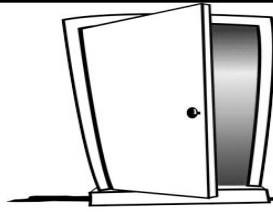


**RAINBOW
HEIGHTS CLUB**
25 FLATBUSH AVE.
4TH FLOOR
BROOKLYN, NY
11217



Rainbow Heights Club

JULY 2009

Xpress

Rainbow Heights Club is a project of Heights-Hill Mental Health Service-South Beach Psychiatric Center Community Advisory Board, Inc. that provides psychosocial support and advocacy services, free of charge, to lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender mental health consumers.

This newsletter is made possible by the continued support of City Council Member Bill de Blasio.

Inside this issue:

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Monthly Calendar

NEW STAFF at RHC!!

Special Events/ Parker's Farewell Letter

Roving Reporter/ Friends & Family Brunch



30 staff, members and volunteers marched in NYC Pride for the first time this year in honor of Stonewall's 40th Anniversary!



RHC's Annual Pride Celebration Special Guest



Above: NYS Assembly Member Hakeem Jeffries assists in drawing the raffle at this years Pride Open House, June 26th.

NY State Assembly Member Hakeem Jeffries visited the club during the Pride Open House. He announced that he has allocated \$125,000 in the form of a capital project grant that will provide for some needed improvements in the Heights Hill Mental Health Service building. To help keep our members, staff and visitors safer we will be installing enhanced security cameras in the elevator lobbies and elevators. Our art room will be getting a makeover and we'll be getting new monitors for the computer room.

We will be creating a classroom on the 5th floor for the use of Rainbow Heights Club groups and we'll be improving our communications system with the installation of an integrated telephone system. All of these enhancements to the building we share with several other organizations will help ensure that we'll be able to continue to provide high quality services for our members for many years to come.

DIRECTOR'S CORNER: NICOLE AVALLONE, LMSW

Change and growth continues here at Rainbow Heights Club! This month we are sad to see the departure of our long-time staff member Parker Hurley, but happy to welcome some new staff members. As many of you know, Parker began with the club as an undergraduate intern, later returned as our very first Outreach Coordinator, and most recently has filled a major role as our Outreach & Member Services Coordinator. Basically, he's done it all! And now he'll be moving on to pursue a doctoral degree. While we're sad to see him go, we are so proud and excited for him as he moves on to this new chapter in his life. If you'd like to wish him well, stop by on Thursday, July 16th as we gather together to celebrate

his invaluable contribution to the club!

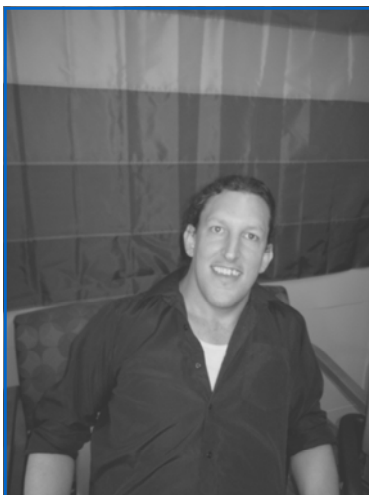
With one loss, we've also made a couple of wonderful gains in hiring not only a new Member Services Coordinator, but also a part-time Outreach Coordinator. By the time you get this newsletter, Imani Henry will have taken on his new role as Member Services Coordinator and Julienne Brown will just be settling into her role as Outreach Coordinator! Check out page 4 for an introduction and come on by to give a warm RHC welcome to these newest members of our team.

As always, I'd like to use this space to give you a quick run-down of the special events that we've got planned for the month of July. On **Thursday, July 2nd** we'll be having our **4th of July celebration** (a couple

days early) with a delicious barbeque spread at 4pm.* On **Wednesday, July 13th** we'll be heading out to **Coney Island** for a fun-filled afternoon. As mentioned earlier, we'll have **Parker's Farewell Party** on **Thursday, July 16th**. And as always our monthly **Friend's & Families Brunch** will be the last Sunday of the month, **July 26th**, and **July Birthday's Celebration** will be the last Friday of the month, **July 31st**! We hope to see you here for one of the exciting happening during the month of July!

***The club will be closed on Friday July 3rd in observation of the holiday**
****Brooklyn Hospital will be providing on site rapid HIV testing for members on Thursday, July 23rd from 12:30-4:30**

Member Spotlight: Anthony Lorito



Anthony Lorito, RHC Member

Hi, I'm Anthony Lorito and I've been a proud a member of the club since 2005! A peer advocate I worked with at the Lodge Bridger Program recommended the club then and I've been coming ever since (which isn't so easy since I'm living in the far away borough of Staten Island!). I've seen the club grow a lot over the years with more events, groups, members and staff. And I've grown too!

For example, just recently I got great advice from my peers in the Too Much Group (our new group about addictive behaviors) which helped me get through a challenging time. Rainbow Heights has done so much for me by helping me to become an 'enabled' and productive member of society rather than a patient 'disabled' by mental illness.



JULY 2009



Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
		<p>A Hot Nutritious Meal is served at 4pm Monday through Friday. Sunday Brunch is served at 2:00pm.</p>				
5	6	7	8	9	10	11
Open Support Group, Brunch, Current Events Discussion	Artistic Expressions Group, Psychoeducation Group, Open Socialization	Zappalorti, Fun Committee, Bi/sexuality/Chess Club, Thoughts & Feelings, Poetry Group	Walking Group, Outreach TF, Community Meeting, SAGE, LGBT FEDERATION MEETING	Trans/Gend Explorers, Womens/Mens Group, Cooking Night, Music Group.	'Addictions' Group, Coming Out Group/ Lesbian Group, Karaoke	Writing Group, 'Addictions' Group, Coming Out Group/ Lesbian Group, Karaoke
12	13	14	15	16	17	18
Open Support Group, Brunch, Current Events Discussion	Artistic Expressions Group, Psychoeducation Group, Open Socialization	Zappalorti, Fun Committee, Bi/sexuality/Chess Club, Thoughts & Feelings, Poetry Group	Walking Grp, Outreach TF, Community Meeting, SAGE	PARKER'S FAREWELL PARTY	'Addictions' Group, Coming Out Group/ Lesbian Group, Karaoke	Writing Group, 'Addictions' Group, Coming Out Group/ Lesbian Group, Karaoke
19	20	21	22	23	24	25
Open Support Group, Brunch, Current Events Discussion	Artistic Expressions Group, Psychoeducation Group, Open Socialization	Zappalorti, Fun Committee, Bi/sexuality/Chess Club, Thoughts & Feelings, Poetry Group	Walking Grp, Outreach TF, Community Meeting, SAGE, TRIP to CONEY ISLAND!	HIV Testing 12:30-4:30	Writing Group, 'Addictions' Group, Coming Out Group/ Lesbian Group, Karaoke	Writing Group, 'Addictions' Group, Coming Out Group/ Lesbian Group, Karaoke
26	27	28	29	30	31	
Friends & Family Brunch 12:30-4:30	Artistic Expressions Group, Psychoeducation Group, Open Socialization	Zappalorti, Fun Committee, Bi/sexuality/Chess Club, Thoughts & Feelings, Poetry Group	Walking Group, Outreach TF, Community Meeting, SAGE	Trans/Gend Explorers, Womens/Mens Group, Cooking Night, Music Group	Writing Group, 'Addictions' Group, Coming Out Group/ Lesbian Group, Karaoke, July Birthday	

WELCOME RHC's NEW OUTREACH COORDINATOR: Julienne Brown



Featured Above: Julienne "June" Brown,
RHC's New Outreach Coordinator
juliennebrown@rainbowheights.org
718-852-5211

Julienne Brown is a transgender woman of color activist who comes from the Lower East Side of Manhattan and currently resides in the central Bronx. Julienne is also known as "June" by her fellow community members. Her past work experiences included organizing youth against police brutality, facilitating workshops for various health care service providers, creating a transgender woman of color focused media/print/ad campaign, participating in various transgender woman of color focused print/ad campaigns, and facilitating a support group for young homeless transgender women of color, and working in the role of Communications Coordinator for the Sylvia Rivera Law Project. (**S.R.L.P.**) Julienne is one of the original founding members of **Fabulous Independent Educated Radicals for Community Empowerment** (or **F.I.E.R.C.E.**) an organization created by and for Transgender, Gender Queer, Gay and Lesbian youth of color activists. She is extremely happy to be joining the Rainbow Heights Club staff.

WELCOME RHCS NEW MEMBER SERVICES COORDINATOR: Imani Henry

My name is Imani Henry and I'm the new Members Services Coordinator. I first learned about all the great stuff happening at Rainbow Heights back in 2004, so I'm very excited about working here. I have been a social service worker for over 15 years and have worked at a lot of different places, such as Housing Works Inc, The Audre Lourde Project and Community Access. I'm also a political activist, playwright and performer.

As a transman of color so very proud to be working for an organization that is leading the way to change the isolation and stigma that LGBT people living with mental health conditions face, I feel that, Rainbow Heights Club is not only an essential resource for LGBT mental health consumers, but its very existence makes our entire LGBT community a better place.

So if you haven't met me as yet, please feel free to drop by to and say "Hi!" Looking forward to getting to know you all,

Imani Henry



Featured Above: Imani Henry,
RHC's New Member Services Coordinator
imanihenry@rainbowheights.org
718-852-2584



CONEY ISLAND ADVENTURES

Wednesday, July 15th
Departing the club at 12:30pm

Once again the club will be heading out to Coney Island for a day of fun in the (hopefully!) sun! Did you know that Coney Island was the world's largest amusement park in the early part of the 20th century? We'll be stopping in to the Coney Island History Project's exhibition center where the early images will make you feel that you've taken a step back in time. Much has changed since those early days, but the excitement along the boardwalk remains.

Parker's Goodbye Letter

It is hard to encapsulate what these past five years have meant to me. I showed up at RHC a wide-eyed undergraduate student intern who was willing, and eager, but unaware of the unique challenges and contributions of LGBT individuals living with mental illnesses. Since then I have had the opportunity to grow along with the agency: both observing times of transition, loss, celebration and learning.

I will be leaving in July to pursue a Ph.D. in Higher Education with the aspirations of making learning spaces more accessible to people of color, as well as transgender & gender non-conforming students and otherwise marginalized populations. With your support I will continue to work to illuminate the disparities that exist for queer folks and work to create a standard of living that transcends surviving.

Throughout the years I have worn many hats—first as an intern, then as the HIV Educator, then the Outreach Coordinator, and finally as the Member Services & Outreach Coordinator. It was an honor to have done this work. I have had an incredible opportunity to represent an agency and communities whose tenacity, creativity and determination always amazes me. I will be forever indebted to the RHC community for instilling in me the magic that can only happen when we decide to tell our stories, 'transpose silence into action' and share our hurt. I will always find time to meditate on your struggles and to celebrate your triumphs—none of them will be forgotten. I want to thank the staff at RHC for working tirelessly to create a space we should all

be very proud of and then returning to table, battle-weary, always wanting to give more and do better. I want to thank the members for always keeping me on my toes, for blessing me with your trust and all of the memories that we share. I also want to thank the community, the providers, allies and supporters of RHC that I have grown to know and respect; together we have begun the necessary work to change NYC's mental health services to include LGBTQ folks. There is still so much work to be done. I look forward to the updates.

What I know most is that I will be forever changed by all of you. Thank you for welcoming me into your lives and allowing me to be a part of your narratives. I am lucky to have been a part of the Rainbow Heights Club.

Peace & Gratitude, Parker Hurley, LMSW



RHC's Roving Reporter...

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11217

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We're on the Web!
www.rainbowheights.org

**SAVE THE
DATE:**

July 8th

LGBT

Federation

@ The Center 3pm

July 16th

Parker's Farewell
Party

July 22nd

Trip to Coney
Island

July 23rd

Rapid HIV
Testing

July 26th

Friends & Family
Brunch

July 31st

July Birthday
Celebration



Featured Above: Natalie Lessinger,
Peer Specialist

"How have you changed since you came to Rainbow Heights?"

"I've gotten more relaxed open up more easily."

-Bill W.

"I'm less depressed. I've become more social."

Peter

"I've become louder more extraverted and happier."

-Steven

The Last Sunday of Each Month is:
Friends and Family

**Sunday
Brunch**

at



Noon - 4:30pm

The last Sunday of each month we invite you to invite those who you consider to be important in your life and your recovery, to visit your club and join us for Brunch!



Every Month
we will present an hour of
LIVE ENTERTAINMENT
with a delicious brunch served at 2pm.

*So whether you want to enjoy a delicious brunch, listen to some music, have a chat, or just chill with a book or magazine you can do it at
Rainbow Heights Club.*

25 Flatbush Avenue, 4th Floor Brooklyn, NY 11217
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