

Amy L. E. Jones, LSW (she/they) is the Co-Founder and Co-Head Instructor at Culture of Safety, LLC in Rogers Park. Along with their spouse, Amy teaches Empowerment-Based Self Defense and Jin Sei Ryu Karate-Do to kids and adults throughout Chicago. Amy was drawn to OWL after reading a journal article about an Empowerment-Based Self-Defense program that incorporated OWL curriculum for college students, and reduced the incidence of assaults against them by 63%. She is passionate about giving people tools that help them feel (and be) safe, strong and respected in all aspects of their lives, and OWL is a powerful way to accomplish that goal! Amy also occasionally dances randomly, usually while deep in thought.

Hal Patnott (He/Him/His) is the Rainbow Services Librarian at the Oak Park Public Library. He is passionate about OWL because the program provides an honest, inclusive, and affirming education that encourages young people to explore their identities and set healthy boundaries.

Elizabeth Jarpe-Ratner (she/her/hers) has two children ages 7 and 10 and has lived in Oak Park for almost 10 years. By day Elizabeth is on faculty at the University of Illinois at Chicago (UIC) School of Public Health. In addition to teaching public health professionals, she works with several local partners on research and evaluation, focusing on using data to support the implementation of policies and practices to promote health equity. She recently worked with Chicago Public Schools to update their sexual health curriculum based on an evaluation she led. Elizabeth loves podcasts, hiking with her family, and trying new foods and restaurants (sadly this is currently limited to takeout).

Valerie Hughes (she/her/hers) is a therapist in private practice who started working with OWL in grad school. She is passionate about OWL, because it is the exact opposite of the awkward, uninformative slideshow of fear from the sexuality education of her youth. She loves animals and is good at making friends with people's pets. She will soon be living with a beekeeper and hopes to learn to take care of bees. She would one day like to apprentice in a trade like carpentry or tattooing and find the histories of these professions very interesting. She would also get a PhD, but fear she may become too egotistical with the title of "doctor."

Sierra Harris (she/her/hers) is currently studying to get my Masters in Industrial-Organizational Psychology at The Chicago School, which strangely enough, is what brought her to OWL. The school was hosting a Volunteer Fair and after doing some more research on the organization, she fell in love with their mission and has been facilitating ever since. She moved to Chicago almost 2 years ago from Georgia so please bear with her as she is still not a "local".

Dave Willard (he/his/him) has been teaching OWL for about 10 years. At first, it was a volunteer opportunity as a parent in the Religious Education program at Unity Temple. Dave now takes every opportunity he can to facilitate OWL classes and learns something new every time. In his professional life, Dave works in Technology Management. In his spare time, he likes to sing, read, write music and cook.

Aaron McManus was born and raised in Oak Park, spent a decade on the West Coast, and came back home to raise his child here. He's worked with kids in settings ranging from charter school in Oregon to detention center in California to wilderness therapy in Alaska... and more. During the day Aaron works for an anti-bias corporate training organization, and loves to escape into the woods whenever possible.

Omega Buluran (He/His/They) I am the Oak Park Our Whole Lives (OWL) Technical Support Coordinator for the parent workshops. I have been involved with Oak Park OWL since 2019 as a co-facilitator. I have co-facilitated workshops for 4/5th grade students at the Oak Park Friends School and Holmes Elementary School. Outside of Oak Park OWL, I am a graduate of Dominican University. I majored in Psychology and double minored in English and the Study of Women and Gender. My motivation in life is to promote education, health, and well-being for under-served and under-represented communities. I am transgender, part of the LGBTQ community, and Asian American. My continuous support of Oak Park OWL has stemmed from believing that open and honest communication about sex education is so valuable to a growing person. It's something that I wish I had learned growing up as I explored my gender and sexual identity. My involvement with Oak Park OWL has shown me the value of my experiences related to sexuality and the role I serve as an educator within Oak Park OWL and elsewhere.