

## **True Colors, Inc Sexual Minority Youth & Family Case Statements**

True Colors works to create a world where youth of all sexual orientations and gender identities are valued and affirmed. We challenge all forms of oppression through education, training, advocacy, youth leadership development, mentoring and direct services to youth and those responsible for their well-being. We work with schools, families, communities of faith; municipal, state and federal agencies, legislators and policy makers across the state of Connecticut with a \$523,000 budget, a volunteer Board of Directors, five full time staff, numerous student interns and scores of volunteers.

### **On-on-One Mentoring Program**

True Colors provides one of only two in the nation, and Connecticut's only, lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) youth mentoring program, bringing the benefits of mentoring directly to more than 100 youth across the State of Connecticut. In addition to one-on-one mentoring with trained and screened adults, this program provides weekly group activities such as game nights, movie nights, dances, etc. These activities provide participating youth the opportunity for healthy peer interactions and social development - key components of adolescent development that are often missing for LGBT youth. This program represents 41% of our annual budget and is funded through the State Department of Children and Families, The United Way of Central CT and varying private foundations such as the Hartford Foundation for Public Giving.

### **Annual Conference**

Our oldest and most well known program, the True Colors annual conference began as a field work project for our founder and current Executive Director in 1994 and is now the largest and most comprehensive LGBT youth issues conference in the nation. Nearly 3,000 youth, educators, social workers, clinicians, family members and clergy participate in more than 150 workshops, films, activities and events over the course of the 2-day event. School groups participate from more than half of the communities in CT, from across the Northeast and nationally. This program represents 20% of our annual budget and is funded through conference registrations, co-sponsorships, ads and donations.

### **Youth Leadership Development**

When we began working with Schools and school environments in 1994, there were only 4 Gay/Straight Alliances in Connecticut. Now there are more than 160. True Colors had a hand directly or indirectly in the development of most of them. Over the last 18 years, we have conducted dozens of summits, forums and trainings for youth, helping them launch and maintain programs in their school. In addition, we have created various leadership development curricula for use with our organizers and volunteers. Most recently we have created a six week, on-site training program designed to give young activists the tools they need to advocate for themselves and others. This program represents 8% of our annual budget and is funded through private foundations such as the Perrin Family Fund and the Auerbach Fox Fund.

### **Safe Harbors Task Force/Foster Parent Recruitment**

Supported through a Personal Service Agreement with the State Department of Children and Families, this program includes policy, programming and advocacy work. True Colors manages a state wide task force focused on the needs of LGBT youth in out of home care (foster care, congregate care, juvenile justice). In addition, we recruit foster parents for teens of all orientations and genders and have helped find homes for more than 20 youth over the last few years. This program represents 6% of our annual budget and is funded through DCF.

### **Cultural Competency Training**

Our values clarification and cultural competency training curriculum has been nationally recognized and is in fact, the only curriculum the Child Welfare League of America has ever published (June, 2006). We train approximately 2,400 youth-serving professionals a year. True Colors Executive Director co-authored [A Sexuality and Gender Diversity Training Program: Increasing the Competency of Mental Health Professionals](#). (Jackson, Rebekah; McClosky, Kathy and McHaelen, Robin. 2011) Professional Resource Press: FL. This program is funded as a fee-based service. It currently represents 4% of our annual budget and clearly presents an opportunity for substantial growth.

### **Spiritual Institute**

The Spiritual Institute began in 2009 and focuses on the Spiritual needs of LGBT youth. Its primary mission is to help create safe and affirming spaces in which LGBT youth might do their spiritual work. The team is made up of a collaboration of clergy, lay leaders, and individuals. Together this group has organized a conference and hosted community conversations across the state. This program represents 1% of our budget and does not currently have a funding stream.

### **Administrative Expenses**

Represents 12% of our budget and is currently funded through individual donors (4%), private foundations (5%) and fundraising events (3%)