



Contact: Colette Schabram
Phone: 805.963.3636 x109

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Pacific Pride Foundation Expands Counseling Program with Cottage Health and Antioch University

Santa Barbara, Calif., May 11, 2018 – Pacific Pride Foundation (PPF) provides programs and services to more than 10,000 people in Santa Barbara County. Since 1976, PPF has provided counseling services to the LGBTQ+ community and their families and currently facilitates group or individual therapy in PPF's downtown Santa Barbara location.

May is Mental Health Awareness Month, and the LGBTQ+ community experiences disproportionate rates of depression, anxiety, suicide, and addiction. These higher rates can be traced to anti-LGBTQ+ stigma and family rejection. PPF responds to the needs of this community in Santa Barbara County with LGBTQ-sensitive counselors that offer support with a wide range of issues including gender dysphoria, same-gender couples with intimate violence, family acceptance, and fears about coming out or being diagnosed with HIV.

PPF's intern training program is the only local program that specializes in clinical work with LGBTQ+ clients, clients living with HIV/AIDS, and their families. The counseling program is also an important support for LGBTQ+ youth from across the county and provides a clinical basis for LGBTQ+ competency trainings in local organizations and institutions.

In April, PPF launched a new program in collaboration with Antioch University and Cottage Health to expand their counseling services. Funding by Cottage Health allows PPF to offer scholarships to clients of moderate income levels – a population PPF has struggled to reach – and Antioch has provided two doctorate level (PsyD) psychology students to the PPF counseling team who will conduct a community-wide awareness campaign

to increase knowledge of PPF's counseling services. Antioch will also help create and facilitate the PsyD intern training program and provide volunteers to assist PPF with counseling services and outreach. PPF's Community Mental Health Training Program will be held on the Antioch campus, providing training on LGBTQ+ mental health issues for Antioch and other universities faculty and students, PPF interns, and community mental health professionals. Thanks to Antioch University, these trainings will also fulfill continuing education requirements for attending helping professionals.

This program will allow psychology students in various degree programs at Antioch to gain knowledge and experience that will allow them to be proficient in working with LGBTQ+ clients before they receive a license to practice therapy. Research shows that clinicians too often expect training about LGBTQ+ issues from their LGBTQ+ clients (an unethical ask), and often ignore the specific nuances of clients' identity-based needs. This leads to a trend of LGBTQ+ patients terminating therapy prematurely and suffering negative mental health outcomes as a result. This program will address this issue in our community head-on in a powerful collaboration of long-standing Santa Barbara nonprofits.

Pacific Pride Foundation is excited to support more community members with affordable and confidential mental health support. Community members can learn more about PPF's counseling programs at pacificpridefoundation.org/counseling, or by contacting counseling@pacificpridefoundation.org or 805.963.3636 x103.

Pacific Pride Foundation (PPF) is the largest LGBTQ+ center between Los Angeles and San Francisco, serving all of Santa Barbara County. It partners with 35 other educational and nonprofit agencies to create a thriving and visible LGBTQ+ community and prevent the transmission of HIV and HEP-C. PPF provides services and programs to more than 10,000 clients in the inclusive and diverse LGBTQ+ community including youth programs, elder programs, counseling services, sensitivity trainings, community events, and advocacy on LGBTQ+ issues.

PPF directly prevents the transmission of disease through its HIV/AIDS and HEP-C testing and prevention outreach and education, delivering 1300 free tests in the past year. PPF is the leader in programs for LGBTQ+ youth, serving 200 kids with mental health, suicide prevention, and anti-bullying programs, while providing them with a safe place and leadership opportunities. PPF is also addressing the opioid crisis through the only clean needle exchange program in the county, which collects about 100,000 used needles every year, and by distributing Narcan kits, which have saved 90 people from potentially fatal overdoses in the past year.

For more information or to make a donation please visit <https://pacificpridefoundation.org>.