

## Volunteer Orientation Guide

### Welcome

Welcome! Thank you for volunteering with Hudson Pride Connections Center. We hope you will find your experience with us positive and meaningful.

### Mission Statement

Hudson Pride Connections Center is a home and voice for the diverse LGBTQ community and our allies that advocates for our physical, mental, social and political well-being. We create safe and vibrant spaces to gather and celebrate our lives.

### Our History

Hudson Pride Connections Center is a 501(c)(3) non-profit, non-governmental, community organization. In 1993, it was founded as Jersey City Connections, Inc. by LGBT community activists in Jersey City to serve the LGBTQ population and people living with HIV. Today, Hudson Pride is happy to offer a number of different services, programs and events to a diverse LGBTQ community in the Northern NJ region.

Jersey City Connections (JCC) began when the Center for Disease Control was soliciting proposals for outreach and prevention services specifically targeting the gay and lesbian community. Shortly after in August of 1994, the agency received its 501(c)3 corporate status.

The by-laws updated in 1999 outline the four purposes that the agency has used to define our mission:

1. To provide education, prevention, and outreach services and information to the LGBTQ community in Hudson County
2. To provide resources for needed services, including medical, emotional, addiction and social services to the gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgender community of Hudson County
3. To provide seminars for the entire community in Hudson County on how to counteract homophobia
4. To create programming and venues which will serve to enhance the cultural life of the gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgender community of Hudson County

In its heyday, JCC's entire operations worked out of a three room office on the third floor of 34-36 Jones Street. From 2005-2006, there was a jump of over 60% in clients directly served. The agency needed more space. Then known as Hudson Pride Connections, the agency purchased the entire neighboring property at 32 Jones Street. After 14 years of serving the community, a three-story house from the late 19<sup>th</sup> century became the home of Hudson County's first LGBT community services center. Over time, the agency became known as Hudson Pride Connection Center.

### Overview of HPCC

Our funding comes from the Ryan White program of the Health Resources and Services Administration (Part A and Minority AIDS Initiative), New Jersey AIDS partnership (NJAP), and community development block grants. We also receive funds through donations, fund-raising and sponsors.

Our programs and services include transgender programming, youth groups, legal advocacy, health education, outreach services, financial assistance and social service linkages. We provide groups for gay, bisexual, and questioning men and

women (M-Power and Women United), transgender people (TransView), LGBTQ people over the age of 50 (SAGE), women of color (Women with Voices), and LGBTQ youth ages 13 to 25 (Youth Connect).

The Center is home to the David Bohnett Cyber Center. The David Bohnett Cyber Center offers free computer access and career development opportunities.

In addition to our programs, we feature some public access spaces, facility rental options, and free Wi-Fi access for visitors. With convenient access to all major public transportation routes, as well as major highways, and a visitor parking lot, Hudson Pride Connections Center is proud to open its doors to support and empower LGBT people and all people living with HIV.

### **What is a volunteer?**

HPCC is an exciting place to work with exciting changes happening on a daily basis. By volunteering with us, you can be part of these important services and have the opportunity to develop your own talents and work with people who are energetic, fun and committed to making positive changes in our community. Volunteers at HPCC help to make the Center what it is and what it will be in the future. Training is provided to volunteers in LGBT sensitivity and HIV/AIDS awareness. Volunteers have the opportunity to develop and practice job-related and interpersonal skills to become leaders in the community. Many schools and professional programs require community service hours to be fulfilled. This is a great way to complete those hours and benefit the community at the same time.

Volunteering for HPCC is about becoming involved in the operations, events, and programs we provide for LGBTQ people and people living with HIV/AIDS. A volunteer is defined as someone who chooses to donate their time, energy, and skills to fulfill the needs of individuals or the community without any monetary compensation on a regular or intermittent basis and without being mandated by a third party. The qualities we look for in a volunteer are:

- Commitment
- Integrity
- A sense of humor
- Diligence
- Reliability
- Being comfortable with all kinds of people including those that have physical or mental health issues, lesbians, gay men, bisexuals, people questioning their sexuality, and transgender people
- Altruism
- Willing to learn about and keep up-to-date about HIV/AIDS and LGBTQ-related issues, challenging ignorance and judgments they identify in themselves and others
- A strong sense of personal and professional boundaries
- A strong sense of confidentiality
- A sense of social responsibility