

NEWS

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CAMBA LAUNCHES 2017 MULTIMEDIA CAMPAIGN TO PROMOTE FAMILY SUPPORT OF LGBTQ YOUTH

Campaign will run in Spanish as well as English

Brooklyn, NY – With the air outside Borough Hall filled with the all-female Afro-Brazilian samba reggae music of Batalá, one of New York City’s largest multi-service non-profits was joined by New York City First Lady Chirlane McCray today to launch its 2017 marketing campaign to promote parental and familial acceptance of LGBTQ (lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer/questioning) youth.

CAMBA, which runs the initiative with funding from the New York Health Department, calls the effort **Project ALY** (Accept LGBTQ Youth).

Now in its fifth year, **Project ALY** works to promote parental and familial acceptance of LGBTQ (lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer/questioning) youth, increasing self-esteem and self-worth and decreasing risk of future health or mental health problems including HIV infection and substance abuse.

“Parental and societal acceptance for LGBTQ children plays a critical role in a child’s mental and physical health and has been shown to dramatically decrease their risk for depression, HIV infection and substance abuse,” **said Joanne M. Oplustil, President and CEO of CAMBA/CAMBA Housing Ventures.** “CAMBA is proud to act as a leader in creating a healthier city for our young people as we prominently display these messages of acceptance for LGBTQ youth throughout Brooklyn.”

“Parents and caregivers are our first teachers and protectors--but that is not always the case for many LGBTQ young people, whose families struggle to accept their identity. I commend CAMBA for stepping up with this new campaign to help parents better understand and appreciate their children as they are. Prominently displaying messages that promote acceptance will help parents of LGBTQ young people and our communities to be more accepting and affirming," **said First Lady Chirlane McCray,** who leads the NYC Unity Project.

Project ALY, which began in 2013, promotes acceptance through educational workshops for parents, community groups, and agencies; the development of role model stories, highlighting the stories of parents and family members who have developed greater acceptance for their LGBTQ youth; and social marketing campaigns.

Project ALY's 2017 social marketing campaign will include ads promoting family acceptance on bus shelters throughout Brooklyn, as well as digital ads on Facebook and Twitter. Transit ads started last week and run through October 15.

Project ALY's 2017 campaign will, for the first time, run in Spanish as well as English. More information on the campaign and resources for parents, family members and youth is available at www.camba.org/ProjectALY.

“Honest conversations begin with trust,” said **Dr. Demetre Daskalakis, Deputy Commissioner for the NYC Health Department’s Division of Disease Control**. “Loving and accepting your child, no matter what, allows parents to support their children to become happy, healthy LGBTQ adults. CAMBA’s campaign hits the mark.”

"Young LGBTQ Brooklynites are at the core of our borough's social fabric," said **Brooklyn Borough President Eric L. Adams**. "That's why I am so proud to have CAMBA launch their 2017 multimedia campaign on the steps of Brooklyn Borough Hall - the People's House - to promote family support of LGBTQ young people. This initiative will undoubtedly have a profound impact on parents and families across the borough, and will empower our young people with greater self-esteem and important health and mental wellness information. Embracing our LGBTQ youth is an essential part of building One Brooklyn, where everyone is accepted and loved for who they are."

NYC Commission on Human Rights Chair and Commissioner Carmelyn P. Malalis said: “LGBTQ youth need love and acceptance to thrive at home, in school, and in their everyday lives. We applaud CAMBA’s Project ALY new campaign promoting family acceptance of LGBTQ youth and look forward to supporting and facilitating additional efforts promoting family conversations around sexuality and gender identity so that LGBTQ youth across the City have the support and tools they need to live safe, happy, and healthy lives.”

Leandro Rodriguez, Latino Commission on AIDS and Director of the Oasis-Latino LBGBTS Wellness Center, said: “Young Latino gay and bi men, and transgender Latinas deal with stigma, homophobia, transphobia, racism, anti-immigrant sentiments within our own Latino communities as well as the community-at-large. Loneliness, isolation, and lack of support are also issues that impact our youth. Familial support is important for our young adults, in their development process.”

“Decision making about health is intrinsically linked to an individual self-worth,” said **Suzanne Robinson Davis, Program Director of the Wellness Center, Hepatitis C, Community Health & HIV Partnerships for Care Program (P4C) Bedford-Stuyvesant Family Health Center**. “As a community, we need to foster and create enabling environments for our LGBT youth of color. Our community needs evidence-based programs that can benefit LGBT youth and their families and that are positioned to define a stigma-free generation. Bedford Stuyvesant Family health Center supports programs that value these principles.”

According to **Floyd Rumohr, Executive Director, Brooklyn Community Pride Center**, “Our LGBTQ+ youth continue to receive negative messages about just being who they are — especially in this political environment that has given bullies and bigots permission to act on their hate. Project Aly sends positive messages of hope to our young people and encourages families and friends to stand up and speak out in support. A representative image, kind word, or a resolute ally can save lives.”

“Often a person (even a child) will encounter messages and experience actions of hate at home and other places people are present, said **Bishop Stacey Latimer, founder and spiritual leader of Love Alive International Sanctuary of Praise-Worship Center of New York City**. “Fortunately hate is a learned behavior. Fortunate in that it can be unlearned. Unaware to many, hate is ingrained in a number of religious beliefs. The truth is, the Divine has given each of us free will to choose to love or to hate. Each second of the day we are faced with that important choice. Due to past teachings (whether via culture, customs, traditions, and/or religion), love must be taught and lifted more for its embrace. Love is the only power that heals ALL as it aids in overcoming ALL. Thank you CAMBA for reminding us, teaching and helping to lead us to greater levels of love that forgives, reconciles, and heals each ill! We will find ourselves blessed by your efforts under-girded by hope in the days ahead. Stay diligent and encouraged. Love and the power it possesses is with you!”

“As a partner in providing healthcare to the LGBTQ community for many years, we are honored to support CAMBA in their effort to break down barriers to acceptance and, ultimately, barriers to good health,” says **Larry K. McReynolds, executive director of Family Health Centers at NYU Langone**. “We know from more than 50 years of experience that underlying issues such as family rejection and stigma contribute toward health disparities that lead to poor sexual and emotional health. Project ALY is important work that can save lives.”

“HMI is grateful to CAMBA’s project ALY for committing to address one of the systemic causes of LGBTQ youth trauma and homelessness, the lack of acceptance that leads to familial rejection, “ said **Lillian Rivera, Director of Advocacy and Capacity Building at Hetrick-Martin Institute (HMI)**. “Having parents and guardians understand the challenges facing their children and providing them with opportunities to gain knowledge and skills in supporting their child can ultimately help us to stem the tide of LGBQ youth consistently facing systemic barriers and struggles, such as misplaced discrimination and fear relating to HIV and AIDS.”

“Unfortunately, people are still worried about what other people think,” said **Riley, father of a gay son**. “How does being gay change the person that you are?” I let my son know, ‘*Tú eres mi sangre*—you’re my blood, no matter what.’”

The **Project ALY** campaign was developed with feedback from focus groups and interviews with LGBTQ youth and parents who are supportive of their LGBTQ children.

Research with Latino families highlighted the importance of including the extended family in messages promoting LGBTQ youth acceptance.

Research demonstrates that family acceptance of LGBTQ youth affects risky sexual, drug-using behaviors, and mental health. Dr. Caitlyn Ryan and the work of the Family Acceptance Project based at San Francisco State University have shown:

- Compared to LGBTQ youth who are accepted by their parents and caregivers, those who are rejected by their families are eight times more likely to attempt suicide, three times as likely to use illegal drugs, and three times as likely to be at high risk for HIV and STDs;
- Families are more motivated to support their LGBTQ children when they learn how their words and actions can damage their children's well-being; and
- Nearly all LGBTQ youth who have extremely accepting families believe they will have a good life as an adult, compared to only 1 in 3 whose families are not at all accepting.

About CAMBA

Started in 1977, CAMBA is a nonprofit agency that connects people with opportunities to enhance their quality of life. CAMBA offers integrated services and programs in: Economic Development, Education & Youth Development, Family Support, Health, Housing and Legal Services. CAMBA serves more than 50,000 individuals and families, including 10,000 youth, each year. Learn more about CAMBA's life-changing services at www.camba.org.

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