

# Same Hall: Gender Neutral Housing

Same Hall is a photo essay documenting life in the Gender Neutral Housing (GNH) communities at Ohio University in Athens, Ohio. As of 2018, there are currently 265 colleges and universities that have gender-inclusive housing options according to Campus Pride Trans Policy Clearinghouse, a research organization that tracks data about LGBTQ inclusive policies on campuses throughout the United States. While Gender Neutral Housing options are growing across colleges in the United States, it is still not available everywhere. In Fall of 2018, Ohio University added five more spaces like Smith Hall, where gender non-conforming students can live.

For several current residents in GNH, such as Alex, this inclusive dorm was the sole factor that brought them to Ohio University. This documentary project examines what life is like in these inclusive dorm communities, why students choose to live in them, and how they create a safe space for queer students to live on campus.

**Photos by Salgu Wissmath - 2018**



Name tags hang on the door of a dorm room in gender-neutral housing (GNH). Since 2010, Ohio University has offered students who are looking to live in a nongendered space the option of gender neutral housing.





“It was the most accepting and awesome place I’ve ever seen,” says Valerie, left, a student who identifies as straight and uses she/her pronouns, when speaking about gender-neutral housing.

B, Valerie, and Conner (left to right) hang out in Valerie’s room. They all chose to live in GNH again for their sophomore year. Valerie, switched to living in the mod in the first few weeks of her freshman year because of the welcoming environment.

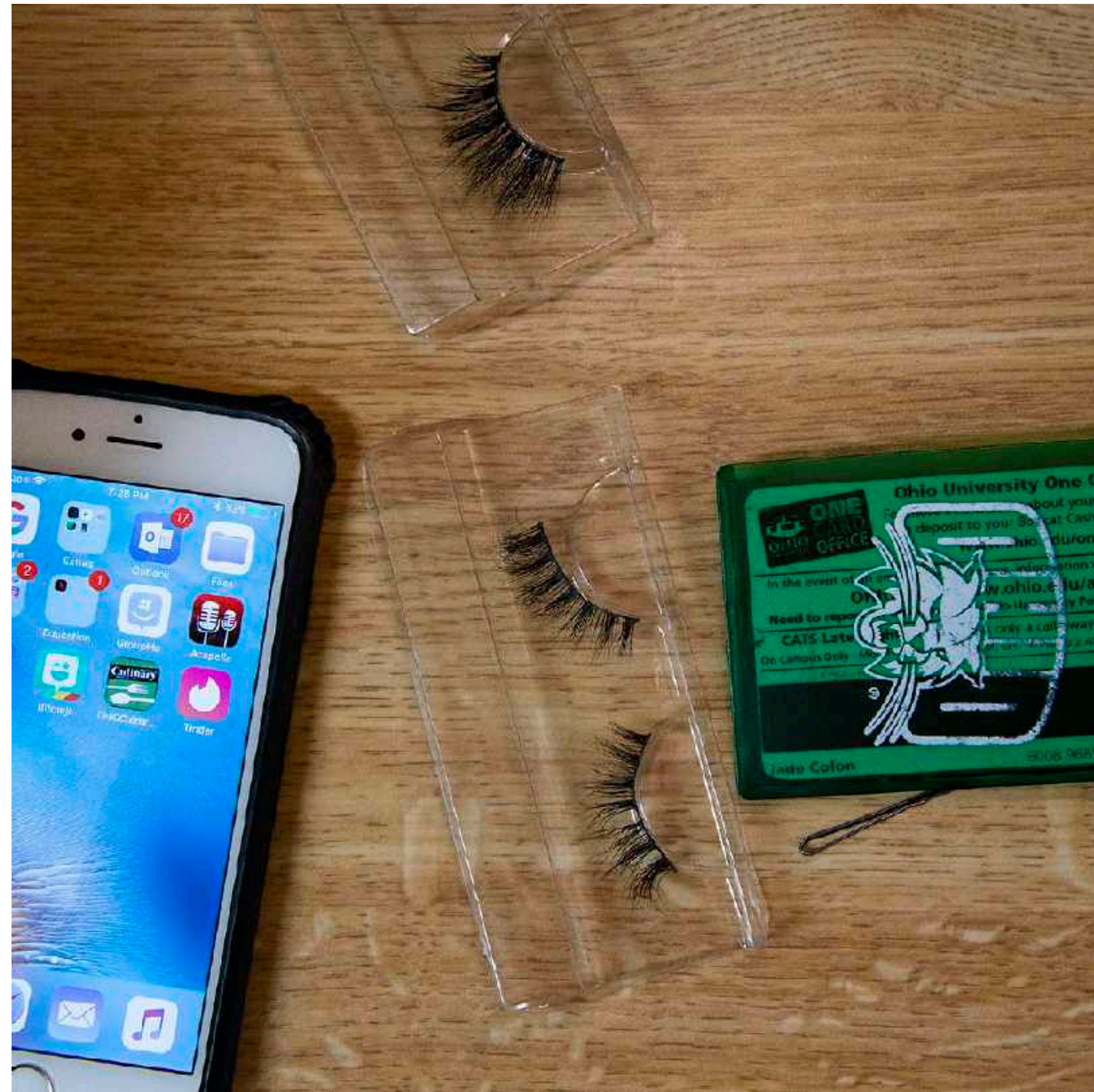




Conner (left) and Jacob (right) are two students who identify as gay, use he/him pronouns, and live in gender-neutral housing.

"We just get each other," Jacob says of his housemates. Jacob, who switched from another dorm into GNH a few weeks into the semester, says it's nice to live among a group of people who have similar backgrounds and who know what you are going through.





Jade, who identifies as bisexual and uses she/her pronouns, gets ready to go out on a Friday night.







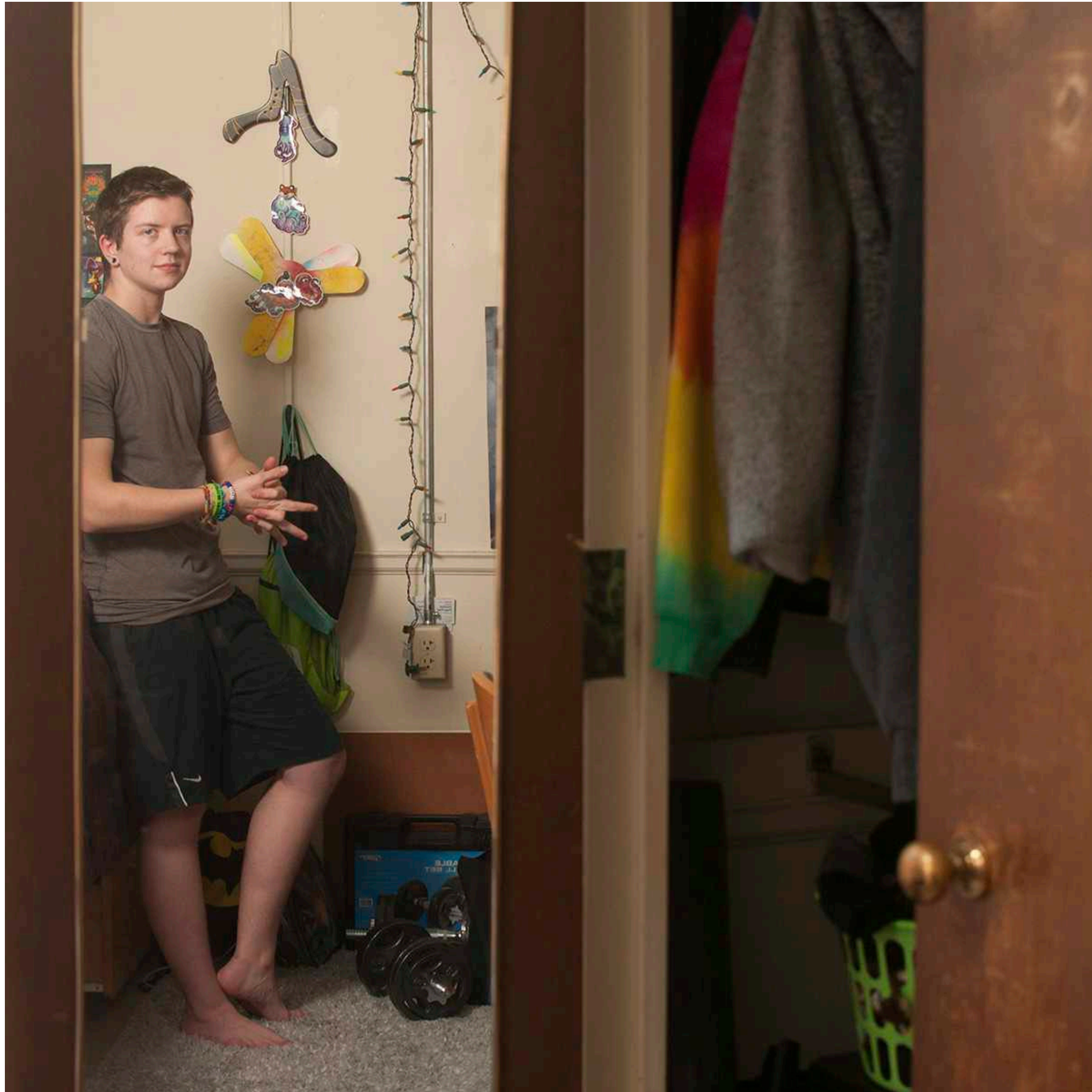
B identifies as a demiboy or trans boy and uses he/him and they/them pronouns. They're seen here after being woken up by some of their fellow housemates. "With our mod, no matter what gender, we can share the same hall," he said.





Residents of gender-neutral housing take selfies together in one of their house's nongendered restrooms on Halloween.





Taylor identifies as trans and says that he chose to attend Ohio University in part because of its gender-neutral housing option.

"I think it's important for people to feel comfortable [at] at least one place on campus," he says. "You kind of get that here."





Casper, a gender-neutral housing resident, jokes around in one of the house's nongendered bathrooms.





B is a gender-neutral housing resident assistant. They enjoyed the experience so much after their first year that they signed up for a second.





Gender-neutral housing residents B (left) and Alex (right), spend time together in their lounge. Alex only considered attending schools with gender neutral housing options.

“I got into a couple schools where I probably could have afforded it, but they didn’t have [gender-neutral] housing,” says Alex, who identifies as a trans man and uses he/him pronouns. “I didn’t want to consider that unless I had to, because I didn’t want to live like that—especially for two years.”