



April 2015

LGBTQ Foster Care Youth: The Silent Voices



Princess for a Day

The Princess for a Day event on Sunday, May 3rd, 2015 is an opportunity for Oregon children 2-18 to be treated like a princess for a day. It is designed to be a gift for foster children in the community as well as to raise awareness of local foster children. The day of princess pampering includes: tea party lunch, hair and makeup, photo shoot, and a princess outfit to keep! This event is open to all princesses. There is a \$50 registration fee



Introduction:

Youth in foster care endure many issues with their self-esteem, psychological trauma and a true understanding of who there are and where their roots lead to. LGBTQ youth in particular not only face the severe psychological trauma of being placed into state care, but they also deal with a severe amount of hate, bullying, discrimination, sexual and verbal harassment.

for non-foster children.

Anybody who has been involved with this event in the past knows that the sponsors, donations, and volunteers are what makes Princess for a Day happen. Thank-you to everyone who has taken part!

We are getting closer to Princess Day and we need your help! We need sponsors, however if you can't become a sponsor but want to take part you can volunteer, spread the word about the event, or donate! Become involved and learn more or register your princess [here](#).



[The Kids Are Listening: LGTBQ Foster Youth \(Video\)](#)

What does LGBTQ stand for?

The series of letter encompass all the individuals and communities who identify as Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender and Questioning. There are some adolescents who question their personal sexual orientation and gender identity and would like to be identified as questioning.



LGBTQ Youth in Foster Care

Often times, LGBTQ youth will face discrimination in state care. LGBTQ youth with sometimes face harassment or rejection from their foster parents and even from their caseworker. There is not a clear percentage of identifying LGBTQ youth in foster care that be accounted for. Many LGBTQ youth worry about the perceptions of other's if they were to identify as an LGBTQ youth in foster care. LGBTQ youth are estimated to make up a higher disproportionate share of the foster care pool. Due to the fact that many LGBTQ youth face disapproval or rejection, they often times hide their sexual identification to protect permanency actions that could be affected if they were to self-identify as

an LGBTQ youth.

Legal Rights for LGBTQ Youth in Foster Care

Many foster youth have reported numerous circumstances in which they were subjected to abuse from group home facilities, foster parents and even social workers. "In 2005, three juveniles, who were either identified or perceived as lesbian, gay, bisexual or transgender and who have been confined at the Hawaii Youth Correctional Facility, sued the facility after experiencing anti-LGBT abuse while in state custody (R.G v. Keller, 415 F. Supp. 2d 1129). These youth experienced multiple counts of verbal, physical and sexual harassment from others that resided within the facility. Other members of the facility would often expose themselves to these youth and pressure them into sexual acts while residing within the facility. The facility then took it upon themselves to place them in a confined area, where they were still subject to continuous discrimination.



The most important issue at hand was that their constitutional right to safety and protection of physical, mental and emotional well-being were violated. All youth, including youth that identify as LGBTQ have the right to safety while in foster care. This includes the protection against threats to an adolescent's physical, mental and emotional well-being. In support of this, foster providers and social workers appointed to work with these youth also have to take great consideration to the environment in which the youth is living in. Some youth have reported that their provider or social worker did not advocate for them appropriately. Also, some foster youth have reported that their providers have often wanted to "change them" or manipulate the way they self-identify. Child welfare professionals must acknowledge the sexual identity of the youth they serve and make certain that the placement they choose for them is safe and that the foster providers feel comfortable and capable of having a safe and loving environment for an LGBTQ youth.



Mentoring LGBTQ Youth

We have youth that identify as LGBTQ that would like to be matched with a mentor of a similar background. We are so fortunate to have proud LGBTQ youth in our program and we wish to honor them with mentors that can help support them through their own unique journey. If you have experience with being an LGBTQ advocate, ally or individual please contact: mentor@afamilyforeverychild.org to learn how you can help empower LGBTQ youth in your community.

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