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LGBT Town-hall series set to implement Anti-discrimination strategy to strengthen local racial equality

December 8, 2015- On December 2, 2015, Philadelphia Black Pride solidified the key components of an anti-discrimination strategy as a response to the multiple reports and publications of [colored] racism in some well known LGBT social & community-based establishments in the gayborhood.

August 2015, Philadelphia Black Pride began the development of a town-hall series that would address the reports of racism within LGBT social & community based establishments of the Philadelphia against Black and Latino individuals. Fueled by published accounts in local news and community driven petitions for action, Philadelphia Black Pride consulted with community organizers and stakeholders to develop the town-hall objectives: (1) Gain community insight on and climate of incidents; (2) Develop a strategy of fewer incidents & inclusive spaces and (3) implement a system of accountability. "In the facilitation of this effort, little response received from local bars and social establishments" notes D'Ontace Keyes, Chief Creative Officer. "I anticipated that response given the things published and backlash from the local Black LGBT community. However we welcomed all to the process and showed appreciation to those who lent their voice."

October 14 2015, Philadelphia Black Pride facilitated the first town-hall at the William Way Center. Gaining insight from 70+ attendees, 85% of the attendees were Black. "It was really important to the process to allow space for the community to be heard. Notes were drafted and made accessible via our website. We wanted this process to be as inclusive and transparent as possible." says Keyes.

Dec 2nd 2015, Anchored by the notes from Townhall 1, Philadelphia Black Pride facilitated the development of a strategy with an attendance of 35 people; about 50% white stakeholders and allies. Keyes notes, "It was surprising, however expected given some prior efforts to gain understanding. I was glad to have city officials and establishment owners in the room showing concern of this issue. In the next 60-90 days Philadelphia Black Pride will work with local officials and stakeholders to formalize the strategy, pilot, and report back in February." Plan components include:

- 1) A reporting system for incidents of racial bias or systematic bullying in LGBTQ social & community-based establishments.
- 2) A live campaign & training that will educate community & set the visual tone for change.
- 3) A challenge for LGBTQ social & community-based establishments to:
 - Pledge to operate according to the principles of equity; continuous practice of equal access, invited feedback, and safety.
 - Pledge to participate in a proposed training that will focus on the consistent implementation of anti-discrimination rules & policies in establishments. (*frequency to be determined)
- 4) A practice of on-going, visible accountability & consequence for cooperating & non-cooperative establishments that serves LGBTQ communities.

Keyes notes, "This was not an easy task nor done alone. We thank everyone who's gone the extra mile to aid this effort." Philadelphia Black Pride welcome anyone who would like to get more involved to reach out via any of our social media platforms, website or info@phillyblackpride.org. All updates in this process will be posted at www.phillyblackpride.org/townhall



Philadelphia Black Pride is a PROUD Member and Program Partner of the Center for Black Equity.