

The Friends of GLBT Youth



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GLBT Youth



2007 Youth Pride Participants riding Duck Boat: South End Sara (Generously donated – Thanks!)

Photo: EDGE Boston www.EDGEboston.com

Table Of Contents

Gift of Pride, by
Kelly Lydon – pg 2

Improving Safety for GLBT
Youth, But Miles to Go, by
Dr. Richard Marshall – pg 3

Announcements - pg 3

Sponsorship Opportunities –
pg 4

Contact Information – pg 4

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*Administrative Assistant &
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Contact

The Friends of GLBT Youth
P.O. Box 960519
Boston, MA 02196

(617) 450-1333

friends@friendsofGLBTyouth.org

www.friendsofGLBTyouth.org

A Special Message from Our President

Joblin C. Younger

Dear Supporter:

Over the last year or so we have faced quite a storm. So much has happened in our disfavor this past year, but let's sing it from the rooftops...we are the winners!

On Thursday, May 11, 2006, the same day as our first Sunset Soiree, former Governor Romney (hold your applause) dissolved the Governor's Commission on Gay and Lesbian Youth. He later retracted the dissolution and denied that it had taken place. The next day, *The Boston Globe* reported this story on the front page and later that summer in July the Massachusetts State Legislature enacted the Commission on Gay and Lesbian Youth. Struggling with the politics of the Executive Office would no longer hamper the Commission, now the *state's* Commission and NOT the Governor's. That very day, former Governor Romney officially dissolved the Governor's Commission.

The Governor's Commission on Gay and Lesbian Youth was originally created under Republican Governor William F. Weld, and reaffirmed under Republican Governor A. Paul Cellucci. However, under former Governor Romney's administration the

Commission became strangled for funds, so The Friends was created to address that issue. 'Youth Pride must continue!', thought our founders. Since 2004 The Friends of the Governor's Commission has organized Youth Pride and supported it solely through private fundraising. Now that's a success story!

Now is the time to look forward. I am happy to report that we have officially changed our name to: "The Friends of Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual and Transgender Youth, Inc". We have a brand new website (see www.friendsofGLBTyouth.org) and you are reading our first-ever newsletter. Please join us on May 8th for the second Sunset Soiree—the money raised from this event will directly go to support the best Youth Pride this country has ever seen on May 10th. Come to support the youth on the Statehouse steps!

None of this would be possible without your generous support, and for that, I and the entire Board of Directors (not to mention the youth of the last five years), are forever grateful.

Sincerely,

Joblin C. Younger, President

The Gift of Pride

By Kelly Lydon

The thirteenth annual Youth Pride: "Make a Statement" was an exhilarating event lasting four and a half hours. Attendees who ranged in ages from 13-23 heard speeches from:

1. Gubernatorial candidates,
2. MA Dept of Health's John Auerbach,
3. Youth Pride award winners,
4. GLSEN Boston,
5. Soulful songstress Amanda Palmer (of the local duo The Dresden Dolls),

as well as a proclamation from both Governor Deval Patrick and Mayor Thomas Menino declaring Saturday May 12th, 2007 as Massachusetts Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual and Transgender Youth Pride Day. Thousands of youth marched through the city of Boston returning to the Boston Common bandstand for activities which included performances by: The Brookline Academy of Dance, Fly Upright Kite, and local youth favorite Medicated Kisses. The stage was also shared by the first ever MA Youth Pride Fashion Show which featured original fashion creations by up-and-coming youth designers.

FOUR AND A HALF HOURS!!!

Sometimes it takes me four and a half hours to get out of bed! For a lot of GLBT youth in MA, these few hours are the happiest and most exciting hours of their year. However for the MA Youth Pride Committee it is the shortest four and a half hours of our lives. Planning for this youth-run event starts taking place in early November with a committee of fifteen from all over the state who dedicate two Sundays a month to brainstorming, planning and creating everything that is Youth Pride. At the first meeting this creative board is told that their sole responsibility is to put every ounce of energy they have into planning the creative aspects of the event. The logistics and the nitty-gritty of the planning is my problem, not theirs.

I start planning the next Youth Pride event two days after the previous one. I have one year to create a committee, recruit performers and speakers, order merchandise, obtain permit after permit and handle any catastrophe, large and small, along the way. As Youth Pride approaches, I can't seem to talk about anything else. My partner always tells me that I don't love planning Youth Pride, I love complaining about planning it. The truth is I DO LOVE PLANNING YOUTH PRIDE! You have to love it, every last second of it; otherwise all the endless work and sleepless nights would prove to be complete and total masochism. Organizing this event is my passion and at my age I am lucky to be truly passionate about such a thing. I love seeing the youth come into the meetings with such excitement and enthusiasm as I had when I first started years ago. I love hunting for bargains so that the youth in attendance can have as much fun

Wanted!!

Board Members

In the spirit of representing the multicultural community we serve, we are seeking board members with experience working in diverse communities of underserved populations. In addition thereto, we are seeking to enhance female, people of color, bisexual, transgender and urban representation on our board. Please contact Friends@friendsofGLBTyouth.org to learn more.

Volunteers

We are always looking for dependable people to assist us in our goals of delivering an uplifting and educational experience for the youth attendees of Youth Pride, and we are in constant need of volunteer assistance at our fundraisers. Please contact volunteers@friendsofGLBTyouth.org and please note any special qualifications you feel would be important to our organization. We're always looking for people with special skills in accounting, auctions, event organizing and fundraisers.

Interns

Please contact Interns@friendsofGLBTyouth.org if you are interested in doing an internship with The Friends. Also, if you know someone who might be interested in being an intern for The Friends, please pass this information along.

activities to participate in as possible. I love listening to the tons of CD's I receive from hopeful bands trying to get their "big break" at Youth Pride. Even though I get so frustrated at times that I can't even think straight I NEVER GIVE UP because I don't want our youth to ever think that it's ok to give up your passion just because it can be frustrating. I never want any youth to think that.

Why else do I do it? Have you ever seen a sea of rainbows pouring through the city? Have you ever heard thousands of youth chanting with pride as loud as they can? On Youth Pride Day I feel like a great big gay Santa Claus knowing I've helped give these youth the biggest gift I could possibly give: The Gift of Pride.

Do you want to experience that with me? Please donate your time to this year's Youth Pride celebration! Call (617) 450-1333 or email youthpride@friendsofGLBTyouth.org to find out how you can get involved!

Massachusetts Youth Risk Behavioral Survey:

Improving Safety for GLBT Youth, But Miles to Go

by Richard Marshall M.D.

In June of 2007, the Massachusetts Department of Education released the most recent Massachusetts Youth Risk Behavior Study. This anonymous survey, the sixth in a decade, is carried out in selected high schools across the state. Over the ten-year period it has shown an improved health status for GLBT youth but raises important concerns for future work.

Sexual minority youth (defined as youth who have had sexual experiences or who have sexual identities that include same sex contact or attraction) comprise about one in twenty of the youth surveyed. They differ significantly from other youth and experience higher rates of:

1. threats of or actual physical violence in school
2. dating violence or sexual contact against their will
3. depression, self-harm and suicide
4. sexual risk behavior
5. Pregnancy

Even more alarming, these youth experience **twice the average rate of drug and alcohol use as well as STD diagnoses.**

All is not doom and gloom however. Over the last ten years, there has been a significant improvement in these statistics. Our Youth are now more able to talk to adults at home or at school if they have a problem. Comprehensive, science-based HIV/AIDS and sex education at school as well as discussing sex and prevention at home have led to a reduction in sexual partners and fewer STD diagnoses. Youth in schools with a Gay-Straight Alliance have decreased victimization at school and fewer suicide attempts. These are all victories that should make anyone in Massachusetts proud.

Despite improved conditions for GLBT youth over the last decade, much remains to be done, especially in addressing the needs of youth who do not identify as sexual minority youth, despite their sexual practices. One important finding was the discrepancy between identity and behavior. Forty-seven percent of sexual minority youth have had no same-sex sexual contact and forty-nine percent of youth reporting same-sex sexual contact identified as heterosexual. This finding emphasizes the importance of broad based efforts to educate high school students about issues related to sexual orientation and safe sexual practices. Targeting youth who only identify as minority misses half the youth who have same-sex experiences. This statistic is frankly unacceptable.

As the study shows, programs like Gay-Straight Alliances in schools are important to our youth. This is why The Friends does the work it does. We feel that events like Massachusetts Youth Pride aren't just a fun day on the Common but a chance to change the lives of youth living in the Commonwealth. Massachusetts Youth Pride doesn't just make youth feel good, it also helps them lead healthier and safer lives.



Announcing!!

The 2008 Sunset Soiree

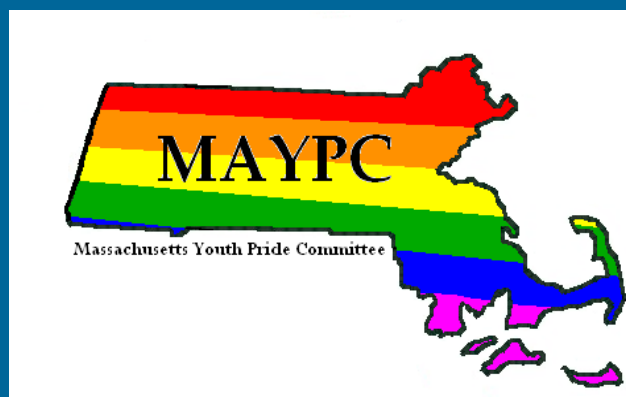
Please join us on **Thursday, May 8th, 2008** between 6:30 and 10:00 PM for our second Sunset Soiree at the Hotel Marlowe in Cambridge.

The 2008 Youth Pride

Please join us in supporting the youth attending Youth Pride by cheering on the parade route, especially at the steps of the State House, on **Saturday, May 10th.** See www.massyouthpride.org for more details as the Youth Committee formulates the day's festivities.

The New Friends of GLBT Youth Website

Please visit our newly designed website www.friendsofGLBTyouth.org containing information about our purpose, mission, pictures of past events and links to other community resources available to GLBT youth.



The Massachusetts Youth Pride Committee consists of high school students who work hard to make Youth Pride the best day of the year for thousands of GLBT youth across the state.

Contact Us



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Be A Sponsor

Youth Pride Must Go On!!

And it will with the amazing support of people like you. Please show your support for this important day by providing the funds for us to make this year even bigger and better than the last. Every donation helps!!



Sponsor a seat on a bus from Western MA.....	\$25
Sponsor ONE amplifier.....	\$250
Sponsor the Rainbow Balloon Arch.....	\$250
Sponsor Youth Pride T-Shirts for a WHOLE GSA.....	\$300
Sponsor a WHOLE bus.....	\$600

“Youth Pride changed my life. I realized I wasn’t alone when I attended my first Youth Pride over ten years ago. I had hope to hold on to and I was no longer afraid of my sexual orientation. Youth Pride helped me become who I am today.” – Anonymous



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Friend's Name
Street Address
City, State Zip Code