



*DJJ hosts roundtable discussion to commemorate Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender & Queer/Questioning Pride Month.*

## **DJJ Commemorates Pride Month with Roundtable Discussion at Horizon Juvenile Center**

On Tuesday, June 9, 2009, the Department of Juvenile Justice hosted its annual roundtable discussion to commemorate Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender and Queer/Questioning (LGBTQ), Pride Month at Horizon Juvenile Center.

The discussion began with a welcome message from DJJ Equal Employment Opportunity Officer Tonia Haynes and opening remarks by Deputy Commissioner for Legal Affairs & General Counsel Herman Dawson.

The discussion's featured guest was Charisa Smith, Esq., who serves as Director of the Juvenile Justice Project at the Correctional Association of New York. She provided discussion participants and guests with insight into issues and concerns of interest to LGBTQ youth. Ms. Smith, a very active and visible advocate for the rights and concerns of New York's LGBTQ community, opened the discussion with the question, "Is the acronym LGBTQ the right usage when referring to Lesbians, Gays, Bisexuals, Transgender and Queer?"

Deputy Commissioner Dawson discussed efforts taken at DJJ to ensure all employees and youth in the Department's care are treated with equal respect and understanding.

Ms. Smith is a graduate of Harvard University and Yale Law School. She is the sponsor of several advocacy coalitions for LGBTQ youth, and she encourages respect and passionate support for LGBTQ youth in her advocacy endeavors.

