Today, October 11th, is National Coming Out Day. Every year on this day, we celebrate coming out as LGBTQ (lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer). National Coming Out Day, was founded on October 11th, 1988 by Robert Eichsberg and Jean O’Leary to mark the anniversary of the 1987 March on Washington for Lesbian and Gay rights. We use this day to raise awareness about the LGBTQ community and issues that are important to us and our families. Something relatively unique to the LGBTQ identity is that it is largely invisible; you don’t know if someone is LGBTQ unless they tell you or “come out”. We recognize the importance of being “out” about our identities so that we can be visible members of our communities and society that are worth being counted, deserving of equal rights and opportunities, and loved in every way that our heterosexual and cisgender friends and family members experience. We also recognize that for many LGBTQ folks, they don’t feel safe to “come out” or share their true identities with their family, their workplace, or their community.

At Children’s Minnesota, we recognize and celebrate our employees and our patients and families that are part of the LGBTQ community. We hope that within our walls, staff will always feel safe to bring their whole identities to work, and that families will feel safe and cared for in their true identities during their time with us. We invite you to join us in celebrating National Coming Out Day by wearing a visible sign of LGBTQ support (our Children’s PRIDE rainbow buttons are a good first step!), joining us outside the Starz café for a donut and some conversation, and taking a moment today to learn about our community or our identities a bit more so that you can be an active ally today and every day. Please check out the resources on StarNet: [LGBTQ Competency Resources](http://starnet.childrenshc.org/departments-and-committees/human-resources/culture-competency-builders/) and check out any of the following websites where you can learn more: [www.hrc.org](https://www.hrc.org/), [www.genderspectrum.org](https://www.genderspectrum.org/), [www.pflag.org](http://www.pflag.org/)

If you would like to become a member of the PRIDE ERG (and receive communications and event invitations and your PRIDE rainbow button!) please click here for the [Employee Resource Group Form](http://starnet.childrenshc.org/forms/empresourcegroups.php).

Thank you for joining together with me to make Children’s a safe space for me and others in our community. Here is a short piece about my own identity to share with all of you in recognition of today:

I am from growing up in a Midwestern town, where you didn’t ask and didn’t tell and almost everyone minded their own business.
I am from a strict Catholic family, where we didn’t talk about being gay and thoughts of homosexuality were considered a sin.
I am from assumptions about what it means to be a girl. I am from defying those assumptions, and being a “tomboy” with dirty jeans and skinned knees, and parents who encouraged me to follow my passions and strengths.
I am from placing all of my dresses on my parent’s bed in third grade and proudly declaring I was done wearing those, thank you very much.
I am from not going to high school dances, and sometimes pretending to “like” a boy, so that I could fit in with my peers.
I am from finding solace in the meditation of Catholic prayers and joy in the songs of my Christian youth group, only to feel an intense need to walk away from religion as I discovered my sexual identity when I left home for college.
I am from the fear of coming out to my parents, my sister, my grandparents, my aunts, my uncles, my friends, my basketball teammates, my youth group leaders and anyone and everyone I could think of, and wondering if they would all hate and disown me.
I am from parents who love me. A sister who admires and adores me. Grandparents who eventually came around.
I am from being chased and taunted and physically assaulted for being visibly gay in the small town where I went to college.
I am resilient and I am from finding my place and my strength and my voice as a queer person in my young twenties
I am from finding friends who would become family as part of creating my LGBTQ community as a young adult.
I am from wondering if I would ever have equal rights under the law and then watching miraculously as gay marriage became legal in my home state of Iowa, then in Minnesota and then recognized by our federal government.
I am from creating the family that I always dreamed I would have, despite the world and the media and hate telling me that I didn’t deserve love or children or equality.
I am from the pure joy of holding my children in my arms in the seconds after they were born and hearing them call my name down the hall each morning as they wake up.
I am from continuing to define what it means to be a family, for my children, and for the world.
I am from still not fitting in. I am from getting kicked out of women’s restrooms, and “what can I get you, sir?”
I am from wearing bowties in a world that still wants me to wear dresses.
I am from not caring what other people think about my haircut or my clothes but instead learning to love what makes me unique and celebrate my sexual and gender identity as I continue to break down expectations.
I am from the trauma of hearing about LGBTQ folks gunned down at Pulse, Orlando, from the inhumanity of a president who seeks to erase my identities and my community, from the uneasiness of watching my rights debated at the supreme court and wondering if we will ever be fully protected under the law.
I am from using my life experience to advocate for others, and in particular for children and teenagers who are still on their path to finding themselves and their place in the world.
I am from justice for all and a never ending drive for equity.
I am Dr. Angela Kade Goepferd.
I am queer and gender diverse.
I am Children’s.