

# Queers for Economic Justice

## WHAT WE DO

### PUBLIC EDUCATION

#### *WE BRING INFORMATION TO THE COMMUNITY*

Through speak-outs and discussions, **QEJ** brings issues of queer poverty and economic injustice into the spotlight by educating the larger LGBT community, anti-poverty organizations, and the general public. *Recent events include:*

- ▼ **BEYOND IRAQ: The Impact Of 'The War On Terrorism' On Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender Communities**
- ▼ **LOVE AND MARRIAGE, BUSH STYLE: A Community Forum Exploring the Relationship Between Welfare Reform and Gay Marriage**
- ▼ **ENSURING SHELTER FOR HOMELESS TRANSGENDER NEW YORKERS: A Community Forum Exploring Alternatives To Our Current System**
- ▼ **HOMELESS LGBT YOUTH: A Community Speak-Out**
- ▼ **POST-PRESIDENTIAL-ELECTION TOWN HALL MEETING**
- ▼ **WHY WELFARE REFORM IS A QUEER ISSUE**
- ▼ **GAY GENTRIFICATION: What Role Do LGBT People Play In Gentrifying Neighborhoods?**
- ▼ **DE-FUNDING OUR LIVES: the LGBT Community and the Privatization of Social Security and the Federal Tax Cuts**

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### ADVOCACY

#### *WE MAKE GOVERNMENT PAY ATTENTION*

**QEJ** works to integrate the issues of queer people into the advocacy agendas of economic justice organizations and to incorporate anti-poverty issues into the advocacy agendas of LGBT organizations. As a result of our ongoing efforts, numerous issues affecting LGBT homeless people are being addressed by the City of New York. *Recent successes include:*

- ▼ **We organized New York LGBT organizations to demand that the City treat homeless LGBT domestic partners as if they are a married couple when they apply for shelter. In March, 2005, the Speaker of the City Council introduced a bill requiring the Department of Homeless Services and other agencies to treat homeless domestic partners as equal to homeless married couples.**
- ▼ **The Bowery Mission, one of the largest private providers of shelter in the country, changed their admission policy, which on religious grounds had barred homeless lesbians from receiving shelter. Their application process no longer discriminates against lesbians.**
- ▼ **As a result of a QEJ community forum, members of NYC's City Council met to address the problem of homeless youth and — for the first time — included \$1.3 million in the City budget specifically to fund beds for homeless LGBT youth.**
- ▼ **QEJ was also invited by the NYC's Department of Youth and Community Development to help them develop revised agency materials that are sensitive to the needs of LGBT youth to use when they contract with shelter providers.**
- ▼ **As a result of our joint advocacy with two other organizations, NYC's Department of Homeless Services agreed to create a policy that would allow transgender residents to self-determine which shelter system (male or female) they would like to live in.**

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## ORGANIZING

### ***WE BUILD COMMUNITY AND TRAIN LEADERS***

In 2004, **QEJ** launched a three-part Shelter Organizing Project. *It included:*

- ***Outreach/Support groups***

**QEJ** staff trained volunteers to be facilitators of 8-week support groups for LGBT residents in various homeless shelters. At these groups, QEJ volunteers offered support, gave referrals, collected information, and recruited people for organizing campaigns.

- ***“Know Your Rights” Trainings***

Monthly trainings have reached hundreds of LGBT shelter residents. Topics have included:

- ▼ “How To Get A Job If You Have A Criminal Record”
- ▼ “Using Domestic Partnership To Get Into A Family Shelter”
- ▼ “How To Access Social Security and Medicare ”
- ▼ “How to Deal With The Police”
- ▼ “How To Get Out Of A Shelter and Into Supportive Housing”
- ▼ “Winning Your Welfare Fair Hearing Trail”
- ▼ “How To Find Housing If You Have A Criminal Record”
- ▼ “Accessing Welfare ”

- ***Leadership Development Course***

This 10-week course helps LGBT current and former shelter residents hone their skills as activists and advocates working for systemic change. Seven participants are currently in the middle of our first 10-week session. This course is divided into three sections, covering LGBT issues and politics (3 weeks); Organizing and Advocacy Skills (3 weeks) and Analysis of Public Policy-making (4 weeks).

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## TRAININGS

### ***WE COME TO YOU***

**QEJ** staff and Board members provide trainings for community organizations, social service agencies, homeless shelter staff and others on issues such as:

- ▼ LGBT sensitivity
- ▼ queer poverty issues
- ▼ transgender issues
- ▼ welfare reform
- ▼ criminal justice
- ▼ homelessness & the shelter system
- ▼ the war on terrorism
- ▼ corporate welfare
- ▼ sexual liberation

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### **For More Information Contact Us At:**

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