interest
 - Implemented previously non-existent onboarding that included our strategic plan, equity values, and organizing strategies and tactics
 - Orient staff around multicultural organizing and direct action tactics
- Policy, Legislation, and Research
 - Research, track, analyze, and create education materials (fact sheets, training decks) around policies that support or threaten LGBTQ+ people, especially those at the intersections
 - Established *Electeds for Equality and Out Electeds* programming for endorsed candidates who won their elections, creating calendar and content, providing education, legislative briefs, and discussing political strategy while also acting as an ongoing resource for elected officials

- Partnered with a small group of Out Electeds to promote comprehensive nondiscrimination ordinances across the state once they were legal again, passing 23 total in a year and a half, covering everything from LGBTQ+ identity and expression, natural hairstyles, and familial status
- Develop advocacy days and promote participation with partner organizations' advocacy days at the North Carolina General Assembly
- Assist in developing Rural Youth Empowerment Fellowship advocacy days digitally and in Washington D.C.
- Led federal non-discrimination work by engaging business leaders, faith leaders, families, and youth in direct advocacy with members of Congress, sign-on letters, and writing op-eds and LTEs
- Write and circulate sign-on letters, including a medical provider letter for the 2023 legislative session that received over 800 signatures
- Planned and executed press conferences and other relationships with media, including authoring and pitching stakeholder op-eds
- Create policy agenda for each state legislative session with Equality North Carolina and partner organization policy priorities
- Organized six in-person and digital advocacy days at state legislature and United States Congress, multiple times per year, including storytelling, with different stakeholder groups and organization's base
- Connect constituents to their political power through briefings, popular education, storytelling training, and visits with their elected officials at all levels
- Elections
 - Transformed Political Action Committee with equitable representation from across the state
 - Created endorsement process for local, statewide, and national candidates for public office including research, writing questionnaires and interview questions, and facilitating reports and votes with PAC
 - Ensured Political Action Committee understood and were united around shared values of racial and social justice and that they were reflected in our questionnaires, interviews, and our endorsement decisions
 - Between organizing directors, developed elections strategy including organizing tactics
 - Created and executed c4/independent expenditure strategy for 2020 elections including radio ads, billboards, and mailers
 - Strengthen strategic interactions between PAC, c4, and c3
- Programming
 - Manage external speaking engagements, including fee-for-service, which includes creating and presenting content for municipalities, elected officials, corporations, faith leaders, and other stakeholder groups, including a three-module series for municipalities implementing non-discrimination protections
 - Initiate and maintain partnerships and coalition membership at the local, statewide, and national levels, attending meetings, sharing resources and information, in pursuit of a multi-racial, multi-issue liberatory agenda, and co-sponsoring or signing on to support specific initiatives. Coalitions covered reproductive justice, racial justice, democracy, public education, and the North Carolina's People's Platform
 - Implemented and co-lead strategic coalitions around advocacy for incarcerated trans people, LGBTQ+ health, LGBTQ+ aging services, and interfaith leader for equality
 - Created and maintained a coalition of organizations across North Carolina to respond to MPox in a way that promoted racial equity and access while avoiding stigmatizing imagery and language, including developing a digital package (website, graphics, social media), planning and executing virtual townhalls with NCDHHS, working with local groups to host vaccine events for hard-to-reach communities, and partnering with university public health departments, all which led to \$100k in grant awards from various organizations
 - Trained all election workers across North Carolina around trans voters and how to avoid discrimination
 - Led internship program, created Standard Operating Procedures, connecting directors with potential interns, and directly supervising social work interns
- Fundraising
 - Organize and prepare stakeholder and impacted demographic groups for rapid response through community fundraising
 - Garnered at least \$300,000 through programs and partnerships
 - Wrote grants and grant reports on a variety of programming
 - Managing fee-for-service programming
 - Assisted in planning and executing house parties while inviting local connections
 - Pursued corporate partnership for programs, where strategic and applicable

Founding Principal, [Pride Education Services](#), August 2016-Current

- Provide EDI courses and consultation to small businesses, organizations, and faith communities
- Develop modules for online and in-person delivery
- Facilitate conversations and conflict transformation for organizations around equity and inclusion initiatives

- Go beyond traditional EDI to include community culture, history, societal influence

North Carolina Consultant, *Faith in Public Life*, February 2020-June 2022

- Managed statewide efforts for federal nondiscrimination on behalf of Faith in Public Life
- Worked in national LGBTQ+ coalitions and national interfaith coalitions
- Provided training for press on LGBTQ+ nondiscrimination protections
- Scheduled meetings with United States Representatives and Senators and train clergy to speak at these meetings
- Pitched clergy-authored op-eds for the purpose of nondiscrimination protections
- Organized statewide clergy infrastructure and work with existing faith leader tables for LGBTQ+ advocacy

Western Piedmont Regional Managing Organizer, *Democracy North Carolina*, March 2016-March 2019

- Managed projects across the region with many moving parts and coalition partners
- Recruited, trained, and supervised local staff, interns, and volunteers
- Facilitated meetings with full-staff, regional coalitions, and local staff
- Mobilized volunteer leaders to monitor local boards of elections, conduct voter registration, serve as poll monitors, lobby their legislators, implement digital organizing tactics, and work for a more equitable democracy
- Initiated and led efforts to advance racial, gender, and LGBTQ+ equity within the organization
- Planned and hosted moving screenings and book clubs around issues of racial justice, environmental justice, and democracy
- Assisted in developing onboarding processes
- Managed regional budget, monitored/reported upon grant objectives, and provided grants to community-based organizations
- Supported executive staff in managing projects and serving on hiring committees
- Met with elected officials to lobby for pro-democracy policy and engage them in accountability campaigns
- Worked alongside local boards of elections to address election administration concerns and establish early voting plans
- Used traditional organizing tactics such as phone banking, petitions, letter writing to encourage residents to vote, attend meetings, and contact their legislators

Vice-Chair, *MeckPAC - Mecklenburg LGBT PAC*, Board Member: November 2016-July 2018, Member: May 2012-July 2017

- Planned and facilitated board meetings, identifying skills present and lacking on board, planned professional development
 - Developed and implemented measures and training around racial equity and equity for women, disabled people, and trans people
- Evaluated events and programs for effectiveness
- Served as education chair for the campaign to pass Charlotte's nondiscrimination ordinance in 2015-2016 and provided education and organizing to move stakeholder groups including faith communities, small businesses, corporate leaders, and more to publicly support the ordinance and speak at city council
- Used mixed research methods to collect data and stories regarding anti-LGBTQ discrimination in public accommodations in Charlotte, 2015
- Fundraised through planning executing large events, email and social media campaigns, and direct calls to donors, approximately \$10, 500
- Distributed funds to endorsed candidates
- Led issue-based policy initiatives, such as a program with Mecklenburg's health department, to increase PrEP access in the county through a pilot initiative
- Wrote press releases and public statements regarding current topics, including attempts at HB2 repeal
- Lobbied and built relationships with local and state officials on issues impacting LGBTQ community
- Built a coalition with other progressive organizations in the Charlotte-Mecklenburg area and statewide LGBTQ organizations
- Directed endorsement process including writing candidate questionnaires, conducting interviews, and making announcements

Member, *Community Relations Committee*, November 2016-November 2017

- Appointed by Charlotte City Council
- Served on intercultural relations subcommittee, conducting research on public accommodations discrimination and impact of deportations on our community

HIV Medical Case Manager, *RAIN*, September 2014-September 2015

- Provided case management services to 55-60 adults living with HIV
- Facilitated weekly adult support groups
- Equipped clients to advocate at the North Carolina General Assembly around policies that would impact their care
- Conducted grassroots and direct legislative advocacy related to HIV in economic and social policy
- Supervised social work interns

Adjunct Professor, *Johnson C. Smith University*, Fall 2014-Spring 2015

- Taught and supervised MSW students at Johnson C. Smith, an HBCU in Charlotte, NC

Clinical Coordinator, *Elon Homes and Schools for Children*. June 2013-September 2014

- Oversaw quality assurance, including conducting internal audits, ensuring equitable program implementation, and resolving compliance needs
- Supervised and trained interns, case managers, and foster parents in foster care policy and relevant issues including interracial foster care dynamics and LGBTQ+ youth in care
- Developed and conducted program evaluation standards, training, and services to fill gaps
- Implemented program for teens transitioning out of foster care and into independent living
- Promoted from foster care case manager to clinical coordinator

Case Manager/MSW Intern, *Children's Home Society*. August 2012-May 2013

- Provided case management services to youth in foster care, including transition to independent living, and court support
- Trained foster parents to work with youth in foster care from diverse backgrounds and how to talk with children in their care about healthy relationships and sex education

Intensive Adult Outpatient Therapist/MSW Intern, *Novant Behavioral Health*. May 2012-August 2012

- Created individual treatment plans for adults with mood disorders
- Facilitated daily, 3 hour psychoeducational and support groups
- Advocated with insurance panels on behalf of patients

Founder and Co-Coordinator, *Prism Charlotte*. October 2012-March 2016

- Developed and oversaw strategic plan, structure, and program evaluation methods
- Developed programming, events, and services for LGBTQ youth transitioning into young adulthood
- Led fundraising and grant-writing efforts
- Developed and maintained social media strategy
- Awarded *Q-Notes* "Best of Charlotte" award for Best Social/Support Group in 2014

Program Assistant/BSW Intern, *Time Out Youth*. June 2011-September 2013

- Worked with a program evaluation team to improve the impact of our discussion and support groups
- Served on a team to conduct a community needs assessment for LGBTQ youth. Assisted with survey creation and data analysis.
- Provided case management for LGBTQ youth, including crisis intervention and supportive counseling
- Facilitated nightly group meetings
- Conducted SafeZone trainings for schools and community organizations working with LGBTQ youth
- Assisted with grant writing and management

City Host/Summer Staff, *Center for Student Missions*. Summer 2008

- Hosted youth groups in Washington, DC on week-long service learning trips
- Worked closely with local organizations and agencies to schedule youth groups into their volunteer schedules
- Provided tours throughout city to monuments, historical places, and to discuss socio-economic issues impacting the residents of the city

Marketing Intern, *Girls Club YMCA*. 2007-2008

- Served as Director of Public Relations at Gardner-Webb University's Student YMCA
- Planned and executed Family Fun Run and festival
- Created a marketing plan for Girls Club YMCA in Shelby, North Carolina as intern through YMCA minor at Gardner-Webb University

Alumni Advancement Coordinator, *Gardner-Webb University*. August 2006-May 2008

- Helped guide fundraising efforts through university alumni and advancement departments
- Consistently led alumni direct caller program for direct fundraising

VOLUNTEER EXPERIENCE

Jail and Legal Support, *Charlotte Uprising*. September 2016-July 2017

- Helped train and schedule court support team
- Participated in jail and court support as well as moving resources to individuals arrested during local protests
- Provided legal observation through the National Lawyers Guild and the ACLU
- Participated in direct fundraising for Black trans femmes to cover shelter and other basic necessities

Policy Chair, Mecklenburg County Young Democrats. July 2013-December 2015

- Appointed by Charlotte City Council
- Served on intercultural relations subcommittee, conducting research on public accommodations discrimination and impact of deportations on our community

Third Vice Chair, Mecklenburg County LGBTQ+ Democrats. January 2010-July 2014

- Led fundraising efforts, including event planning and individual call campaigns
- Monitored policy

Volunteer, Charlotte Pride. August 2009-July 2017

- Served as Partner in Peace, community safety team
- Secured corporate and community sponsorships
- Processed vendor applications as they were submitted
- Led Charlotte Pride through strategic planning process
- Served as co-chair of Charlotte Trans Pride from September 2016-July 2017

Legal Observer, Feminist Majority Foundation. August 2009-May 2012

- Trained and scheduled legal observers and clinic defenders
- Filmed and documented anti-choice protester behavior at reproductive health clinics and used documentation in court as proof of *Freedom of Access to Clinic Entrances Act* violations
- Traveled between three Charlotte health clinics every Saturday morning for legal observation/volunteer management
- Served as secretary for the UNCC Feminist Union, managing multiple projects

Program Assistant Intern, McGill Baptist Church. May 2004-December 2007

- Provided support to youth
- Led Sunday School and youth meetings
- Produced and developed youth newsletter
- Facilitated parent committee
- Chaperoned youth trips

Youth Outreach Director, Habitat for Humanity, August 2005-May 2006

- Recruited teenage volunteers to Habitat for Humanity

TRAINING

Received	Conducted
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dismantling Racism Works • Campaign Management and Community/Issue Organizing (multiple) • Supervising and Team Management: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Managing to Change the World ○ Managing for Racial Equity, Inclusion, and Results • Popular Education • Direct Action <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Campaign Escalation ○ Marshaling ○ Security ○ Street Medic Training • Fundraising for Organizations and Campaigns 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Researching and understanding legislation and local policy • Organizing Strategy and Tactics • Accessing public information through the Freedom of Information Act • LGBTQ+ inclusion and intersectionality, best practices for a variety of audiences • Updates and Community Security against Extremists at Events • Program development and project management, MOCHA • Lobbying and Storytelling for advocacy • Power and Resource Mapping • Voting Rights and Registration

AUTHOR

“[Maintaining Hope](#),” *Q-Notes Carolinas*, May 26, 2023

“[From Uganda to Florida: An Introduction to the Christian Right’s Fascism through Scapegoating](#),” *Medium* March 23, 2023

“[Happy World Social Work Day from a Decade Post-MSW](#),” *Medium*, March 21, 2023

“[2022 rulings bring new hope for LGBTQ health care equality](#),” *Charlotte Observer*, December 26, 2020

[“Dinner, bathrooms, and a battle for safety,”](#) *Q-Notes Carolinas*, February 11, 2015

FEATURES AND INTERVIEWS

[“Reclaiming Transgender Appalachia w/Artie Hartsell,”](#) *Rednecks Rising*, November 24, 2022

[“We are all just walking each other home,”](#) *Spark Sessions Podcast*, April 18, 2021

[“Our People: Q&A with Mel Hartsell,”](#) *Q-Notes Carolinas*, August 16, 2016

[“Longer hours, more sites for early voting in Mecklenburg,”](#) *Charlotte Observer*, July 21, 2016

[“Survey seeks to gauge anti-LGBT discrimination in Charlotte,”](#) *Q-Notes Carolinas*, March 31, 2015

[“Discussion series to explore present and future of Charlotte’s LGBT community,”](#) *Q-Notes Carolinas*, October 21, 2014

[“25 turn out in Welcome to protest Klan’s message,”](#) *Winston-Salem Journal*, August 10, 2014

[“Voices for Progress,”](#) *Q-Notes Carolinas*, March 14, 2014

QUOTES AND MENTIONS

[“State Representative from Mecklenburg County Switching Parties,”](#) WCNC Charlotte, April 7, 2023

[“Conservatives claim equality for LGBTQ people violates their religious freedom,”](#) *The American Independent*, March 26, 2021

[“Today is our day’: Hendersonville celebrates first Pride event,”](#) Mountain Xpress, June 16, 2019

[“Charlotte granted the police sweeping powers for the Democratic National Convention. Will they finally give them up?”](#) *Charlotte Observer*, January 30, 2017

[“LGBT North Carolinians struggle in a post-HB2 world,”](#) *Q-Notes Carolinas*, August 26, 2016

[“See How the Internet Community Brought Down That Viral Fat-Shaming Video,”](#) *Teen Vogue*, September 8, 2015