



PRESS RELEASE

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Media Contact:

Ellen Vaz: 646-336-6789, ext. 209
646-709-2064 (cell), ellen@fiercenyc.org

LGBTQ YOUTH OF COLOR WIN SEAT ON HUDSON RIVER PARK TRUST ADVISORY COUNCIL

FIERCE celebrates significant victory in its campaign to open 24-hour LGBTQ youth center on Pier 40 and secure community decision-making power in park development

(New York, NY) On Wednesday, September 23, 2009, FIERCE won an important victory in its campaign to open a 24-hour LGBTQ youth center on Pier 40 when the Hudson River Park Trust (HRPT) Advisory Council approved a motion to grant FIERCE an Advisory Council seat. FIERCE was among three community groups to win representation on the council and is the only LGBTQ youth-focused organization to hold such a position. The appointment marks a major victory in the organization's fight to keep the West Village Waterfront a safe place for lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer (LGBTQ) youth.

"Our appointment to the HRPT Advisory Council is one example of how the community now considers LGBTQ youth an important voice on waterfront development issues," stated Azreal Morales, an Active FIERCE member who serves on the Campaign Steering Committee that meets with HRPT representatives and elected officials to advocate for a 24-hour LGBTQ youth center as an element of Pier 40's redevelopment.

Earlier this year as part of the *Our S.P.O.T. (Safe Place to Organize Together) Campaign*, FIERCE released legislative amendments to the Hudson River Park Act that included expanding the decision-making power of community members in the pier redevelopment process. FIERCE's *White Paper: Expanding Access to Public Space at the Hudson River Park* calls for amendments that would prioritize the creation of public space, preserve community uses of the park, increase community decision-making power, and stop over-development in the Hudson River Park.

"This is an important step in our struggle to be recognized as stakeholders in the Hudson River Park community," stated Desiree Marshall, Lead Organizer at FIERCE. "As little as 4 years ago, we would not have been invited to sit at this table. Now, due to the organizing work of our members—LGBTQ youth of color—and their persistence to be recognized by elected officials and West Village residents, our voice will be counted in the conversations concerning development on the piers. We bring an important perspective and experience that is currently missing from the debate."

Since 2000, FIERCE has been dedicated to making sure the needs of LGBTQ youth are not forgotten in the wake of redevelopments along the West Village Waterfront. Through the *Safe Space Saves Lives* and *Our S.P.O.T.* campaigns, FIERCE members have won significant victories for their community, including most recently, free programming on the pier for LGBTQ youth. On September 19, 2009, FIERCE, in collaboration with the Friends of Hudson River Park

and the Kiki Coalition, hosted a historic ball on Pier 46 that was attended by over 600 LGBTQ youth and featured performances by famed dance crew *Vogue Evolution*.

In addition to serving the needs of LGBTQ youth, FIERCE is dedicated to creating a park that is accessible to everyone and meets the needs of the entire community, from Little Leaguers to local residents. “Our White Paper recommendations impact all West Village community members, not just LGBTQ youth,” stated Azreal Morales. “We must stand united against the over-development of our piers and parks and for increased community decision-making power in what happens to our public spaces. It is crucial that our elected officials at the City and State levels and Community Board 2 endorse FIERCE’s policy recommendations and prioritize their work with community groups to implement changes that benefit everyone in the community, including LGBTQ youth. Tonight we took a step in the right direction.”

To learn more about FIERCE’s campaigns, visit <http://www.fierceny.org/index.php?s=94>.

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Founded in 2000, FIERCE is a membership-based organization building the leadership and power of lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer (LGBTQ) youth of color in New York City. We develop politically conscious leaders who are invested in improving ourselves and our communities through youth-led campaigns, leadership development programs, and cultural expression through arts and media. FIERCE is dedicated to cultivating the next generation of social justice movement leaders.
<http://www.fierceny.org>