





Westchester

LGBT Advisory Board

Who We Are

- Scott Barber
- Nancy Dyer
- d. a. johnson
- Norman Friedman
- Alison Jaffe
- Joe Manzo
- Joann Prinzivalli
- Michael Sabatino
- Patti Smith
- Jim Stenerson
- Dennis Whetsel

and Yvette Christofilis, Director of LGBT Affairs, Ex Officio

*The community spoke
and we listened . . . again!*

Continued Community Visibility

- We are continuing the tradition of hosting an annual Town Hall meeting
 - *The LGBT community, families, friends, allies*
 - *LGBT and supportive mainstream organizations*
 - *Awards Program for service to the community*
 - *Open Mike Session to encourage community input*
- LGBT section of Westchestergov.com
 - *Westchestergov.com is **STILL** the only official government site in New York State to include a section dedicated to LGBT needs and issues*

Westchester Pride Coalition

Westchester Pride at Playland!

- The Advisory Board and Office of LGBT Affairs hosted LGBT Roundtable summits
 - *13 LGBT non-profit community-based organizations formed a coalition*
 - *LGBT Advisory Board and Office of LGBT Affairs assisted with facilitating coalition meetings and with securing Playland for the first event: Westchester Pride at Playland – 9/12/09!*
 - *Coalition members are here tonight!*
 - See them if you are interested in greater involvement

Human Rights Law *clarified* *now expressly includes transgender coverage*

- On April 13, 2009, the county legislature amended the definition of gender to include *gender identity and expression* as a protected class in the Human Rights Law
 - *Adopted UNANIMOUSLY in a bipartisan vote*
- Previously, the county passed a Fair Housing Act that already had the correct language

Youth - *Pride Works*

- PrideWorks for LGBT Youth Conference brings together educators, parents, students and youth workers,
 - *provides support for LGBT youth and addresses anti-LGBT bias*
- Over 600 people attend, more than half of them students
- PrideWorks for 2009 is scheduled for Tuesday, November 17, at the Westchester County Center in White Plains

Young Adults - *College Summits*

- There are now *TWO* LGBT College Summits (Fall and Spring) sponsored by the Advisory Board
 - *October 29, 2008 –Purchase College, SUNY*
 - 40 attendees & 6 institutions
 - **TOPIC:** How can LGBT students and groups unite and stay connected on campus?
 - *April 3–Fordham University Graduate School of Social Work in Harrison*
 - 30 attendees & 10 institutions
 - **TOPIC:** Challenges faced by LGBTQ students in Westchester
- Harassment issues at local colleges and nonprofits discussed
- The Summits are a valuable resource for communication and strength, with the county acting as an information hub

Training Government Employees

- Police (county and municipal):
 - *Training for Westchester Police Academy recruits is continuing in 2009*
 - *“In Service” training for Westchester County Police veterans will still be sought*
- Department of Social Services
 - *Child protective Services - all district offices*
 - *Adult Protective Services - entire staff*
 - *Working to establish an ongoing training program*

What Else Do We Do?

- Westchester County continues to fund the *Silver Connections* program for LGBT seniors
- Westchester County continues to work with LGBT people seeking to adopt or foster children
- Westchester County continues to fund an LGBT Helpline for the community

More That We Do

- LGBT Advisory Board and Office of LGBT Affairs maintains a *Speakers Bureau*:
 - *Offering speakers, presenters and facilitators for a host of LGBT issues free of charge*
- Westchester County is working with nonprofit domestic violence providers:
 - *The final goal—serving victims of same-sex domestic violence*
- Advisory Board and Office of LGBT Affairs continue to work with the county on initiatives and councils to help prevent the spread of HIV/AIDS



Suggestions

The Advisory Board
would like your input!

*DON'T FORGET TO FILL OUT A
SURVEY!*

WE WANT TO HEAR FROM YOU!

Suggestions

- Get more education out into the media about LGBT
- Try to tap into the local schools' GSA's, etc. to get the youth energized
 - *Tap into that energy*
- Should we look into immigration rights? Or is this something that can only be advocated on at the Federal level?

Suggestions (*continued*)

- Barry Kramer, a member of the Westchester County Human Rights Commission gave input to explain WC's Human Rights Law and detailed what the law covers. More info about what is covered is on their Web site: <http://humanrights.westchestergov.com/>
- Barry also mentioned that since 2005, the HRC 41 claims relating to LGBT issues
 - *15 are active*
 - *15 will have a hearing*
 - *3 to 4 were resolved positively for the claimant*

Suggestions (*continued*)

- A request was made to move a Bee Line bus route so that it will go along Bryant Ave between Mamaroneck Ave and North St.
 - *Justification: more than 200 groups meet at a facility along that route that includes youth and seniors*
 - *The numbers may justify such a route change*
 - *The Commissioner of Transportation?*

Suggestions (*continued*)

- American Foundation of Suicide Prevention wants to work with Westchester County and with nonprofits in Westchester
 - *LGBT and LGBT youth are disproportionately more likely to commit suicide than their mainstream counterparts*
 - *Very interested in working with the County and groups to do fundraising for suicide prevention*

Suggestions (*continued*)

- The Interfaith Task Force works in NYC with homeless shelters for LGBT youth
- The cutbacks in funding have severely affected these services for LGBT youth
 - *Many shelters can't even feed the youth*
- The Task Force is considering a food drive so that a drop-in center can at least feed the youth that seek shelter at the drop-in centers

Suggestions (*continued*)

- Center Lane, a community center for youth 14 to 21 gave input
 - *Announced their annual Gay Prom at the Memorial United Methodist Church on Saturday, June 20 from 8 p.m. to midnight*
 - *They are also looking for organizations that are specifically for LGBT people of color*

Suggestions (*continued*)

- The Advisory Board was encouraged to start an initiative to offer LGBT sensitivity training to municipal police officers
 - *Incidents were mentioned that detailed White Plains Police Officers discriminating against a citizen who was gay and disabled*
 - *The discrimination was experienced on both levels*

Suggestions (*continued*)

- Westchester County hospitals must recognize the same-sex partners of their patients
 - *It was reported that a number of hospitals had trouble with recognizing the same-sex partners of the patients*
 - *White Plains Hospital was generally okay*
 - *Westchester Medical Center has had problems with this issue.*

Suggestions (*continued*)

- Along with the Marriage Equality bill pending in the NYS Senate, there are also two major bills pending:
 - *Gender Expression and Identity Nondiscrimination Act (GENDA)*
 - *Dignity for All Student Act (DASA)*
 - *Participants were encouraged to use the paperwork present to write, call and e-mail their NYS Senators*

Suggestions (*continued*)

- Friday, June 12: In-district meeting with Senator Suzi Oppenheimer planned
 - *UPDATE: meeting was cancelled due to Senate power dispute*
- Create LGBT info and event calendar so all LGBT groups can know what is going on in the groups and the County
 - *Calendar will have links to the group Web sites*
 - *Westchester Pride Coalition is already working on this calendar idea*