

heartgallerynyc.org



MEDIA ANNOUNCEMENT

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LGBTQ FOSTER KIDS SEEKING “FOREVER FAMILIES”

Helping to Fulfill Dreams of Adoption

**Heart Gallery NYC & NYC ACS PRIDE Exhibit 2015 to
Feature Portraits by Award-Winning Photographers**

Launch & Press Conference: Monday, June 1st, The New Victory Theater

New York, NY, May 19, 2014 – Children in foster care share common goals...find “forever” families and live in a loving and stable home environment. In an effort to help them, **12 LGBTQ youth and 24 other foster children** will be featured in the **Heart Gallery NYC & NYC ACS Pride Photo Exhibition** during **National Pride Month**. The photos were taken by celebrity photographers, many of whom will be present during the launch and press conference on Monday, June 1st, 6-8pm, which will be open to the media.

WHAT: Heart Gallery NYC & NYC ACS PRIDE Exhibition 2015 larger-than-life images of LGBTQ and other foster youth awaiting adoption

WHO: Youth in need of "Forever Families" spotlighting **LGBTQ** identified youth; **Celebrity Photographers** including Antoine Verglas, Deborah Feingold and Heidi Gutman; **Elvin Garcia**, Bronx Borough Director for Community Affairs at the Office of the Mayor and LGBTQ Liaison; **Richie Torres**, member of the New York City Council LGBT Caucus; **Gladys Carrión**, Esq., Commissioner of the NYC Administration for Children's Services; **Rhodes Perry**, MPA, Director of the LGBTQ Policy & Practice Office at the NYC Administration for Children's Services; **Laurie Sherman Graff**, Executive Director, Heart Gallery NYC; **Prospective Adoptive and Foster Families**

WHEN: During National PRIDE Month

- Launch and Press Conference: **Monday, June 1, 6:00PM-8:00PM**

WHERE: The New Victory Theater 209 West 42nd Street

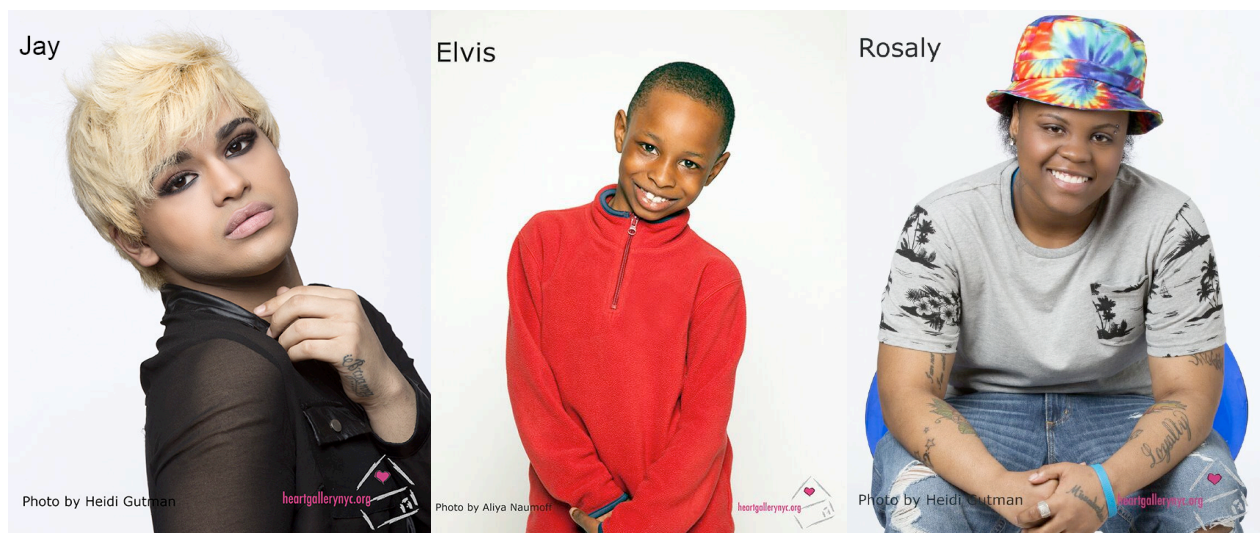
PARTNERS: Heart Gallery NYC, NYC Administration for Children's Services, the Office of LGBTQ Policy & Practice at the NYC Administration for Children's Services and Duggal Visual Solutions

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According to **Laurie Sherman Graff, Executive Director and Founder, Heart Gallery NYC**, *“Our PRIDE exhibition plays a critical role in fostering the understanding needed by LGBTQ young adults and youth. They often face isolation during the most vulnerable time of their lives. They need loving adoptive families. We’re hoping that same-sex or heterosexual couples will step up to fulfill the children’s dream of finding “forever families”. We’re also hoping to connect youth with supportive mentors to act as positive role models”*. She continues, *“This exhibition is about honoring the nearly 12,000 NYC children living in foster care and the hundreds waiting and ready to be adopted. We are thankful to the Office of LGBTQ Policy & Practice at the NYC Administration for Children’s Services for helping to bring this exhibition to fruition and in the public eye.”*

Celebrity and notable photographers, each of whom donated her/his talent and time to create the portraits on display, hope their expressive images capture the hearts of prospective adoptive families.



Through the support and collaboration of **the Office of LGBTQ Policy & Practice at the NYC Administration for Children’s Services**, charged with carrying out the agency’s vision of creating an environment where all young people—including LGBTQ young people—are respected, affirmed, and empowered to thrive into healthy and happy adults; the goal is to create interest to build families in non-traditional ways.

Rhodes Perry, MPA, Director of the LGBTQ Policy & Practice Office shares, *“We are grateful for our ongoing collaboration with Heart Gallery NYC to help bring visibility to the specific needs of LGBTQ young people in foster care settings. My office works hard every day to aggressively implement policies and best practices intended to create environments that are safe, respectful and affirming of every young person, no matter their sexual orientation or gender identity.”* He continues, *“We are thrilled that the Pride Exhibit will bring together prospective foster parents, recruiters and LGBTQ young people. These connections will empower more LGBTQ young people to thrive into healthy, happy, and independent adults.”*

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Noted for their iconic banner-sized photographs, **Heart Gallery NYC** launched its very first traveling exhibit in 2007, which was hosted at the Times Square Alliance Visitors Center. The space, which is now permanently closed, once housed the landmark Embassy Theater and held the 2014 Heart Gallery inaugural PRIDE Exhibit. Now, Heart Gallery NYC is excited to have their exhibit in The New Victory Theater on June 1st.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION:

Celebrity Photographers: While Heart Gallery NYC works with many [well-regarded photographers](#), the following contributed their photographic talent and time to create the portraits featured at The New Victory Theater Exhibition as well as in the 2015 Heart Gallery NYC & NYC ACS traveling photo exhibition: [Deborah Feingold](#), [Martin Schoeller](#), [Antoine Verglas](#), [Heidi Gutman](#) and [Aliya Naumoff](#)



Heart Gallery NYC (www.heartgallerynyc.org) connects the artistic talents of renowned photographers with children in foster care who are in need of permanent adoptive families. The Heart Gallery is dedicated to raising awareness about children living in foster care and encourages New Yorkers to make a difference in the lives of 13,000 NYC children in foster care. *Contact:* Laurie Sherman Graff, E.D., Heart Gallery NYC, 212 965-8699, info@heartgallerynyc.org



Established in 2012, the **Office of LGBTQ Policy & Practice at New York City Administration for Children's Services** works to improve overall outcomes for LGBTQ children, young people, and adults involved with the child welfare and juvenile justice systems. We welcome collaboration and encourage LGBTQ & ally community leaders and organizations to get involved with our work by contacting us at: LGBTQ@acs.nyc.gov, or by visiting [our website](#).



The **New York City Administration for Children's Services** protects New York City's children from abuse and neglect. Along with our community partners, Children's Services provides neighborhood-based services to help ensure children grow up in safe, permanent homes with strong families. To learn more go to www.nyc.gov/acs.

DUGGAL® A special thanks to **Duggal Visual Solutions**, the Heart Gallery NYC print partner for the past 3 years. Duggal is a world leader in the creation of high impact print and visual production in fine art, print, interior design, large format and multi-media. Committed to arts in education and childhood development, Duggal hopes to empower the next generation to bring beauty to their lives, their community, and the world.