Pride in STEM is a U.K.-based charitable trust “run by an independent group of LGBT+ scientists and engineers from around the world.” It was founded in 2016 by Dr. Alfredo Carpineti, his husband Chris, and Matt Young, a graduate researcher at the University of Nottingham. Here, OSA interviews Dr. Carpineti to learn more about Pride in STEM and LGBTSTEM Day. The OSA Foundation is offering grants to student chapters interested in organizing events around LGBTSTEM Day 2019 through the OSA Grants Database.

**OSA:** How did Pride in STEM start and how did the idea for LGBTSTEM Day come about?

**Dr. Alfredo Carpineti:** A group of friends and I wanted to march in the 2016 London Pride Parade, but to register as a marching group, we needed a website and an ethos. And so Pride in STEM was created. In the weeks that followed we began to receive a lot of emails asking for advice and support on LGBT visibility. We felt a bit out of our depth but worked to pull together online resources. In doing this, we found that very little existed. Given the amount of time we were dedicating to this project, it was suggested that we become a charitable trust so that people could donate money in order to create the needed resources.

One of the first things we did was starting these events called Out Thinkers which gave LGBTQ+ researchers a place to hold informal talks about their work in various settings ranging from bars, to universities, to museums. The events are still happening and are quite successful with one happening almost every month. After a few of these, we were contacted by LGBT researchers at CERN and other groups who wanted to start a day of visibility. We thought this was an excellent idea and went about emailing every organization and contact we could think of to gain support.

In the first few months, we had six or seven organizations agree to sponsor LGBTSTEM Day, and by the time last year’s event was announced, in March 2018, dozens organizations had signed on by providing their logo for use on the LGBTSTEM Day website and agreeing to be active in the social media discussion. When the event took place, organizations did a lot to showcase the events and talks they had promoting LGBT in STEM.

**How do you think 2019’s LGBTSTEM Day will be different?**

In 2019, we’re asking a little more from sponsors. In addition to the logo and conversations on social media, we’re asking for communication from a high-level employee in each sponsoring organization showing support for the initiative. Last year, we received feedback from participants that the events and online discussions were great, but they didn’t feel they had buy-in from the higher-ups. Hopefully, this new requirement will change that.

We did really well with social media engagement last year, so we hope that continues. We will have a new, longer video this year and the discussion will be centered on the changes people would like to see.
in STEM. We’re hoping to see more events this year, no matter what size they are. We’ll have an event page online showing worldwide events in order to help with outreach efforts.

**What is your hope for the future of the event?**

Ultimately, I hope we go beyond diversity and inclusion and into belonging in order to create a place for LGBTQ+ people to thrive.

In terms of the event, we’d ideally talk about these issues all year and not just on the one dedicated day. I encourage people to do events during a time that is good for their schedule and allows for the most engagement.

We hope that there will be a continued increase in community engagement and plan to email more organizations to get them involved. Eventually, we would like for this to be something that is automatically supported with events on a regular basis. We would like this to become completely community run.

**In a larger sense, what are the key elements to greater acceptance of LGBTQ+ people in STEM?**

Recently, there was a study that said LGB students in STEM are 10 percent less likely to continue that than their straight peers due to a lack of role models and no sense of belonging. By being role models and creating this community, we can show that some of the battles have already been fought and give support to STEM students by encouraging them to continue in their studies.

LGBTSTEM Day is an important component of the global push to increase diversity and inclusion in STEM. In order to be truly successful, we need an intersectional approach that considers ethnicity, social class, gender, sexuality, and ability. We need to have a frank conversation about privilege and about barriers to STEM. We need changes in making STEM careers truly for everybody and making sure organizations invest in making anyone belong in their careers.

**What advice would you give to someone that identifies as LGBTQ+ and is considering a career in STEM?**

If you are LGBTQ+ and you want to be in STEM, do it. If you have questions or doubts do get in touch. There’s a community out there that can help you and where you can belong. We are out there. Reach out to us. We want to support each other and make changes to find better ways to do science together.

For more information about Dr. Carpineti, visit his [website](#) and follow him on Twitter and Instagram @DrCarpineti.