

PRIDE FOR YOUTH

A HISTORY OF SERVICE TO THE LONG ISLAND LGBTQ COMMUNITY

Yesterday...

- From its inception in 1971, Long Island Crisis Center was receiving crisis calls on its hotlines from LGBT youth who needed support because they felt isolated and had nowhere to turn. Suicidal ideation was high on these phone calls – out of proportion to the population when compared to their straight counterparts.
- Realizing that this was truly a segment of the community in crisis, the Crisis Center, in 1974, initiated gay peer counseling, which was the only advertised service for the population on Long Island.
- In 1993, Pride for Youth (PFY) was formally established. In 1995, it was one of only five agencies in New York State to be awarded a grant from the NYS AIDS Institute. This enabled Pride for Youth to create “The Coffeehouse,” the first social gathering place in the nation for LGBT youth in a suburban area.

Today...

- Over 1,000 LGBTQ youth access the *free* services offered by PFY. These services include: one-on-one and family counseling by licensed social workers; the Friday night “Coffeehouse”; HIV/STD testing and health services in collaboration with Northwell Health; the Mpowerment program for minority gay/bi men ages 17 – 30; a Program Leaders component where young people are tasked with providing sexual health education to their peers; weekly school-based counseling and Gay/Straight Alliance facilitation to LGBTQ youth of color in the Uniondale, Hempstead and Roosevelt School Districts; weekly support groups for Transgender and LGBTQ youth and a monthly support group for parents of LGBTQ youth;
- As a conduit for social change, PFY’s Community Education Program increases awareness and sensitivity to LGBTQ youth in schools throughout Long Island. It provides the opportunity to change minds and shape attitudes of students and staff whose behaviors often reflect preconceived stereotypes of their LGBTQ counterparts. In 2015, 7,450 students and staff attended workshops on *Understanding Homophobia, Understanding Transphobia* and *Creating a Safe Environment for LGBTQ Students*.
- On a daily basis, young people walk through PFY’s doors. Some are in deep crisis, some are lacking support in their communities, schools and homes, and some are desperate to make connections in the LGBTQ community to break out of isolation. For all of them, Pride for Youth is a place of equality and opportunity.

Tomorrow...

- The promise of acceptance, equality and opportunity comes true for today’s LGBTQ youth.
- *Their future is in our hands.*
- *Their future is our future.*

All net proceeds from Pride for Youth events go to enhance and enrich services and programs for participants and create new initiatives to meet the growing needs of the LGBTQ community.