Windy City Times - YWEP youth speak out

YWEP youth speak out
by Yasmin Natr
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"If you're tired of not being heard, or being overlooked, this is the place for you." With these words, a member of Chicago's YWEP (Young Women's Empowerment Project), and the emcee and host for the evening, opened the evening's speak-out. The event, which took place at the University of Illinois at Chicago's Latino Cultural Center, 750 S. Halsted, was part of the first National Week of Action for Reproductive Justice, launched by the Third Wave Foundation, a feminist organization that focuses on young women and transgender youth. YWEP works with female-identified street-based youth 12-23 involved with the sex trade, whether by choice or for survival.

Approximately 50 youth and a few adults attended the entirely youth-led and -created program, which began with a presentation about the youth facing the participants. A YWEP member spoke about the "poor and shitty health care" that street-based youth endure, compounded by medical professionals who either provide little access to contraception or coerce them into having unwanted abortions. In addition, these youth are particularly affected by the combination of parental notification laws and increased criminalization of young people in the sex trade, which doubles their chances of homelessness.

According to Cindy Ibarra, communications coordinator for YWEP, the aim of events like the speak-out was to foster leadership skills in street-based youth who are multiply disenchanted for their actions; their gender and sexual identities; and their class background. They are also disenchanted by mainstream organizing around reproductive rights because of structural issues, such as activist meetings are held at times when youth are unable to attend.

Performances included short skits by the Empowered Fe-Fes, a group focused on the needs of young girls with disabilities. Others read pieces that ranged from the personal—one youth read a poem to a boyfriend—to spoken word performances about child sexual abuse and being kicked out of homes. Also on hand were youth representatives from groups like Illinois Caucus for Adolescent Health, who urged the audience to lobby against abstinence-only programs, and youth who had experienced abuse in incarceration and/or the mental health system.

See www.yourepriceless.org for more.
Youth: Howard Brown Kicks Off Mentor Program 2005-07-27
Youth: Goodman Theatre’s Student Programs 2005-07-27
Broadway Youth Center 2005-06-22
Youth Pride Weekend in Chicago 2005-06-22
HBHC Starts Mentor Program for Queer Youth, Announces Youth Pride Weekend 2005-06-15
Windy City Times’ 30 Under 30 Awards 2005-06-01
Prom Season: What LGBTQ Youth Need to Know 2005-05-25
Latino LGBTQ youth 2005-05-25
Bullying in Schools 2005-05-25
2005 GLSEN Awards 2005-05-25
Latino LGBTQ Youth to Hold 1st Prom in Pilsen 2005-05-04
Youth Leadership 2005-04-27
Noisemakers: LGBTQ Youth 2005-04-20
Day of Silence for Youth April 13 2005-04-06
NBJC Attacks Murder of Black Gay Youth 2005-04-01
IGNITE: Youth News 2005-03-23
Youth LGBT Health Week Events 2005-03-16
Gay Hockey Player Refs Youth Hockey 2005-03-16
Youth: GLSEN Chicago’s Day of Silence Summit 2005-02-23
Youth: Synergy – LGBTQ Youth Dance Party 2005-02-23
Youth: Fourth Annual Jean Paul Oladi Scholarship 2005-02-23
Youth: National Youth Group Call for Action 2005-02-23
Youth: Q - A Social Group for LGBT Young Adults 2005-02-23
Youth: All-School GSA Dance at Maine East 2005-02-23
Jacqueline Woodson Speaks on Her ‘Youthful’ Writing 2005-02-01
Ignite Youth: GLSEN Chicago and Area Schools Observe Name-Calling Week 2005-01-26
Ignite Youth: National Spring Break Event in Chicago 2005-01-26
Ignite Youth: News and Events 2005-01-26
Youth News 2004-12-22
Youth News 2004-11-24
SPIRITUALITY Political and Religious Terrorism on our Youth 2004-11-01
Youth: Christian Gay Youth Center Seeks Volunteers 2004-10-27
Synergy Youth Dance’s Halloween Party 2004-10-27
About Face Youth Theatre Begins Season 2004-10-27
Youth Face Health Battles 2004-09-22
Youth: GLBT College Groups Join Forces for Charity 2004-09-22
Youth: Scholarship Foundation Jump Targets 2004-09-22
Youth News 2004-09-22
Youth: Activities and News 2004-08-25
Ignite Youth: About Face Youth Theatre’s ‘On The Record’ 2004-07-28
Ignite Youth: 2 LBGT Chicagoan Youth Receive Point Scholarships 2004-07-28
Ignite Youth: Synergy Youth Dance Party 2004-07-28
Ignite Youth: Chicago Youth Web Page 2004-07-28
Ignite Youth: Family Pride Week 2004-07-28
Ignite Youth: Gay Youth Camp 2004-07-28
About Face Youth Show 2004-07-28
About Face Youth 2004-07-28
About Face Youth Show 2004-07-21
Youth Get ‘Centered’ 2004-07-14
Transgender Youth Kit 2004-07-01
30 Under 30 GLSEN Youth 2004-06-23
Pride Week Youth Events 2004-06-23
GLSEN Youth Awards 2004-05-26
‘Day of Silence, Night of Noise’ GLBT youth event 2004-04-28
Youth: Families Gather 2004-04-28
First Youth Art Project 2004-04-28
Youth: Canticle Ministries Awards Scholarships To Students with HIV 2004-04-28
Youth: The Barbara Gittings Legacy Award 2004-04-28
Youth: Elmhurst School’s Day of Silence 2004-04-28
Youth: Synergy Youth Dance 2004-04-28
Youth: The Raw Works Poetry Program 2004-04-28
Youth: TYRA (Trans Youth Resource and Advocacy) 2004-04-28
Youth: Rainbow Families Event 2004-04-28
Youth: Sexuality, Pride 2004-04-21
Youth News Briefly 2004-03-24
Youth: Something New at Chicago's About Face Youth Theatre 2004-02-25
Youth: UIC Collegiate Pridefest Pridefest Pridefest 2004-02-25
Youth: Millett, Allison At U of C Feminism Confab 2004-02-25
Ignite/youth: Partying with DJ G-String 2004-01-21
Ignite/youth: STUDENTS TO BULLIES: DON'T BE CRUEL 2004-01-21
Ignite/youth: Howard Brown's Synergy 2004-01-21
Ignite/youth: Lawsuit Aims at Protecting Gay Students 2004-01-21
Ignite/youth: Midwest Student Confab 2004-01-21
YOUTH Ammi: Christian Bad, Open Mind 2003-12-17
YOUTH More News 2003-12-17
GLSEN Looks at At-Risk Youth 2003-12-03
Youth Work on GLBT 'Smoke Out' Effort 2003-11-26
YOUTH 2003-11-19
YOUTH GATHER at Broadway United Methodist Church 2003-11-19
The Center/Horizons announces a new Youth Program 2003-11-01
YOUTH NEWS! Joe Hollendra: Social Worker/Activist 2003-10-15
YOUTH NEWS! GLSEN Chicago GSA Summit 2003-10-15
YOUTH NEWS! Chicago 2003-10-15
YOUTH NEWS! 2003-09-17
YOUTH NEWS! Chicago Student Among Point Foundation Honorees 2003-09-17
IGNITE: GLBTQ Youth News 2003-08-20
Study: Youth Face Harassment in Southern Schools 2003-08-13
ctric 'Youth': About Face Youth Theatre 2003-08-06
HBHC Youth Program Gets Major Funding 2003-08-06
IGNITE YOUTH News 2003-07-16
IGNITE YOUTH NW Indiana Pride Picnic 2003-07-16
IGNITE YOUTH A Look Inside About Face Youth Theatre 2003-07-16
Horizons Youth prom 2003-06-18
YOUTH NEWS! 2003-06-18
Wonka Ball benefits the About Face Youth Theatre 2003-06-18
GLSEN Youth Awards 2003-05-01
DCFS Targets GLBT Youth 2003-05-01
DCFS Targets GLBT Youth 2003-04-23
Ignite: GLBTQ youth news 2003-04-16
'Hedwia' And the About Face Youth 2003-04-16