

GEMMA HOLGATE

COMMUNITY ADVOCATE

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

I am a passionate advocate for LGBTQ+ rights with lived experience, both as a member of the LGBTQ+ community and as a parent of queer kids. I lead a LGBTQ+ advocacy nonprofit in Howard County supporting queer youth through a strong partnership with HCPSS. I worked in various engineering roles with increasing responsibility over a 16-year career before leaving the workforce to focus on family and community advocacy opportunities.

KEY STRENGTHS

- Relationship development
- Problem solving
- Financial planning
- Empathy and understanding
- Integrity and commitment to excellence

CORE SKILLS

- Community connection
- Technical and analytical analysis
- Leadership and responsibility
- Clear communication

ACADEMIC BACKGROUND

University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign

Master of Science, Mechanical Engineering
August 2015

The University of Texas at Austin

Bachelor of Science, Mechanical Engineering
May 2004

WORK / VOLUNTEER EXPERIENCE

Community Allies of Rainbow Youth

President (2024-current) / Treasurer (2021-2024)

- Lead Howard County-based LGBTQ+ advocacy organization.
- Provide public presence for organization at community events such as Pride festivals, TDoV, and HCPSS partner events.
- Engage in state-level advocacy in Annapolis, including presenting to the LGBTQ+ Caucus.
- Develop budget and provide quarterly reports on the financial health of the organization.
- Write successful grants in partnership with HCPSS to get \$41,000 over two years through the Howard County YEP! grant program for youth programming.
- Develop and administer candidate questionnaires to help educate voters about candidate's positions on issues that impact the LGBTQ+ community.
- Coordinate Rainbow Ribbon School program development and annual review.

Operating Budget Review Committee

Secretary and Committee Member | September 2025 - current

- Advise Howard County Board of Education on matters pertaining to the operating budget.
- Meet with HCPSS central office and executive staff to better understand issues impacting the school system budget.
- Compile and distribute meeting minutes.

General Electric / Baker Hughes

Engineering Manager and Senior Engineer | April 2011 - September 2020

- Responsible for the design, development, and qualification testing of surface wellhead equipment, including gate valves, chokes and actuators in compliance with American Petroleum Institute specification 6A.
- Manage multiple engineering teams, including other engineering managers.
- Mentor and coach employees in both technical and career topics.
- Manage training plan and budget for the department.
- Holder of 4 US Patents for oil & gas equipment.

Wood Group Pressure Control

Lead Engineer | September 2004 - April 2011

- Responsible for the design, development, and qualification testing of surface wellhead equipment, including gate valves, chokes and actuators in compliance with American Petroleum Institute specification 6A.
- Analyze new and existing designs including Finite Element Analysis, Computational Fluid Dynamics and industry standard calculation methods. Tools used include ANSYS, MathCAD, and STAR-CCM+.
- Design and oversee product validation testing including hands-on experience.
- Engineering support to worldwide service and manufacturing locations.