

December 2006

Dear Community Partner,

In November of 2006 the Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, Trans-Identified and Questioning (GLBTQ) Youth Outreach Program held a conference, Beyond The Letters, where numerous students, school staff, and front line workers attended. We received an overwhelming response from the conference participants for the need to create a group for individuals to discuss and address issues pertaining to GLBTQ Youth. As a result of the response from the conference and recognizing the intricate needs of the GLBTQ Youth Outreach Program participants, we have proposed the creation of a GLBTQ Youth Advisory Committee.

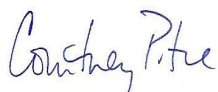
Some statistics to consider:

- Students hear anti-gay epithets 25 times a day
- 28% of glbtq youth drop out of school because of harassment
- In most schools teachers fail to respond to these comments 97% of the time
- Gay and lesbian youth are two to three times more likely to commit suicide than other youths
- 30 percent of all completed youth suicides are related to the issue of sexual identity
- 92% of glbtq youth have met someone from the internet in an unsafe manner

Enclosed with this document you will find a rough draft of some important information pertaining to the GLBTQ Youth Advisory Committee. Please take some time to look through this information and consider joining the Committee.

Please join us to continue to support GLBTQ youth in Niagara.

Respectfully,



Courtney Pitre  
Program Director  
GLBTQ Youth Outreach Program

# GLBTQ YOUTH ADVISORY COMMITTEE

## *What Is It?*

The GLBTQ Youth Advisory Committee is a team of school district staff, students, families, organizations, agencies and members of the community. It advises the school boards, local government, organizations and agencies through out the Niagara Region on issues pertaining to safe and welcoming environments for gender and sexually diverse youth.

## *Mission*

The mission of this committee is:

- Educate: raise awareness and promote a culture of respect
- Make an anti-homophobic presence visible in the community
- Create a more queer-positive culture among school staff, front line workers, and administrators

## *Goals*

We support programs to achieve the following goals and ally ourselves with others working to increase safety, family involvement, and student achievement

- Increase safety and sense of belonging for GLBTQ people in schools and community organizations.
- Increase visibility of GLBTQ issues to promote self-esteem, academic achievement, and respect for diversity.
- Reduce high-risk sexual behaviors, substance abuse, suicidal ideation and attempts, and dropout rate for GLBTQ students.
- Increase participation by GLBTQ parents/guardians and families in Niagara schools.
- Improve family and staff support for GLBTQ youth.

## *Activities*

The GLBTQ Youth Advisory Committee will assist in the following:

- Support the activities of the GSA's/Safer Space Programs in High schools.
- Provide workshops and training for school staff and organizations surrounding harassment and bullying.
- Provide administrative bodies with technical support around GLBTQ issues.

## *Membership*

Membership on the GLBTQ Youth Advisory Committee is open to anyone who is interested in working to ensure the goals and mission of the Committee are supported fully in the community. Although membership is open to anyone, it is strongly suggested for anyone who works front line with youth in the Niagara Region.