

Long Island Volunteer Hall of Fame

Archive Project

Inception to Induction

Long Island Gay and Lesbian Youth

LIGALY

Year of Founding: 1993

Issues Addressed: Discrimination, Safety and Equality

Induction Category & Year: Emergency Services, 2004

Founder: David Kilmnick

History: In 1993, David Kilmnick, a student studying at the School of Social Welfare studying at Stony Brook University started what is now LIGALY in his Levittown apartment operating with only volunteers and an answering machine. He wanted to provide workshops for students to explain what it is like to grow up on Long Island as a gay individual. The group soared from there as they went to more schools and presented their workshops. Quite often students would shuffle their papers after class and tell the presenter that they wished there was a place to meet others in the GLBT community. From there, LIGALY started to add more programs like their Friday night program called Outlet and services such as support groups and mental health help. Then they rented a place from 1997 until 2002 when they finally purchased a building in Bay Shore becoming the first GLBT owned and operated organization on Long Island. The biggest area of service is education and they serve thousands of students every year by using the same workshop they developed in 1993. They travel all over Long Island in the hopes of reaching students and to train faculties, administrators, and human health services providers. Serving only young adults from ages thirteen to twenty one, the organization changed significantly in 2005 because many of the young people who were involved, aged out of the program. These children were now adults and wondered what was next and so did the families and seniors of their communities. So, they started focus groups for the next 2 years and created a structure that was called the Long Island GLBT service's network. It included five non-profit organizations that serve the GLBT community throughout a person's life span.

Agency Mission: Long Island Gay and Lesbian Youth serve both Nassau County and Suffolk County as a non-profit organization providing a variety of programs and services. They provide education advocacy and social support to Long Island's gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender youth, adults and their families. Some issues such as sexuality, sexual identity, gender identity, HIV, and AIDS are addressed and/or solved. Their goal is to motivate GLBT youth, advocate for their diverse interests and educate them about society. This ignorance about GLBT youth can be shattered and can make life easier for many young adults.

Scope of Activities: LIGALY provides a place for youth to socialize, get counseling, go to support groups and have community events. The most significant event is their Long Island GLBT Conference. Every year they choose a college to hold these conferences and about three 300 people attend. They are mostly students, educators, community members, and service providers. During the conference they provide many workshops such as how to address GLBT bullying, how to become more culturally confident, GLBT health issues and policies for the GLBT community.

Volunteer Involvement: LIGALY has a staff of only twenty full time members and has a very large group of volunteers as well. Volunteers are a large part of helping the organization runs. The volunteers have responsibilities such as providing supervision, guidance and support at their Friday night program outlet. Other volunteers, who have great interest in politics, make phone calls and write letters to advocate GLBT policy issues. They even have volunteers at their office who help with organizing and facilitating groups. LIGALY relies on volunteers to support the agency. It is also easy for people to sign up on their website. To volunteer is a great experience because it's exciting, motivating, rewarding and fulfilling.

Affiliate Organizations: All of the organizations are located in Bay Shore including the Long Island GLBT Community Center which serves adults and families with social, cultural and health programs. Also, they have a program for the GLBT senior community of Long Island called SAGE Long Island. It is for ages fifty and up and provides social support and health programming. Recently, Equality Long Island and The East End Gay Organization joined LIGALY. Equality Long Island promotes equality and dignity for GBLT residents of eastern Long Island through public policy, health, culture and charitable outreach programs. They are a 501(c)3 organization and share all resources and facilities which strengthen their message for the GLBT community of Long Island.

Funding Sources: LIGALY's operating budget is about \$1.6 million a year so funding is crucial. Most of their funding comes from public grants, private grants, the state, and the county and private donations from people who just believe that what they do serves a great purpose. When a person wants to give a private donation, it's a hassle free process on their website. They even have the option of giving a onetime gift or a sustaining gift of once a month. All the funding and donations are what helps LIGALY operate and serve Long Island.

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**Submitted by:
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