

## RICHMOND RAINBOW MURAL WELCOMES LGBTQ YOUTH

West County Child & Adolescent Services provides mental health counseling support to youth and families fostering a safe place to engage life stressors, especially for our lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, questioning (LGBTQ) youth.

**The mural is one of fourteen innovative mini-projects funded by the CA Mental Health Services Act in partnership with Contra Costa County Behavioral Health Services.** Grant recipients join Rainbow Community Center (Concord) and other partners of the Contra Costa LGBTQ Youth Advocacy Collaborative in a one-of-a-kind effort to reduce rejection and increase support for LGBTQ youth by their families, service providers and social networks. *“This mural project is a great example of what it means to serve LGBTQ youth in a welcoming and supportive community environment,”* commented Ben Barr, Executive Director of at Rainbow Community Center. *“We hope many more organizations will follow the example set by these creative youth.”*

Pancho Peskador, a bay area muralist, visual artist and educator from Chile distilled the themes, ideas, imagery and passion of this group of west county youth. It resulted in an extraordinary cross-generational visual journey covering two walls of the programs' building. Mr. Peskador is a member of the Bay Area Community Rejuvenation Project (CRP). He has been involved with creating over one hundred murals in Europe, Chile and here in the United States. Loriana Valente, a child therapist at, who also studied Art in Florence, Italy, managed the project along with colleagues, Kevin Anderson, Jovanka Beckles and Glynis Samb. They promoted the practice of being allies for our LGBTQ youth and all young people needing advocacy and a voice for their challenges, adding depth and cohesiveness



throughout the entire project.

The Contra Costa LGBTQ Youth Advocacy Collaborative was formed to improve the physical and mental health of LGBTQ youth by reducing rejection and increasing acceptance among families, peers, schools, faith groups and other community members. Collaboration partners include Rainbow Community Center as Lead Agency, Center for Human Development, Gender Spectrum, James Morehouse Project, RYSE Center, and the Family Acceptance Project.

Organizations across the county have been identified that are prepared to support LGBTQ youth, and provide services for those youth and their families. The goal is to build a clearly identified network of organizations that share information and coordinate services for LGBTQ youth. The project also provides opportunities for organizations & service providers which include:

- Networking opportunities to enhance efforts with LGBTQ youth & families
- Training & education for schools
- Workshops & education for faith-based groups
- LGBTQ cultural competency training for organizations seeking to engage youth & families
- Advertising opportunities through county-wide promotion of services & opportunities that benefit LGBTQ youth & their families

One-stop access to services is available across Contra Costa County by calling 925-692-2056. Current opportunities for LGBTQ youth and their families include:

- Peer support groups engaging youth in East, West & Central County
- Counseling for youth & families
- Parent & family support
- Education & support regarding gender identity & expression
- Consultation & support regarding bullying & rejection in school
- Youth leadership development & training opportunities

The Rainbow Community Center has served Contra Costa County's LGBTQ population since 1992. The RCC builds community among LGBTQ persons and their allies through social opportunities, health and wellness services, and awareness programs.

For more Information contact: Dr. Ben-David Barr, Executive Director of Rainbow Community Center  
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Additional Event Photos:

