



MEDIA RELEASE

THE ANTI-VIOLENCE PROJECT CONDEMNS TWO RECENT HATE VIOLENCE INCIDENTS

Incidents coincide with alarming national trend of anti-LGBT violence

For Immediate Release

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New York- Shortly after the National Coalition of Anti-Violence Programs (NCAVP) released its Annual Report on Anti-Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender Hate Violence, detailing a 24% increase in hate violence incidents nationally; two attacks involving anti-LGBT slurs, insults, and physical violence have made New York City headlines. Both attacks are currently being investigated as possible hate crimes.

The first incident occurred on June 28, 2008: a gay male couple riding the subway after doing volunteer work at a church were verbally attacked and shoved by two other passengers. The NYPD is currently investigating the incident as a hate crime.

Less than two weeks later, a second attack occurred on the evening of July 7, 2008. Four young men shouted homophobic and transphobic insults at the residents of Carmen's Place, a homeless shelter for transgender and gay youth, and targeted shelter director Father Louis Braxton Jr. as he defended young residents against the assault. The attackers hit Braxton and the residents with garbage, belts and fists, among other weapons, sending Father Braxton and a shelter resident to the hospital where both were treated. The New York Police Department's Hate Crimes Taskforce and the Queens County District Attorney's Office's Hate Crimes Bureau are investigating this matter.

“Carmen’s Place is a lifeline in New York City and a safe place to stay for transgender and gay young people.” said Sharon Stapel, Executive Director of the Anti-Violence Project. “The shelter, the streets and the neighborhoods throughout New York City should be a safe space for LGBT youth, too. However, as this violence demonstrates, LGBT youth are still vulnerable to being victimized simply for being who they are. This violence is unacceptable and the Anti-Violence Project appreciates the quick response of the NYPD, the DA’s office and City Council Speak Christine Quinn and Senator Tom Duane.”

The Anti-Violence Project traditionally sees alarming spikes in our already high numbers of bias related attacks during the summer months. Several contributing factors such as larger numbers of people doing things outdoors and greater visibility of LGBT culture during Pride month factor in to the increase in anti-LGBT violence. “While we are continually working for increased LGBT visibility, rights, and respect, as we bring these issues into the public arena we often see a backlash in escalation of violence directed against our communities. Homophobic and transphobic violence is unfortunately an all too common reality for many LGBT New Yorkers, especially during Pride month.” Stapel said, “This violence cannot be tolerated and those who are victim to it must know that there are resources available, such as Carmen’s Place and the Anti-Violence Project, to allow LGBT people to live safely.”

In 2007, the Anti-Violence Project served over 2,000 victims of violence. The Anti-Violence Project's Safe Dating and Internet Safe Dating Tips, as well as annual reports on hate violence and domestic violence can be accessed online at www.avp.org or by calling 212-714-1184.

The New York City Gay & Lesbian Anti-Violence Project is the nation's largest service agency for victims of bias crimes against the lesbian, gay, transgender, bisexual, and HIV-affected communities. Since 1980, the Anti-Violence Project has provided counseling and advocacy for tens of thousands of survivors of bias-motivated and domestic violence, rape and sexual assault, HIV-related violence, and police misconduct. The Anti-Violence Project documents incidents of violence against and within LGTB communities, educates the public about the effects of violence, against or within our communities, and works to reform public policies impacting all lesbian, gay, transgender, bisexual, and HIV-affected people.

The Anti-Violence Project provides free and confidential assistance to crime victims through its 24-hour bilingual hotline (212-714-1141).