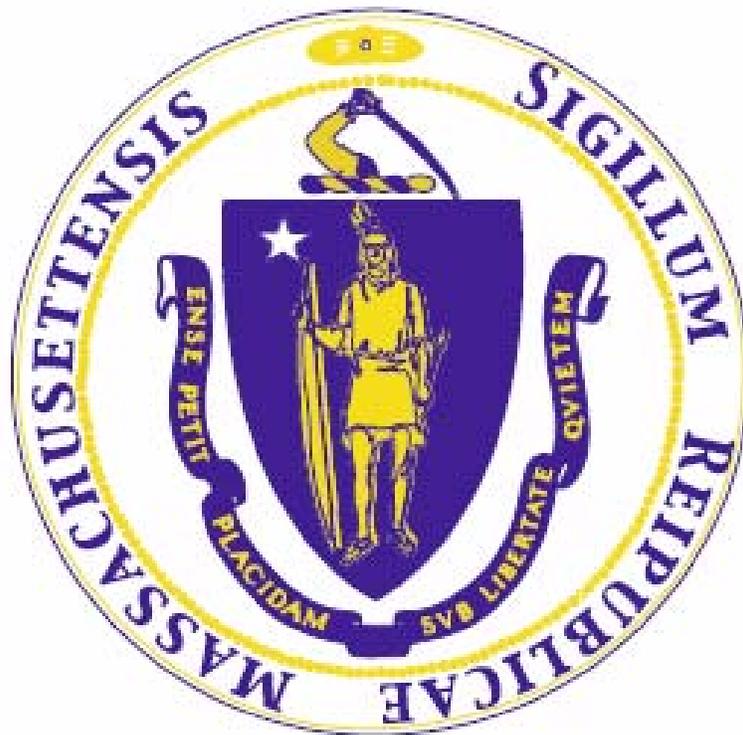


The Commonwealth of Massachusetts Commission on Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, and Transgender Youth

2008 Annual Report



Lisa Perry-Wood, Executive Director

Jason A. Smith, Chair

Eleni A. Carr, Vice-Chair

Grace Sterling Stowell, Vice-Chair

Jacob Smith Yang, Vice-Chair

Executive Summary

History and Structure

The Massachusetts Commission on Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual and Transgender Youth (MCGLBTY, “the Commission”) was created by the General Court in 2006.¹ Forty-one Commissioners were appointed in January 2007 representing twelve state Education, Public Health and GLBT organizations, and fourteen state regions. The Commission's leadership includes a Chair and three Vice-Chairs; all members meet quarterly as a full body and monthly in the following committees: Research, Evaluation and Practice, Government Relations, Human Services, and Education. An Executive Committee, comprised of the Commission Chair, Vice-Chairs, Committee Chairs, and two at-large members, meets monthly.

Mandate

The work of the Commission is to eliminate the disparities between GLBT youth populations and non-GLBT youth populations. The Commission adopts a public health approach, which focuses on the root causes of disease and injury in GLBT youth populations in Massachusetts. The scope of Commission activities includes:

- Reviewing current research, identifying disparities and disseminating that information publicly;
- Researching best practices for programs and services for GLBT youth populations;
- Making policy recommendations to state agencies: including MA Department of Public Health (DPH) and Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE);
- Supporting, testifying and crafting legislative initiatives to redress disparities;
- Advocating for increased funding to support programs for GLBT youth populations;
- Recommending targeted use of state agency funds to best improve the public health of GLBT youth populations, and
- Serving as the connecting point regarding policy targeting GLBT youth populations in the Commonwealth, through its diverse organizational and regional representation.

¹ The Commission was created in an Act of Jul. 1, 2006, ch. 139 §4, codified in Mass. Gen. Laws ch. 3 §67 (2006).

Summary of Accomplishments - Goals, Actions and Outcomes for FY 2008

Goal #1: Building a Strong and Stable Commission Infrastructure, with Staff

Action: A job description, recruitment and hiring process were designed by the Executive Committee. Candidates were interviewed and a final candidate was selected.

Outcome: An Executive Director was hired by the Executive Committee, as recommended by the Commission Chairs, in March 2008.

Goal #2: Creating a Road Map for GLBT Youth Health through Actionable Annual Reports

Action: All Commission Committees set annual goals for GLBT Youth Health, as reported in 2007 Annual Report.

Outcome: Reports on progress to date of committee work in 2008 Annual Report.

Goal #3: Strengthen GLBT youth advocacy and leadership through the Commission

Action: It was decided that in lieu of a separate Youth Caucus for the Commission, youth should be recruited and appointed as full members of the Commission.

Outcome: Two youth from Massachusetts high schools and four youth in colleges were appointed as full members of the Commission in February 2008.

FY 2008 MCGLBTY Activities

The following are activities carried out by the Commission in FY 2008.

- Quarterly Full Commission Regional Meetings held in four MA cities: Hyannis, Worcester, Brockton and Springfield. [See Attachments]
- Community Youth Forums held at each regional meeting, to gather input from youth in local gay-straight alliances (GSA) and community-based GLBT youth groups.
- Work toward building collaborative working relationships with state agencies: DESE, DPH, and the Department of Social Services (DSS).
- Review of GLBT-related research (i.e. Massachusetts Youth Risk Behavior Survey data) and best practices for work with GLBT youth in schools and in communities.
- Response to local events related to GLBT youth and equity issues, i.e. Milton and Acton-Boxborough Public Schools. [See Attachments]
- Participation on panel for 4/30/08 press conference release of “Direct from the Field: A Guide to Bullying Prevention”, with DPH.
- Testimony provided by Commissioners for House Bill 1722, An Act Relative to Gender-Based Discrimination and Hate Crimes, “Transgender Rights Bill”. [See Attachments]
- Participation and official statement at 3/12/08 Lawrence King Memorial Vigil.
- Signed on to official letter in support of the MA Coalition for a United ENDA. (Employment Non-Discrimination Act: ENDA HB 2015) asking our Massachusetts Congressional Delegation to pass a fully- inclusive ENDA in this Congress and to oppose any version that leaves transgender people behind.

Report of the MCGLBTY Committee on Education

Acting Chair: Arthur Lipkin

In FY 2008 the High School and Higher Education Committees merged into the joint Committee on Education (EdC), in order to work more closely in collaboration on issues and concerns of GLBT youth in schools. Work of the EdC focused on two goals:

- 1) Create a Road Map for GLBT Youth Health
- 2) Strengthen GLBT youth advocacy and leadership through the Commission

Actions taken

In collaboration with DESE Leadership, the EdC reviewed the Safe Schools Program (SSP) for Gay and Lesbian Students Goals and Objectives, yearly RFP, and YRBS data to determine gaps in understanding the needs and capacities of all GLBT youth. The committee advocated development of supplementary research tools to capture GLBT youth populations data by school and to include underrepresented populations (particularly Transgender Youth and Youth of Color). EdC members advocated for increased resources for GLBT youth programs in the annual state budget process and testified on behalf of the Transgender Rights Bill (HB1722), emphasizing GLBT youth population needs. The committee also referred parents in Milton to resources to resolve an equity issue in an elementary school and applauded Acton-Boxborough Regional High School's performance of the Laramie Project.

Preliminary Recommendations

There is a clear need for a director of the DESE Safe Schools Program (SSP) for Gay and Lesbian Students, which was not met in FY2008. EdC will work with DESE leadership to hire a full-time SSP director. With the new DESE Commissioner and his leadership team, EdC will continue to review SSP Goals and Objectives, the yearly RFP, and YRBS data to determine gaps in understanding the needs and strengths of all GLBT youth. The committee will also continue to educate and encourage DESE to alter the statewide YRBS to capture data on all GLBT populations. EdC will continue to advocate for development of supplementary research tools to capture GLB youth data by school and to include underrepresented populations (particularly Transgender Youth and Youth of Color).

Report of the MCGLBTY Committee on Government Relations

CHAIR: Eleni A. Carr

In FY 2008 the Government Relations Committee (GRC) continued its efforts to:

- 1) Educate legislators on health disparities for GLBT youth populations in the Commonwealth, and
- 2) Advocate for appropriate state budget funding for GLBT youth in schools and in the community.

Actions taken

GRC worked with legislators and advocates to develop plans to address FY '09 appropriation and budget priorities. The Committee conducted outreach to key legislators to educate them regarding the status of GLBT youth populations across the Commonwealth. Priorities were identified and developed to impact the largest numbers of youth, connecting the most pressing needs to critical resources. GRC identified new initiatives to address violence prevention and the high rate of GLBT youth homelessness, especially for youth of color, and provided testimony to the Executive Office of Health and Human Services (EOHHS). Members of the Committee also developed close working collaborations with the MA Gay and Lesbian Political Caucus (MGLPC) and MassEquality.

Preliminary Recommendations

In FY 2009 GRC will seek to fully educate the state legislature regarding needs and disparities for GLBT youth populations. Pursuant to this, GRC will review and introduce legislation to support all GLBT youth. Rebuilding and expanding the GLBT youth service infrastructure to best meet needs across the state will be a high priority for committee work going forward. GRC will also work to develop relationships with city municipalities to support services for GLBT youth populations.

At the same time, building relationships with the Governor's office, as well as Commissioners of state agencies and Commissions such as the Massachusetts Commission Against Discrimination (MCAD), will ensure that GLBT youth issues are represented at all levels of state government.

Report of the MCGLBTY Committee on Human Services

CHAIR: Hutson Inniss

In FY 2008 the Human Services Committee (HSC) pursued the following goals:

- 1) Gather information from state agencies providing services to the Commonwealth's GLBT youth populations.
- 2) Make recommendations regarding state budget appropriation for programs and services for GLBT homeless youth.

Actions taken

Letter submitted to the Commissioner of the MA Department of Public Health (DPH), asking to review formal and informal policies and procedures for working with GLBT youth populations, including those related to protected health information. This also included regulations and any tacit agreements, as well as internal rules and sensitivity training for all management, staff and associated vendors. The agency's data collection policies (including those on information privacy) and any ongoing research were also queried. A meeting with DPH administration followed this letter; all of the questions were reviewed and discussed at that time. Letters requesting comparable information have been drafted to send to the Executive Office of Health and Human Services (EOHHS) and the Department of Social Services (DSS).

Research and creation of a report on emergency youth shelter services for MA homeless GLBT youth under 24 [See Attachments]: members of the HSC contacted comparable programs for GLBT homeless youth across the country to research costs and best practices. HSC also attempted to research statistics on homeless GLBT youth populations in Massachusetts. The committee met with the DSS Diversity Coordinator regarding collaboration with the Commission, as well as policies and procedures regarding GLBT youth and families. This was followed by a conference call with area DSS office liaisons.

Preliminary Recommendations

Strong working relationships with all MA departments that fall under the EOHHS need to be in place, in order to monitor policies and procedures regarding GLBT youth and families.

Report of the MCGLBTY Committee on Research, Evaluation and Practice

CHAIR: Jessica Flaherty

In FY2008 the Research, Evaluation and Practice Committee (REP) emphasized increasing Commissioners' competencies around GLBT youth populations. In FY2009 the committee will change its name to the Committee on Community Interventions to more accurately reflect the focus of its work. For FY 2008, REP intended to:

- 1) Improve collective ability to assess environmental risk as well as to assess racial/ethnic, gender, and socio-economic system disparities of GLBT youth in Massachusetts;
- 2) Improve the infrastructure for increased participation of youth, people of color and transgender identified and/or gender non-conforming people on the Commission.

Actions Taken

REP recommended four areas for in-service training: Transgender Youth Identity and Experience, Anti-Racism, Bisexual Youth Identity and Experience and Youth Development. The Commission approved and scheduled a mandatory full commission training on transgender issues for May 19, 2008. A training focusing on disparities and race/ethnicity has been scheduled for FY2009. The Commission has not approved the final two recommended focus areas.

Preliminary Recommendations

Data on GLBT youth populations is insufficient; more resources should be devoted to surveillance. Current surveillance, while capturing many GLBT youth populations, is insufficient for reliable and comprehensive policy recommendations. REP believes current systems leave many GLBT youth undocumented, e.g. youth outside of school settings, transgender youth, and youth for whom English is not a primary language. Surveillance systems should be widened to include more than survey data and should measure a wider-spectrum of health indicators in GLBT youth populations. Additionally, more research must be devoted to identifying and measuring environmental determinants of GLBT youth population health. Environmental determinants must include, at a minimum, social, community, legal, policy, and physical determinants.

MCGLBTY Commission Members Committee Appointments

The Chairs of the Commission have appointed the following:

Executive Committee

Jason A. Smith, Chair
Eleni A. Carr
Jessica Flaherty
Hutson Inniss
Arthur Lipkin
Gunner Scott
Jean Chapin Smith
Grace Sterling Stowell
Jacob Smith Yang

Committee on Education

Arthur Lipkin, Acting Chair
Doug Bounds
Abigail Carpenter-Winch
Ken Garber
Matt Goldsmith
Stan Griffith
Donna Harlan
Chris Mattocks
James Maynard
Michael McDonald
Alex Morse
Ralph Noon
Mark Weber
David Wilson

Committee on Human Services

Hutson Inniss, Chair
Ralph Freidin
Paige Kruza
Greg Miller
Rhiannon O'Donnabhain
Gunner Scott
Jonathan Starr
Kirsten Steinbach
Rich Vaden
Judy Vreeland

Committee on Research, Evaluation and Practice

Jessica Flaherty, Chair
Chelsea Amato
Luigi Ferrer
Marisa Howard-Karp
Michael Langlois
Richard Marshall
Marty Martinez
Marta Rivera Paczynska

Committee on Government Relations

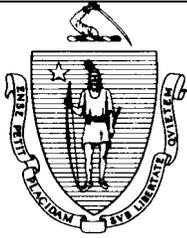
Eleni A. Carr, Chair
Ed Byrne
Marty Martinez
Alex Morash
Averill Roberts
Ellyn Ruthstrom
Jean Chapin Smith
Al Toney
Armando Velez, III
Judy Vreeland

Ad-hoc Committee on Bylaws

Jacob Smith Yang, Chair
Hutson Inniss
Gunner Scott

May 2008

ATTACHMENTS



Commission on Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual and Transgender Youth

Administrative Office

c/o MA DPH - 250 Washington Street - 4th floor, Boston MA 02108
(617) 624-5485 • www.mass.gov/cgly

JASON A. SMITH

CHAIR

GRACE STERLING STOWELL

VICE-CHAIR

JACOB SMITH YANG

VICE-CHAIR

Representative Eugene L. O'Flaherty
Joint Committee on the Judiciary
State House - Room 138
Boston, MA 02133

29 February 2008

Senator Robert S. Creedon, Jr.
Joint Committee on the Judiciary
State House - Room 413C
Boston, MA 02133

Representative O'Flaherty: / Senator Creedon:

I write to you on behalf of the Massachusetts Commission on Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual and Transgender Youth ("Commission"). The Commission, in its role as GLBT youth and policy advisor to agencies of the Commonwealth, recognizes the importance of H.B.1722 and its passage. This bill addresses basic legal protections for young people in the Commonwealth and is a key step toward protecting the health, safety and welfare of all young people in Massachusetts.

In the past year, the Commission surveyed youth, students, teachers, parents, legislators, and communities on the needs of gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender youth. The Commission has traveled to Hyannis, Brockton, and Worcester, meeting people and hearing their concerns. In these surveys, in public meetings, and in meetings with students, youth, parents, and teachers, one commonality is clear: lack of protection for young people based on gender identity and expression is a major cause of concern, directly affecting the health and safety of *all* children.

The Commission has heard repeatedly from youth around the state that a key factor in the bullying and harassment they are subjected to is based on a perceived failure to conform to expected gender norms. This harassment, based on gender expression, is a disturbing and common experience for too many young people in the Commonwealth, regardless of sexual orientation. H.B. 1722 takes a strong step forward in dramatically improving the daily lives of young people in Massachusetts.

The Commission urges the passage of H.B.1722 as further demonstration of Massachusetts' commitment to equal rights and as an appropriate policy to protect the health, safety, and welfare of all young people in the Commonwealth.

I, as well as members of the Commission would be happy to meet with you and your colleagues or answer any questions you may have.

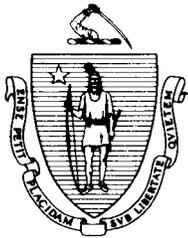
Respectfully,

Jason A. Smith, MTS, JD, Chair

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts Commission on Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual and Transgender Youth 10

Administrative Office c/o MA DPH - 250 Washington Street - 4th floor, Boston MA 02108

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JASON A. SMITH
CHAIR

**GRACE STERLING
STOWELL**
VICE-CHAIR

JACOB SMITH YANG
VICE-CHAIR

Dr. Magdalene P. Giffune
Superintendent of Schools
Milton Public Schools
25 Gile Road
Milton, MA 02186

October 18, 2007

Dear Dr. Giffune:

It has come to the attention of the Massachusetts Commission on Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual and Transgender Youth (MCGLBTY) that a situation concerning the physical and emotional safety of the child of a lesbian parent recently arose in the Milton Public Schools. We are concerned about the reports we have received, both through the media and anecdotally, regarding this incident.

The MCGLBTY strongly urges the Milton Public Schools to investigate the allegations in this situation and address any findings in a timely and thorough manner. Our office stands prepared to direct schools to resources for curriculum development, staff training, and/or conflict resolution.

We call upon the Massachusetts Department of Education to exercise its oversight through the Safe Schools Program, providing technical assistance and training to school systems to ensure that all children feel safe in their schools, regardless of their family heritage or sexual orientation.

Please feel free to contact me through this office should you require further assistance.

Respectfully,

Lisa Perry-Wood,

Chair, MCGLBTY High School Education Committee

Cc: Milton School Committee

John Bynoe, Associate Commissioner, Student Support, Career and Education Services, Mass. Dept. of Education



Commission on Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual and Transgender Youth

Administrative Office
c/o MA DPH - 250 Washington Street - 4th floor, Boston MA 02108
(617) 624-5485 • www.mass.gov/cgly

JASON A. SMITH
CHAIR

**GRACE STERLING
STOWELL**
VICE-CHAIR

JACOB SMITH YANG
VICE-CHAIR

November 2, 2007

Dr. William Ryan
Superintendent of Schools
Acton-Boxborough Regional Schools
16 Charter Road,
Acton, MA 01720

Dear Dr. Ryan:

On behalf of the Massachusetts Commission on Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual and Transgender Youth (MCGLBTY), I wish to commend you and your school committee for your unwavering support of the Acton-Boxborough High School production of *The Laramie Project*. The Commission recognizes that your stand on this issue was not taken without some risk of censure. We applaud your commitment both to the rights of students to perform dramatic productions of their choice and to the important message of this play.

It is our hope that the successful and well-received production of such works as *The Laramie Project* will inspire other school districts, cities and towns in Massachusetts to support such expression in their own region. Surely the safety of all youth, including those who identify as gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender, must be a high priority for all citizens, especially educators and youth workers, in the Commonwealth.

Please feel free to contact me through this office should you require further assistance.

Sincerely,

Lisa Perry-Wood,
Chair, MCGLBTY High School Education Committee

Cc: Acton-Boxborough Regional School Committee

Cape LGBT youth complain about lack of social spaces
By Ethan Jacobs – staff reporter
Thursday, July 19, 2007

On July 16 the Massachusetts Commission on GLBT Youth came to Hyannis to hold its summer meeting, the first meeting held by the new commission outside of Boston. The commission met in the headquarters of the Cape and Islands Gay and Straight Youth Alliance (CIGSYA), and one of the goals of the meeting was to learn about the issues facing LGBT youth and the programs that serve them on the Cape. During an ice cream social held after the meeting the commissioners chatted in small groups with the young CIGSYA members, and the youth said that across the Cape, even in the gay Mecca of Provincetown, LGBT youth have few places to kick back and connect with each other.

"On Cape Cod either you're over 21 or you don't exist. There's nothing for the under-21 crowd to do on Cape Cod. You have to go to Providence or Boston, and even in Boston there's not whole a lot," said Nicole Tompkins, a Plymouth resident finishing her final year of high school at Cape Cod Community College. Nick Mucciarone, a recent graduate of Dennis-Yarmouth Regional High School, agreed, saying that the problem extends beyond LGBT youth. He said in Provincetown there were so few places for young people to socialize that he worked with other youth to push for the creation of a skate park, but ultimately it was constructed a few towns over in Wellfleet.

"When I was in eighth grade I lived in P'town and there was nothing for our age range."

Tompkins, who is 19, said on a recent trip to Provincetown she and her friends were hoping to shoot a game of pool during daylight hours, before the nighttime club scene got in full swing, but everywhere they went they were turned away because they were under 21.

One of the few social outlets specifically for LGBT youth is CIGSYA itself, which has weekly meetings that draw a crowd of between 30 and 60 youth and monthly dances that bring in between 60 and 80 youth from around the Cape. Ashley Merithew of Wareham said she started coming to CIGSYA about two years ago after a friend brought her to a social event, and she's been coming back ever since. Amanda Diehl of Barnstable, who just finished her senior year, said she first got involved with CIGSYA back when she was 11 years old, first coming to the monthly dances and movie nights and then attending the weekly meetings. Tompkins said CIGSYA is one of the few social options for LGBT youth unless they try to sneak into an adult club.

"This is the only place you can go if you want to dance that's drug-free, [where] you don't have to get a fake ID, [where] you don't have to try and be hanging out with people who are three times your age," said Tompkins.

One of the other major problems is addressing homophobia in the schools. One of the schools with the worst reputations for homophobia on the Cape, according to the youth, is Provincetown High School.

"When I lived in P'town the high school there is actually very homophobic because it's so open in their town that the kids actually get picked on outside of it," said Mucciarone.

As far as ways to address the issues facing LGBT youth, several said that having the LGBT speaker's bureau SpeakOut come to their schools helped improve the school climate. They also said gay-straight alliances (GSA) provided a safe venue for LGBT youth to meet each other and find out about resources. Mucciarone said when he was in high school he began attending meetings of the Dennis-Yarmouth Regional High School GSA.

"It was basically like a CIGSYA meeting, and that was how I found out about CIGSYA," said Mucciarone.

As for the adults providing services to LGBT youth on the Cape, one of the top concerns is need for more funding. Scott Fitzmaurice, executive director of CIGSYA and one of the program's co-founders, told Bay Windows that since the state budget crisis under former Gov. Jane Swift, CIGSYA's funding has plummeted, and this year the organization was forced to shift from having paid staff to becoming an all-volunteer organization. Beyond state budget cuts Fitzmaurice said the organization has found it more difficult in the last three years to get grants; he estimates that the organization applied for about \$350,000 in grants and only received about \$30,000. Another problem, he said, is that so much LGBT philanthropy focuses on organizations in Provincetown that other programs get short-changed.

"It's almost like an energy draw ... They sort of forget all the programs that cover the whole Cape that are based in Hyannis," said Fitzmaurice, who said CIGSYA has only about 25 committed monthly donors.

During the commission's meeting Fitzmaurice gave commissioners an overview of CIGSYA's work and answered their questions about his perspective on the issues facing LGBT youth and youth programming. He said while other Alliances of Gay and Lesbian Youth (AGLYs) around the state rent out facilities to hold meetings, CIGSYA purchased

its own two-story house on Barnstable Road, making it the only AGLY to own its own building. Despite tight finances, CIGSYA was able to get funding for the building from the Rotary Club, the Gill Foundation and other groups and individual donations to get the money for the house. The total cost of the purchase and renovations was around \$300,000, according to Fitzmaurice, and he said CIGSYA has currently paid off about \$100,000 of that cost. Fitzmaurice said that the more LGBT youth organizations can own their own space, the stronger they will be.

"The more nonprofits that can purchase space the less we're going to be dependent on increasing costs and also dealing with people that may or may not understand our work," said Fitzmaurice.

He told commissioners that when funding for GSAs began drying up under the Swift administration CIGSYA worked in partnership with GSA advisors to keep the 13 groups in the region afloat, holding quarterly meetings with the advisors. He said he believes that outreach was one of the factors that made the Cape one of the few regions that did not lose any GSAs. Fitzmaurice said CIGSYA has worked to open its doors to all young people, regardless of whether they publicly identify as LGBT. He said some youth come because they are ostracized at school because of their weight, their appearance, or some other characteristic that makes them stick out from their peers. Opening CIGSYA to all youth has made the organization a safe space for young people who are not ready to come out.

"Ultimately the majority of people who come here are LGBT, but I think what happens is by having that platform [we] really create an environment where folks can say to their friends at school, [if someone says], 'I saw you in front of CIGSYA the other day,' [they can answer], 'Yeah, well, lots of people go there.' They can have an opportunity to say that and not feel pressured," said Fitzmaurice.

The commission also focused on other business beyond learning about LGBT youth issues on the Cape. Foremost among these was talking about funding for an executive director position for the commission to help oversee many of the administrative functions of the commission. Currently the commission has one paid administrator, Bernie Gardella, but commission chair Jason Smith said they need more staff support to administer the commission and keep it running smoothly. Smith said for the current fiscal year, FY08, the Department of Public Health has agreed to assume the financial burden of administering the commission, including paying for an executive director. He said he hopes to have someone hired by the fall, and that person will be acting as a consultant for DPH. But at the end of the fiscal year DPH's sponsorship will end.

"The commissioner of Public Health has agreed to support the commission administratively through this fiscal year, which puts us in a position then where we need to be prepared to seek our own support in the legislature for FY09," said Smith. He said the total cost of administering the commission, including paying salaries for the executive director and Gardella and paying for the costs associated with meetings, will run between \$150,000 and \$190,000 per year.

Commissioner Marty Martinez asked Smith about the risks associated with hiring an executive director without secure funding for FY09.

"My thought is, without having a real clear sense of where we're getting those resources and whether or not we're going to be able to get that from the state legislature, I'm just wondering if we should be taking on that now or if it's something we should try to work up to," said Martinez.

Smith answered that the commission's executive committee believes bringing on an executive director is crucial to keeping the commissioners from burning out.

"It's a risk, but I think we're running at 125 percent capacity personnel-wise ... I think we'll be burning out soon," said Smith.

As has become par for the course with commission meetings, there was one attendee who did not identify herself but who commissioners suspect was a supporter of the anti-gay group MassResistance, which urged people to attend on its website. At the last commission meeting in May, held in Boston, two MassResistance supporters, Joe Rizoli and Jim Rizoli, were asked to leave after they demanded the right to videotape the proceedings. The state's open meeting law allows citizens to audio record meetings of state bodies, but it does not contain an allowance for videotaping (see "Complaint Filed Against LGBT Youth Commission," July 12). At the Hyannis meeting a woman sat at the back of the room taking notes and capturing the proceedings on a tape recorder. Prior to the start of the meeting she walked to a wall display containing informational pamphlets on HIV/AIDS, youth mentoring and other subjects, and she took several copies of the pamphlets. She did not disrupt the meeting, and when it ended she got in her car and drove away.

Ethan Jacobs can be reached at ejacobs@baywindows.com

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MCGLBTY Meeting in Worcester, MA – October 22, 2007
Bay Windows

Youth tell state commissioners what it's like to be gay in Central Mass
by Ethan Jacobs – staff reporter

The Massachusetts Commission on GLBT Youth gathered in Worcester Oct. 22 for the second in a series of regional meetings across the state, and they heard from high school students firsthand about the challenges they face as LGBT young people. During a meeting at Worcester Technical High School with students from that school's gay/straight alliance (GSA), as well as three students who traveled to the meeting from Milford, which is located about a half-hour southeast of Worcester, the commission asked them what problems they face and what support they have found in their school, at home and in other areas of their life.

"I find it extremely difficult to deal with all the homophobes. ...It's a small town for one thing, and it's not used to change," said one student from Milford involved in his school's GSA. (*Bay Windows* was asked not to use the names of students at the meeting without receiving their permission.)

That same student described an incident his sophomore year when he and his boyfriend were at school attending a friend's basketball game. During the game the student and his boyfriend went outside the gym to talk when another male student started shouting at them, "Hey, you fucking faggots!" He said for the next week he was scared each time he set foot in the school. He later reported the student who harassed them, and he said that the student was suspended.

Another Milford student said that when she was tabling for the GSA during student activity sign-ups kids would stop at their table, make fun of their flyers, and joke with each other as they signed their friends up for the club.

One of the students involved in Worcester Tech's GSA said that she has not encountered the kind of overt harassment faced by the Milford student at the basketball game, but she said words and phrases like "fag" and "that's so gay" are a regular part of the vocabulary of many Worcester Tech students, and she said the GSA has worked to try to educate their peers to respect LGBT students.

"We try hard to let them know we're just regular people, just like everyone else," said the student.

When commissioner Jessica Flaherty asked the students who their main support system was in their school, the overwhelming answer was their teachers. The Worcester Tech student said students formed the GSA three years ago, and over the years teachers have been strongly supportive of the club's work.

The male Milford student said that teachers were also strong supporters of his school's GSA, and

one teacher in particular helped the club secure a video and other materials about LGBT youth.

“[Teachers are] probably the biggest support system that I have for the GSA in my school,” he said.

Commissioner Arthur Lipkin asked what the commission could do to help students struggling with their sexuality or gender identity who did not feel comfortable going to a GSA or LGBT youth group. The consensus from the students in the room is that the best way to give students access to information about LGBT issues is to put it online; the one wrinkle in that plan is that some students said the filtering software at their school or town library blocks LGBT websites.

Following the discussion at Worcester Tech, the commission held its business meeting at The Bridge, a social services agency that houses the LGBT support group Safe Homes. During the meeting, commission chair Jason Smith explained that the commission is recruiting new members to replace several who have resigned. There are currently 37 commissioners, and Smith said the commission can appoint up to 50. In particular he said the commission is interested in recruiting more youth, people of color and transgender people to join the commission. “My hope is commissioners will disseminate the applications. ... Encourage anyone, especially from those targeted communities to apply,” said Smith. He said the deadline for filing applications is Nov. 30.

Smith also said the commission is still in negotiations to hire a director to coordinate the activities of the all-volunteer commission, and he expects that a job listing for the position will be posted by next week. Smith said the commission plans to hire a director by November, and the position will be funded through next summer. Part of that director’s job will be finding other sources of funding to allow the position to continue once the initial funding runs out.

Eleni Carr, chair of the government relations committee, urged commissioners to begin identifying funding priorities for the coming budget cycle, which begins next January. She said her goal is to present lawmakers and the governor with a list of specific LGBT youth-related programs and the required dollar amounts needed to fund each of them. Ideally she hopes to raise the LGBT youth programming budget above the 2001 high watermark of \$1.6 million. “I want to say, if you give us the money in bucks, here’s how we’re going to spend it to the penny,” said Carr.

The Worcester meeting is the second in a series of planned regional meetings across the state both to hear from young people and youth advocates about the issues they face and to conduct general commission business. Last July the commission met in Hyannis, and they will hold their next meeting Dec. 17 in Brockton.

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MCGLBTY Meeting in Brockton, MA – December 17, 2007
Bay Windows

LGBT youth describe harassment, bullying
by Ethan Jacobs - staff reporter – Bay Windows
Wednesday Dec 19, 2007

About 35 high schoolers from Brockton, East Bridgewater, Fall River and Weymouth met with members of the Massachusetts Commission on GLBT Youth Dec. 17 at Brockton High School to give them a glimpse of life inside the region's public schools. The bottom line? They said that in many classrooms homophobic bullies seem to be running the show. They told commissioners that their fellow students frequently make anti-gay comments in the classroom and that their teachers often seem powerless to stop them. One Brockton sophomore said that for the past two years students have targeted him in class, calling him a fruitcake and a fag, and in many cases teachers declined to intervene.

"They're always saying their opinions, how gays are going to hell, and the teacher is just sitting there. ... I felt very alone and by myself," said the Brockton sophomore. (Bay Windows was permitted to cover the meeting, which was closed to the public, under the condition that the young people attending the event would not be identified by name, to preserve their confidentiality.)

A student from Durfee High School in Fall River said that last year he participated in the GLSEN Day of Silence event, where students pledged to remain silent during the school day to highlight the silencing of LGBT youth. Students in his English class teased him relentlessly to goad him into breaking his silence.

"They taunted and teased me to the point where tears were coming out of my eyes," said the student.

Eventually his teacher decided to have the class debate the Day of Silence and gay rights, but his fellow students used the opportunity to declare their anti-gay beliefs, making the student feel even more isolated. In some cases students said teachers were actually afraid of discussing LGBT issues in the classroom, for fear that any discussion would prompt some of the students to let loose a torrent of anti-gay slurs and comments. One member of Brockton High's gay-straight alliance (GSA) said that a health teacher extended an invitation to her and another GSA member to come into one of her classes to talk about LGBT issues. Yet before the GSA members had a chance to address the class the health teacher rescinded the invitation.

"Then she changed her mind because she was afraid about how rowdy the class would be in response. That was pretty disappointing," said the GSA member.

Not all teachers described by the students were poor at handling discussion of LGBT issues in the classroom. Another Brockton student said her health teacher brought up the subject during class and led a respectful discussion.

"There were people who were making jokes, but a lot of us got into the discussion seriously," said the student.

The commission held the forum with the students as part of a series of regional meetings across the state to assess the issues facing LGBT youth, following meetings in Boston, Hyannis and Worcester held earlier this year. After the student forum at Brockton High, commissioners held an open meeting at the Brockton Holiday Inn to conduct formal commission business. During the student forum, students from Brockton High said that while there are few out transgender students at the school, in at least one instance the administration, and particularly principal Susan Szachowicz, took steps to accommodate a trans student. One student said her ex-boyfriend was a female-to-male transman, and when he graduated last year Szachowicz allowed him to wear black robes along with the rest of the male graduates (females wore red robes) and to use his male name on his diploma. But she said there was a desperate need to educate the student body. Before her ex-boyfriend graduated she said students used to approach her and friends of the trans student and ask them, "Who is this freak?"

Commissioners also asked students about the issues they faced as LGBT students outside of school. The Brockton sophomore quoted above told the commissioners that his family refused to accept his homosexuality after he came out, and their reaction turned hostile after he started dating boys. He left home recently, and a lesbian couple agreed to take him in and welcome him into their family. He said if they had not offered him a home he would likely be living on the street.

"It's really nice to finally be in an accepting environment," said the student.

A few high school GSA advisors also attended the student forum, and they told commissioners that the state Department of Education (DOE) has failed to let them know about funding opportunities for their GSAs. When Jason

Smith, chair of the commission, told attendees that one of the commission's priorities is to make sure that money allocated to DOE makes it out to the schools, one GSA advisor said in surprise, "I wasn't aware that we had access to any money at all." Smith explained that there are "mini-grants" of around \$1000 available to GSAs from DOE but that this year the department waited until the last minute to publicize them.

"DOE didn't tell anyone the money was there until two or three days before the deadline," said Smith.

Details of the grants posted on the DOE website suggest that the lack of publicity meant that many GSAs simply did not apply for funding. In the current fiscal year only 23 schools applied for the grants, and all of them received them. By contrast in the previous year 50 schools applied for the grants and all but one received them. Later on in the evening, during the commission business meeting at the Holiday Inn, Lisa Perry-Wood, chair of the commission's high school committee, said that part of the reason for DOE's failure to notify schools may be that Gov. Deval Patrick's administration has not yet appointed a permanent DOE commissioner, and the lack of leadership at the top has meant that some priorities have fallen by the wayside. J.C. Considine, a spokesperson for DOE, disputed the claim that the department announced the GSA grants at the last minute.

"The request for proposal, the RFP, was posted the Friday before Labor Day, and it was open for almost a good two months. It closed Oct. 26," said Considine.

When asked how DOE publicized the grant to GSA advisors Considine e-mailed a statement to Bay Windows saying that the grant was announced on the DOE website at the end of August as part of the list of all available competitive grants offered by DOE for the current fiscal year. He said DOE also notified the commission, but he did not say when the department did so. DOE made no direct outreach to GSA advisors.

Acknowledging that there were fewer applications for the grant than expected (DOE budgeted \$125,000 for the grants but distributed less than \$25,000 to schools), Considine said DOE will re-open the grant application process next year.

"So if you do the math there's a lot of money still available, which means the department is going to release the RFP in January, and when we do that we're going to release it with an open submission date," said Considine.

During the business meeting the commission also discussed plans to lobby for increased Safe Schools funding in Fiscal Year 2009 (FY09). Eleni Carr, chair of the commission's government relations committee, said that her committee drafted a detailed funding request for Patrick describing specific LGBT youth programming initiatives and their expected cost, and the committee hopes to see a significant increase in LGBT youth funding for the coming year.

Following the meeting Carr told Bay Windows that she could not divulge the details of their funding request until after Patrick releases his budget proposal early next year, for fear of tipping off opponents of LGBT youth funding. But she said the request goes beyond the scope of state LGBT programming of previous years, focusing not only on the familiar topics of schools and suicide prevention but also on issues like homelessness, dating violence, sexual health and substance abuse. She said the request exceeds the state's \$1.6 million high watermark for LGBT youth program funding in FY02.

"It's ambitious and it's more money than we have ever received," said Carr.

During the meeting the commissioners also voted to reappoint Smith as chair of the commission for 2008, which launched at the beginning of 2007 as a replacement for the Governor's Commission on Gay and Lesbian Youth. He was the only member of the commission to throw his hat into the ring for the chairmanship, and fellow commissioner Arthur Lipkin said he felt the reason his election was unopposed was that commissioners were pleased with Smith's work over the past year. Noting that he himself often has strong opinions, a comment that prompted chuckles from his fellow commissioners, Lipkin said Smith served as an effective leader on a commission made up of people with very different backgrounds and viewpoints.

"I have met few people who have strong opinions who are as easy to talk to and work with as Jason," said Lipkin.

Ethan Jacobs can be reached at ejacobs@baywindows.com

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MCGLBTY Meeting in Springfield, MA – March 17, 2008 - Bay Windows – Youth commission seeks funding for new programs
by Ethan Jacobs – associate editor - Wednesday Mar 19, 2008

The Massachusetts Commission on GLBT Youth plans to push for an unprecedented \$2.9 million in state funding for youth programs in the Fiscal Year 2009, a figure far above the commission's FY02 high watermark of \$1.6 million. That sum would fund gay/straight alliances (GSAs) and community-based organizations serving LGBT youth, a staple of state LGBT funding in past years. But it would also break ground by funding new initiatives, including a pilot homeless shelter serving LGBT youth and programming to combat LGBT youth dating violence. During the commission's March 17 meeting in Springfield, Jason Smith, chair of the commission, told commissioners to get comfortable with the \$2.9 million figure and to understand it as the "bare minimum" of funding needed to respond to the critical needs of LGBT youth. He urged them not to get discouraged by news reports and comments from lawmakers and budget watchers that this year's tight fiscal situation - House Speaker Sal DiMasi has promised the FY09 budget will include \$100 million in cuts - means there will be few funding increases. The commission's budget request would more than offset the deep cuts made to the state's LGBT youth budget since the state budget crisis in 2002 prompted then-Gov. Jane Swift to gut LGBT youth funding. Funding continued to hover well below the FY02 level during the administration of Gov. Mitt Romney and the first year of Gov. Deval Patrick's administration; in the current fiscal year the total LGBT youth funding stands at \$600,000. The funding request is a product of the commission's work over the past year to identify the most pressing needs facing LGBT youth. Since last summer the commission has held regional meetings in Boston, Hyannis, Worcester, Brockton, and the most recent in Springfield to meet with LGBT youth, GSA advisors and LGBT youth program coordinators and develop a picture of the health and safety risks facing LGBT young people. The commission, drew on those meetings and their own expertise to develop funding priorities, and the commission's executive committee and government relations committee synthesized those priorities into an itemized request.

During the meeting, the first time the full commission discussed the funding proposal, the item that drew the most attention was the \$400,000 for a pilot shelter for homeless LGBT youth. Commissioner Al Toney said he felt it would be more effective to focus on making existing shelters safe for LGBT youth rather than creating one LGBT-friendly shelter. He said he worried that with just one safe shelter in the state, many youth seeking safe housing would have to travel across the state and outside their communities in order to make use of the shelter's services. In response commissioner Gunner Scott, head of the health and human services committee that recommended the pilot shelter, said that based on his decade of experience in shelter services, which included work with The Network/La Red, a domestic violence service organization, he believes that in the short term the community cannot rely on mainstream shelters to create safe spaces for LGBT youth. He told commissioners that if they imagined all the problems facing LGBT youth in schools, the situation in shelters is that severe "magnified by 300 percent." Smith said the commission would defer to the health and human services committee's recommendation. Eleni Carr, chair of the government relations committee, told *Bay Windows* the \$400,000 for the shelter would support a 12-bed facility that would be open during the evenings and overnight but closed during the day. She said the budget request makes no suggestion about where the shelter should be located.

"The idea would be that it would be a 45-day kind of thing, so kids could be assessed and directed to services and hopefully a more permanent situation," said Carr. She said if the pilot shelter is successful the commission would recommend the creation of similar shelters to serve different regions of the state.

The issue of LGBT youth homelessness was at the forefront of the Springfield commission meeting, held at Springfield Central High School. Before the public meeting that evening the commission held a closed-door session with a group of youth and LGBT service providers from Springfield, Holyoke and Longmeadow. A 19-year-old from Holyoke said that when he came out his aunt, who was raising him at the time, kicked him out of the house. The commission permitted Bay Windows to cover the session on the condition that the paper not use the names of the youth unless they gave their express permission. The Holyoke youth said that after he was forced out he entered the Department of Social Services (DSS) system, but he said several of his foster families rejected him after discovering he was

gay. At age 18 he left DSS, but found few options for housing and several times considered going to a shelter.

"I returned to DSS last week," he said.

Chino Rios, an 18-year-old high school student from Springfield, said that while his own family has been supportive, he knows several LGBT peers who have been forced out of their homes by their families after coming out. "I know a lot of friends that I've even taken into my own home. Thank God my mom's accepting," said Rios. The youth said that at school teachers and administrators rarely respond to incidents of anti-LGBT harassment with more than a slap on the wrist. "If you do report it to the teacher they'll say they weren't serious about what they did," said one female student from Longmeadow. The Holyoke youth said that he helped found Holyoke High School's GSA a few years ago, which has had a modest impact on the climate for LGBT students. The GSA took it upon itself to do teacher trainings on LGBT issues. But despite that, he said he was a constant target of harassment. People in class passed him notes calling him a faggot, harassed him in the locker room and refused to change next to him.

"I dropped out of high school. ... Every single day I was tortured," he said.

Rios, who attends Springfield's High School of Commerce, said that he has encountered less harassment, in large part because he found a group of LGBT friends who support each other. "We have a little homo posse, and we stick up for each other," said Rios.

Rios and the Holyoke youth, who are both Puerto Rican, said that it has been particularly difficult to be out within the Puerto Rican community in Western Mass. The Holyoke student said some of the worst harassment he has faced has been at the hands of other Puerto Rican youth, and he said even though he is out he has at times felt ashamed to be gay when he is within the community.

"It's something we're taught from a young age, that a man is supposed to be one thing and a woman is supposed to be another thing," he said. He urged the commission to create a committee to deal with issues facing LGBT minorities.

Following the meeting with the youth the commission held its open meeting, where Smith and Carr outlined the budget proposal. Carr said the \$2.9 million was split between the Department of Public Health (DPH), which will receive \$2.1 million, and the Department of Education (DOE), which will receive \$800,000. Carr told *Bay Windows* that the funding for the homeless shelter would come from the DPH funding, as will a number of other programs. The commission is requesting \$800,000 to support community-based organizations such as the Alliances of Gay and Lesbian Youth (AGLYs), and \$300,000 to create programs dealing with dating violence. The DOE funding includes \$500,000 to support GSAs. Carr told commissioners the House Ways and Means committee is expected to announce its FY09 budget proposal on or around April 16. If the proposal falls short of the \$2.9 million figure (Gov. Patrick's own proposal, released in January, level-funded LGBT youth programs), Carr said lawmakers would have until 5 p.m. on April 18 to file amendments to bump up those numbers. She said the commission is lining up sponsors to file those amendments, but between now and the release of the Ways and Means budget she urged commissioners to schedule meetings with their state representatives to make the case for the \$2.9 million in funding and to ask them to commit to co-sponsoring the amendments if the Ways and Means budget falls short of that figure.

"\$2.9 million, compared to what we have it seems like a lot. ... It is a necessary increase. It is what is needed in the schools and the community to create safer spaces for kids, a more positive social environment," Carr told *Bay Windows*.

Ethan Jacobs can be reached at ejacobs@baywindows.com

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Serving Massachusetts LGBT Homeless Youth Under 24

prepared by Gunner Scott, MCGLBTY Commissioner, Human Service Sub-Committee
November 9, 2007

Currently there appears to be no other programs in the state that provide emergency short term shelter for homeless youth under 24 that identify along the LGBTQ spectrum. Additionally, there was no complete list of youth homeless shelter programs in the state that I could find on any state run websites. There are a small number of youth homeless residential and transitional programs such as the Bridge Over Troubled Waters and Short Stop, Inc.. Additionally, the majority of the family homeless shelters do not provide access to males over the age of 14 or 16 years old, even with a parent.

Suggested program format

Provide three to four short term specific LGBT and questioning youth emergency shelter programs for 1-30 day stays for youth in three to four regions of the state: Metro Boston, Worcester, Springfield, Cape Cod or New Bedford. These would be twelve bed programs with meals provided morning and evening, computer access, and transportation vouchers, such as subway/bus passes. These programs would provide referrals to residential/transitional programs, healthcare, substance abuse programs, mental health programs and can also provide HIV prevention programming on site.

Staffing would consist of program director, social worker for case management services, and two overnight staff providing intake, evening safety, one-to-one support, and group facilitation. Allow youth to utilize the space without being currently involved with DSS, beds to be distributed on a first come first serve basis, and up to thirty night stay with referrals to other youth transitional living programs, substance abuse programs, or DSS foster care programs.

A preliminary budget for each program would \$300,000.

Models of Current Emergency Youth Shelter Programs around the Country

LGBT Youth Specific

New York

Sylvia's Place is an emergency overnight shelter for LGBTQ youth (under 24). We are open 365 days/year from 8pm-8am. Curfew is at 12am. We provide hot meals (dinner and breakfast); clothing; showers; case management; physical and mental health medical services; and court advocacy.

Sylvia's Place is located at 446 W.36th Street and accepts clients on a walk-in basis after 8pm daily as long as we have room. It is a good idea to call before coming to make sure there is space available **(718) 300-0133**. No paperwork is necessary.

<http://www.homelessyouthservices.org/sylviasplace.html>

Open 2003 in with minimum budget: 1 over night counselors 9 hour shifts \$15 an hour (should

have at least 2-3 counselors a night) (approx 50,000 a year for one staff not including benefits)

3 other positions:

Shelter Director, Kate Barnhart, kate_barnhart@yahoo.com, 718.300.0133.

Shelter Administrator Lucky Michaels, LuckyMichaels@gmail.com, 917.463.6439.

Social Worker,

Open 7 nights a week with Drop in hours between 8p-12 midnight

Counseling hours in the morning to help with case management and referrals

Groups in evenings

Community contributions: donated food, cots, clothing

Emergency Shelter \$92, 000 – 26 people a night

Other programs:

- Sylvia's East is an intermediate shelter for LGBTQ youth (under 21) located in the East Village. Residents at Sylvia's East are expected to be engaged in school, work, or other constructive activities.
- Food Pantry Program

All three programs budget total \$800,000

The Ali Forney Center Services

Carl Siciliano

carlsiciliano@aol.com

Executive Director

224 West 35th St. Suite 1102

New York, NY 10001

(212) 222-3427 (Tel)

(212) 222-5861 (Fax)

(917) 822-0120 (Cell)

AFC is the nation's largest and most comprehensive organization dedicated to homeless LGBT youth. Our goal is to provide homeless LGBT youths, aged 16-24, with the support and services they need to escape the streets and begin to live healthy and independent lives. We offer an innovative continuum of services which include the following programs:

AFC Emergency Housing Program

AFC offers a scattered-site emergency housing program with sites in Manhattan and Brooklyn. We offer temporary housing in safe, staff-supervised homelike apartments. LGBT youths are able to reside in our emergency housing program for up to six months while we assist them in moving on to more permanent housing. Currently AFC has 3 emergency housing apartments and a total of 18 beds.

Currently:

Apartment Model

Rent 3 bedrooms apartments for 6 kids per unit with staff supervision

\$200,000 with staffing for each unit.

Currently have 8 apartments
Emergency shelter can be up to six months
And transitional program can up to 2 years
Built in HIV/AIDS programs
Have few relationships with substance abuse programs that they can refer to

Recommend an apartment because it is a more home like environment

Funding Sources:

Has federal funding that allows for services for youth up to 24
Runaway homeless youth funding only allows up to 20 years
Runways homeless funding provides space up to thirty days then the youth need to re-up
Also HUD money for under for services for youth under 20

Do have to report to there DSS/ ACS if under 16
Yes, most get placed into foster care

Michigan

Ruth Ellis Center • 77 Victor Street • Highland Park, MI • 48203 • 313-252-1950 (information) •
313-865-3372 (fax) <http://www.ruthelliscenter.com/home/index.html>

Three programs
15-30 day emergency shelter program for youth 12-17
18 month Independent Living Programs for youth 16-21
Drop In Center

Other Programs not LGBT specific

Janus Youth Programs, Oregon

<http://www.janusyouth.org/>
Administrative Office
707 NE Couch Street
Portland, OR 97232
Phone: 503.233.6090
Fax: 503.233.6093
feedback@janusyouth.org

Street Light Shelter

Short-term housing for 30 homeless youth, ages 13 to 20, who are attempting to make changes in their lives. Working with a service coordinator/case manager, youth are guided through the process of exiting street life.

Porch Light Shelter

Emergency housing for 30 youth, ages 13 to 20, who are new to the streets or in immediate need of shelter and aid. Beds are distributed on a first-come-first-serve basis nightly through the Access Center, and youth are expected to work on securing permanent housing. Nurturing staff serve over 500 youth every year by providing a safe place to sleep, nourishing meals, and hygiene facilities.

Avenues for Homeless Youth, Minnesota

<http://www.avenuesforyouth.org/>

1708 Oak Park Avenue North

Minneapolis, MN 55411

Phone: 612-522-1690

Fax: 612-522-1633

E-mail: info@avenuesforyouth.org

Housing. Avenues for Homeless Youth provides emergency shelter and short term housing for up to fifteen youth per day. Avenues addresses the basic needs of youth by providing resources such as shower and laundry facilities, three meals per day, and hygiene products. Housing is available to youth 365 days of the year, 24 hours a day, seven days a week. Youth can remain at Avenues for Homeless Youth as long as they follow house rules and make progress on their case plan. Youth Counselors provide direct supervision of youth 24 hours per day. Additionally, the House Supervisor and Program Director provide overlapping and integrated supervision of the program. The effectiveness of services is determined by the average number of youth served per day, the number of youth who move onto transitional or permanent housing, and the number of youth who are employed and/or are going school.

Youth Emergency Service, Pennsylvania

1526 Fairmount Avenue

Philadelphia, PA 19130

215-787-0633

Fax: 215-787-0152

wlittle@ysiphila.org

<http://www.ysiphila.org/yes.html>

YSI's Youth Emergency Shelter 215-787-0633

Helps runaway and homeless adolescents in need of immediate shelter and care. Most are referred by the Philadelphia Department of Human Services, others come on their own. YES also provides supportive services listed below.

Runaway Youth Program (RYP) 1-800-371-7233

Provides a 24-hour information hotline and emergency shelter for adolescents who have run away from home or who are dealing with a personal crisis. Teens can come to the YES shelter (1526 Fairmount Avenue) on a voluntary basis to get immediate shelter and care, along with supportive services.

Through a grant from the federal Runaway Youth Program, YES is able to serve runaways regardless of geographic origin.

Around-the-clock emergency shelter and protection for youth ages 12-18

Research and Recommended Policies

Characteristics of Homeless Individuals Accessing Massachusetts Emergency Shelters 1999-2002, A Publication of the Connection, Service, and Partnership through Technology (CSPTech) Project, October 2003

<http://www.mccormack.umb.edu/csp/publications/Homeless%20Individuals%20in%20Massachusetts%20Emergency%20Shelters%201999-2002.pdf>

Homeless Youth - NCH Fact Sheet #13

Published by the National Coalition for the Homeless, August 2007

This fact sheet discusses the dimensions, causes, and consequences of homelessness among youth. An overview of program and policy issues and a list of resources for further study are also provided

<http://www.nationalhomeless.org/publications/facts/youth.pdf>

National Gay and Lesbian Taskforce Report

Lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender youth: An epidemic of homelessness

January 30, 2007

The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services estimates that the number of homeless and runaway youth ranges from 575,000 to 1.6 million per year. Our analysis of the available research suggests that between 20 percent and 40 percent of all homeless youth identify as lesbian, gay, bisexual or transgender (LGBT). Given that between 3 percent and 5 percent of the U.S. population identifies as lesbian, gay or bisexual, it is clear that LGBT youth experience homelessness at a disproportionate rate. It is this reality that prompted the National Gay and Lesbian Task Force (the Task Force), in collaboration with the National Coalition for the Homeless (NCH), to produce this publication.

http://thetaskforce.org/reports_and_research/homeless_youth

Challenges Faced by Homeless Sexual Minorities: Comparison of Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, and Transgender Homeless Adolescents With Their Heterosexual Counterparts **Bryan N. Cochran, MS, Angela J. Stewart, BA, Joshua A. Ginzler, PhD and Ana Mari Cauce, PhD**

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Objectives. The goal of this study was to identify differences between gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgender (GLBT) homeless youths and their heterosexual counterparts in terms of physical and mental health difficulties.

Methods. A sample of 84 GLBT adolescents was matched in regard to age and self-reported gender with 84 heterosexual adolescents. The 2 samples were compared on a variety of psychosocial variables.

Results. GLBT adolescents left home more frequently, were victimized more often, used highly addictive substances more frequently, had higher rates of psychopathology, and had more sexual partners than heterosexual adolescents.

Conclusions. Homeless youths who identify themselves as members of sexual minority groups are at increased risk for negative outcomes. Recommendations for treatment programs and implications for public health are discussed.

<http://www.ajph.org/cgi/content/abstract/92/5/773>

Differentiating the Social Service Needs of Homeless Sexual Minority Youths from those of Non-homeless Sexual Minority Youths

Authors: N. Eugene Walls; Pam Hancock; Hope Wisneski

Published in: [Journal of Children and Poverty](#), Volume 13, Issue 2 September 2007 , pages 177 - 205

Abstract

While homeless youths and sexual minority youths are at greater risk for negative life experiences, and homeless sexual minority youths are at greater risk than homeless heterosexual youths, little is known about the differential risks for homeless sexual minority

youths compared to non-homeless sexual minority youths. Using a sample of 187 sexual minority youths from a community-based social service agency in Denver, Colorado, the findings of this study suggest that homeless sexual minority youths are at greater risk for victimization, mental health issues, substance abuse, and illegal or dangerous activities than their non-homeless counterparts. Implications for social work practice and social service provision are discussed.

<http://www.informaworld.com/smpp/content~content=a782044944~db=all>

The Commission would like to thank the following for their support, counsel and guidance during the past year, without which the extent of our work would not have been possible: Bill Conley, Kevin Cranston, Bob Garcia, Bernie Gardella, Stewart Landers, Matt McTighe, Carlene Pavlos and Marc Solomon. Their work on behalf of Massachusetts GLBT youth is ongoing and deeply appreciated.