



YPI to Open Newport Satellite

On February 2nd, Youth Pride Inc. (YPI) and the Newport County Fund announced the creation of *The Way Out Too*. Thanks to a gift made through The Newport County Fund's Youth Opportunities Grant Program, YPI's first geographic expansion project will respond to increasing demand by youth, parents and community partners for YPI services and programs based in Newport County. Specifically, the grant has empowered YPI to rent space in Newport, hire a part-time staff member and provide free activities to area LGBTQ youth. The Newport County Fund is a field of interest fund of The Rhode Island Foundation.

Echoing the beginnings of YPI itself, *The Way Out Too* will begin in a shared space at Island Arts on Broadway in



YPI supporter, Elisa Del Bonis, left, and Executive Director, Michelle Duso, right, catch up at a recent event.

Newport two afternoons each week. Initial programming will include a weekly support group and youth-led, community-based social activities. The project will also mobilize YPI's Newport Pilot Program staff to provide local youth-to-youth and professional development workshops that examine the impact of homophobia and heterosexism, and provide tools for creating change leading to safe, inclusive communities for LGBTQ individuals.

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Students Demonstrate Silent Strength

by Shelby Ferreira and Paige Parks

On Wednesday, April 13, numerous Rhode Island schools and colleges will become somewhat quieter. The "Day of Silence" is a national student-led day of action where students, faculty, and administrators take a day-long vow of silence to recognize and protest the discrimination and harassment—in effect, the silencing—experienced by LGBTQ (lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgendered, queer, and questioning) students and their allies. Providence-based Youth Pride, Inc.'s Safe Zone Initiative is supporting Gay/Straight Alliances (GSAs) across the state as they organize Day of Silence activities in their schools. YPI is the only statewide nonprofit in Rhode Island devoted to meeting the social, emotional, and educational needs of youth and young adults impacted by sexual orientation and gender identity/expression.

Unfortunately, the vast majority of American schools

are not safe places for LGBTQ youth. Students identifying as sexual minorities are almost 4 times as likely to miss school because they feel unsafe (1999 Massachusetts Youth Risk Behavior Study). In a study of LGBT youth in RI by YPI, 83% of respondents reported feeling depressed and

58% having suicidal thoughts as teenagers. According to the National Mental Health Association, 93% of all youth hear other youth at schools or in their neighborhoods use words like "fag," "homo," "dyke," "queer," or "gay" in a derogatory manner.

According to the Hetrick-Martin Institute, 80% of gay and bisexual youth report severe problems with cognitive, social or emotional isolation. Through the "Day of Silence," students and their allies are raising awareness of these statistics, in a far more powerful manner than by using their voices alone.

*Rhode Island's LGBTQQ
and allied youth
vow silence to
end harassment*

SEE **DAY OF SILENCE** PAGE 3



YOUTH PRIDE, INC.
www.youthpride-ri.org

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ABOUT YPI

Youth Pride, Inc. ("YPI"), a tax-exempt 501(c)3 organization, is Rhode Island's only statewide agency dedicated to meeting the social, emotional, and educational needs of lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, and questioning youth. YPI offers a Drop-In Center at 95 Cedar Street in Providence, and will soon launch services in Newport. YPI is supported by grants, sponsorships, and contributions made by people who value fairness, justice, and equality, and who value empowering youth to achieve their full potential.

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Graduation Day!

That's right folks, we celebrated graduation in February! Our community education program, OUTspoken, has graduated the OUTspoken Playaz, youth who use creative, artistic performance pieces and public speaking skills to teach others about the issues that impact the lives of LGBTQ youth daily. The youth completed trainings that included public speaking, leadership and facilitation skills, as well as the fundamentals of performance. We have had the honor and privilege to be one of the trainers and have witnessed six youth grow leaps and bounds over the last year. We are proud to continue to work with these dedicated, intelligent young people and witness their activism, dedication and willingness to bring their powerful message to our community to create positive change. We also have the pleasure to announce a new training for up and coming Playaz trainees. Watch out for their graduation announcement in the coming months.

from the board

Spring is all about growth and energy, and the YPI Board is right on schedule. New directors and volunteers are bringing energy, fresh ideas, and vast experience to the Board, which has set an ambitious agenda for 2005. In future issues, we will introduce you to the Board of Directors.

One of our biggest challenges this year will be creating more space for our staff and youth to do the incredible things they do every day. Our Cedar Street offices are hopping, with young folks spilling into every room and office in the third floor suite. It's hard to image that, just two years ago, the space seemed almost cavernous. Today, there is not even enough room for board and committee meetings: we are borrowing space from AIDS Project RI and other generous friends. Our desire to share the space once again with young people, together with our commitment to YPI's continued growth, motivates the Board to lead the search for more suitable space.

Board members – and friends from around the community – will be hosting house parties throughout the year to raise awareness and funds. If you are invited to one, please give generously. Better yet, consider hosting one yourself. You supply the party and the guests; we will provide all the support you need, including staff, youth, and board presence at the event.

Finally, the Board is already busy planning this year's annual event, *Come Out & Celebrate!* If you haven't attended this fabulous event in the past, you're missing out on a showcase of youth talent, energy, and passion. October 14 – mark your calendar today. There are myriad opportunities to help us plan this festive event. We need help with design, promotion, printing, soliciting sponsors, and many, many details.

We can't do the work alone. If you can host a house party or volunteer to serve on a committee, please contact YPI at 401-421-5626, or e-mail Beth Vorro, board chair, at eamjd@aol.com.

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Coupled with ongoing technical assistance, these trainings will develop a network of culturally competent providers to whom program staff and volunteers can confidently refer youth in need, thus strengthening and connecting existing services.

YPI's *The Way Out Too* will be a unique resource for Newport County's LGBTQ youth and allies. If you are interested in supporting YPI's *The Way Out Too* program by volunteering, joining YPI's Newport Advisory Council or Major Gifts Committee, hosting a house party or simply making a donation, please contact Michelle Duso at (401) 421-5626 ext. 31 or youth_pride@yahoo.com.

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Day of Silence participants also protest the devastating effects of anti-LGBT bullying, harassment, and name-calling in America's schools. YPI salutes all "Day of Silence" participants, and looks forward to the day when no one will be afraid to be in school.

For more information about Day of Silence activities or to plan the event at your high school or college, contact YPI at (401) 421-5626 or safezoneypi@yahoo.com. You may also visit www.dayofsilence.org.

P.R.O.U.D. Leaders

By Rachel Floyd-Vinnitti

Youth Pride, Inc. is pleased to announce its newest program, PROUD (Powerful. Resilient. Outspoken. Unified. Determined) Leaders, an adventure-based youth leadership program launched January, 2005. Applicants to the PROUD Leaders program were required to submit and present works of art, poetry, essays, performance pieces, or oral presentations to YPI staff and youth for admission into the program. From these presentations, ten of Rhode Island's youth were selected to join the PROUD Leaders core team, although all youth will be able to participate in our workshop series.

As PROUD team members, youth will participate in workshops that focus on queer history, community organizing, resumé building, college application and admission, conflict resolution, social negotiation, and communication skills from February through May. The core team will also participate in three adventure trainings which may include rock climbing, white water rafting, hot air ballooning, camping, hiking, or other fun activities to be decided by the core team.

The final component of the PROUD Leaders program is a service learning project with a social justice focus. All core team members must select and plan an event that focuses on social justice issues and community. PROUD Leaders will be doing some serious work!!! Congratulations to all applicants and those chosen as core team members! Special thanks to Equity Action for funding this fabulous youth leadership opportunity.

**Empowering young people to fulfill their potential by supporting YPI?
...Priceless.**

Yes! I/we will proudly support Youth Pride, Inc. with a generous gift.
Please add me/us to your fabulous list of supporters.

- Visionary (\$5,000+)
- Collaborator (\$2,500-\$4,999)
- Advocate (\$1,000-\$2,499)
- Activist (\$250-\$999)
- Supporter (\$1-\$249)
- Check is enclosed.
- I'll give via credit card (call 421-5626 to learn how).
- I'll send \$_____ each month.
- I'll give via my workplace campaign this year.
- I'll host a house party to get my friends involved.

Your Name(s): _____ Telephone: _____

Mailing Address: _____ Email: _____

City/State/Zip _____

Please return to YPI, 95 Cedar Street, 3rd Floor, Providence, RI 02903-1062. **Thank you!**

Youth Pride, Inc. is a 501(c)3, nonprofit organization. All gifts are tax deductible to the extent permitted by law.

ypi wishes...

YPI wishes we had a building all our own. If a fairy god-person decided to make this happen, we'd look for real estate tomorrow. In the meantime, here are some other YPI wishes:

- A 15 passenger van; 24 generous angels giving \$1,000 each would send us to every event, speaking engagement, and conference we want to go to— about 250 trips a year. (Bonus: it'll be the coolest ride in town.)

- A sound system for our events, to save rental costs; three gifts of \$500 will get us one.

- Office supplies; if 23 YPI fans send \$250 each, we'll buy enough for the rest of the year.

- Offer our young people more networking opportunities; 25 gifts of \$100 can send them to a regional conference to present and learn from their peers.

- New computers and laser printers; 100 gifts of \$50 will get three to help youth do homework, learn, explore, and network.

- A new stereo system and games for our Drop-In Center; 20 \$25 gifts will get them.

YPI also wishes for a tool box, RIPTIX for youth, frequent flyer miles, canned goods and non-perishable food for our Food Pantry, gift cards (grocery stores, department stores, music stores), travel/hotel size shampoo, conditioner and soap, and spiral notebooks. And, of course, winning lottery tickets...

Lights! Camera! Queer!!! YPI's Talent Show Turns 10!

by Frankie Mateo

Join us for YPI's 10th Annual Talent Show! This event is very special to us, because it provides our youth with a great opportunity to showcase their immense talent and sense of humor. They put an enormous amount of work into preparing for the Talent Show, and it shows! This is a great chance to show your support for LGBTQQ youth who don't often get the recognition they deserve, and to gather for a night of fun, music, and laughter. Youth Pride's 10th Annual Talent Show will take place on Friday, June 3rd at the Round Top Center at Beneficent Congregational Church (300 Weybosset St. in Providence). Doors open at 6:30pm, show starts at 7pm; tickets will be sold at the door, \$5 for youth (ages 13-23) and \$10 for adults. This is a youth organized event and young people control the use of all profits (in the past they've subsidized trips, or purchased equipment and supplies for their activities).

For more information, please contact Frankie Mateo at (401) 421-5626.



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