




DEPARTMENT FOR THE AGING

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Edwin Méndez-Santiago, MSW, CSW
Commissioner

MEMORANDUM

TO: Community Partners

FROM: Edwin Méndez-Santiago 

DATE: June 1, 2005

SUBJECT: Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender Senior Community

In an effort to improve services to older New Yorkers, Neal Lane, Director of New York State's Office for the Aging, has written to the many governmental offices for the aging throughout the State, to remind them of their role in addressing the needs of the Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender (LGBT) senior community. Mr. Lane estimates that there are over 200,000 LGBT seniors who live in New York State, but notes that this community continues to be underserved.

I, in turn, am now writing to you because we all play a part in meeting the needs of the LGBT senior community. Like all aging New Yorkers, LGBT seniors face the daunting problems of illness, reduced income, loss of friends and family, increased isolation and ageism. But LGBT seniors must also cope with homophobia, which may prevent them from seeking and finding the help they need to enjoy their later years.

LGBT seniors remain a largely hidden population. Many LGBT seniors grew up when there was little understanding and tolerance. They fear hostility, rejection or embarrassment when interacting with mainstream senior services. These fears may cause LGBT seniors to avoid accessing services or to hide their sexual orientation if they do access services. Further, a larger proportion of LGBT seniors live alone without the traditional support networks that would enable them to better age in place.

I ask that you consider ways that you can reach out to this community to assure them that they are welcome. For example, ensure that your outreach materials, brochures or other publications are inclusive. Or, when asking for information about a "spouse" – perhaps on an intake form or an emergency contact list -- add the option of providing information about a "partner." Or you could consider having an activity in recognition of Gay Pride Month this June. Even if you think that your constituency does not include many LGBT seniors, it may include seniors whose children and grandchildren belong to the LGBT community who will be glad to see their families validated in that way.

Attached please find a listing of some of the resources for LGBT seniors in New York City.

RESOURCES FOR LGBT SENIORS IN NEW YORK CITY

Empire State Pride Agenda Foundation LGBT Health and Human Services Network

Nora Yates, Coalitions Coordinator
647 Hudson Street, New York, NY 10014
212.627.0305

www.prideagenda.org
nyates@prideagenda.org

The Network is a group of nonprofit LGBT organizations that provides health and social services to LGBT New Yorkers, including youth, seniors, people of color, and women. The Network focuses on non-HIV related services, such as primary and preventive care, crime victim assistance, family counseling, and education.

GRIOT Circle

Glen Francis
30 3rd Avenue, Suite 212
Brooklyn, NY 11217-1822
718.246.2775

www.griotcircle.org
glen@griotcircle.org

Griot Circle is an intergenerational and culturally diverse community based organization serving older LGBT persons, especially Elders of Color.

The LGBT Community Center

208 West 13th Street, New York, NY 10011
212.620.7310

www.gaycenter.org

The largest LGBT multi-service organization on the East Coast and second largest LGBT center in the world, the center provides social services, public policy, educational and cultural/recreational programs.

SAGE

Services and Advocacy for GLBT Elders

Felix Gardon, Dir. of Education/Advocacy 305 W. Seventh Avenue, 16th Floor
New York, NY 10001
212.741.2247

fgardon@sageusa.org
www.sageusa.org

SAGE is the world's oldest & largest organization working to meet the needs of aging GLBT persons with direct services, education, and advocacy.

SAGE/ Queens

Karen Taylor, Executive Director
74-09 37th Avenue, Room 409
Jackson Heights, NY 11372
718.533.6459

www.fhch.org (click on programs, senior services, senior centers)
ktaylor@fhch.org

SAGE Queens is a clubhouse program of the Forest Hills Community House with classes, discussion groups, and other activities for LGBT older adults.