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**Northwest Victim Services September 2024 Newsletter**

# RETURNING TO SCHOOL



Last school year was overwhelming, especially with all the bullying and violence. Kids are heading back to school hoping for a better environment. Due to the negativity from last year as a teenager myself, I would want a better environment as we head back to school. A lot of the negativity comes from the media and from social media. Some things we as students can do differently this school year is, don't spend too much time on the social media platforms. If we see something negative we can avoid it by logging out, or try to speak up with positive feedback. Going back to school can be a little rough, especially for any students attending a new school. They might feel like they do not fit in or that they are having a hard time settling in because of what people might think. As an upcoming sophomore, I would suggest finding the right group of people to guide you through everything, and that positive group of friends can become a positive force for you even in your daily life. This advice doesn't just have to be for sophomores specifically, it can be for anyone who is having a hard time with all the negativity surrounding them.

*Savannah DeShazor-Matthews, 10th Grader*



Pennsylvania  
Office of the  
Safe Schools Advocate

**215.656.5381**

**Call the Office  
of Safe Schools  
Advocate  
(OSSA) today!**

**ASK  
FOR  
HELP**

## Services That OSSA Provides


When you contact the office,  
please ask about the following  
services our staff can provide:

- ▶ Attending disciplinary hearings upon your request, as well as presenting information and testimony and cross examining.
- ▶ Providing assistance and advice on available victim support services.
- ▶ Assisting in ensuring that your child will be safe on school property

**If you, your child, or loved ones  
have been a victim of a crime,  
you have rights under  
Pennsylvania law.**

**For more information regarding  
your rights and other services  
available for victims visit:  
<https://bit.ly/46C14Ba>**



 **School District of Philadelphia  
Administration Building  
440 N. Broad St. | Suite 1183**

 **Monday - Friday  
8:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m.**

 **215.656.5381  
or 877.730.6315**

 **RA-OSSAPhiladelphia@pa.gov**

 **<https://bit.ly/4cdGJDv>**

**If you have been hurt  
physically, emotionally,  
sexually or financially  
while on school property  
or on route to/from  
school, there is help.**

**Get More Information Today!**

**Call 215.656.5381  
or visit <https://bit.ly/46C14Ba>**



# How OSSA Helps You

## WHY SHOULD I CONTACT OSSA?

- ▶ If you have been a victim of violence in a school.
- ▶ If you have been harmed and/or feel threatened, harassed or bullied and are at risk of being hurt or injured.

## WHAT DOES OSSA DO FOR ME?

- ▶ Inform and advise parents/caregivers and advocate for students who have been victimized.
- ▶ Assist victims in making sure their concerns are heard, and their needs are met.
- ▶ Appear at hearings, speak on behalf of victims if requested.
- ▶ Suggest places that can provide follow up support.

**CALL TODAY!**

**215.656.5381**

## VISIT US ONLINE!

<https://bit.ly/46C14Ba>

## IF I CONTACT OSSA, WHAT INFORMATION DO I NEED TO PROVIDE?

- ▶ Name and contact information.
- ▶ Purpose of why you are seeking assistance.

**OSSA staff may request a meeting time or additional information so that the Office can further investigate the situation.**

**If you have been hurt by another person or group of people while on school property, we can help. Call 1-877-730-6315.**

**Si ha sido herido por otra persona o grupo de personas mientras estaba en la propiedad de la escuela, podemos ayudarlo. Llame al 1-877-730-6315.**

**如果您在學校財產上被另一個人或一群人傷害，我們可以提供說明。請致電 1-877-730-6315。**

**វិនិច្ឆ័យ បង្កើត ឬ ប្រឈម ជាមួយ អ្នក មនុស្ស បណ្តា មនុស្ស មនុស្ស ចៅ បេល ចៅ បល ១០ ឬ ១០០ យ សមបរិភព សាលា បយងើ អាច ជួយ បាន ។  
Call 1-877-730-6315.**

**Si vous avez été blessé par une autre personne ou un groupe de personnes sur la propriété de l'école, nous pouvons vous aider. Composez le 1-877-730-6315.**

**Если вы пострадали от другого человека или группы людей во время пребывания в школе, мы можем помочь. Звоните 1-877-730-6315.**

**Nếu bạn đã bị tổn thương bởi một người hoặc nhóm người khác trong khi trên tài sản của trường, chúng tôi có thể giúp đỡ. Gọi 1-877-730-6315.**

**إذا كنت قد تعرضت للأذى من قبل شخص آخر أو مجموعة من الناس أثناء وجودك ممتلكات المدرسة، يمكننا المساعدة. اتصل على 1-877-730-6315.**

**Në qoftë se të ka lënduar një grup personash kur ke qenë në ambientet e shkollës, ne mund të të ndihmojmë. Telefono 1-877-730-6315.**

## **RESOURCES FOR LGBTQIA+ YOUTH**

This list is made up of different resources for youth who identify as a member of the LGBTQIA+ Community and primarily serves youth from ages 14-24. There are exceptions so please check with each org.

### **Philadelphia District Attorney's Office:**

Kelly Burkhardt, LGBTQ+ Liaison & Victim Witness Coordinator.

Email: [kelly.burkhardt@phila.gov](mailto:kelly.burkhardt@phila.gov)

Office: 215-686-8909 or Cell: 267-216-5080

### **Philadelphia-Based Organizations:**

#### **THE ATTIC YOUTH CENTER:** <https://atticyouthcenter.org/>

Creates opportunities for lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer and questioning (LGBTQ) youth (ages 14-24) to develop healthy, independent, civic-minded adults with a safe and supportive community, and promotes the acceptance of LGBTQ youth in society.

#### Programming:

- Mental Health Programming (Individual, Couples Therapy, Family (as defined by client) Therapy, Group Therapy)
- Case management (The Attic assists youth in accessing health and dental care, housing, public benefits, and social, legal, and emergency services.)
- Life Skills Services (academic enrichment, leadership skills, including meals, food pantry & personal hygiene supplies, access to safer sex education and supplies)
- Community Engagement and Summer Activities
- Summer Internship Program

Address: 255 South 16th Street Philadelphia, PA 19102

Phone: (215) 545-4331

Email: [info@atticyouthcenter.org](mailto:info@atticyouthcenter.org)

Office Hours, by Appointment Only

10-6pm (M/Th), 10-7pm (T/W/F)

Drop-in Hours

3-6pm (M/Th), 3-7pm (T/W/F)



**GALAEI:** <https://www.galaeiqtbipoc.org/>

(Open Daily M-F 10:30am - 6pm)

118 Fontain St.

Philadelphia, PA 19122

PH: 215-398-5003

Mission: "Galaei is Queer, Trans, Black, Brown, Indigenous, and People of Color radical social justice organization serving the Latine/a/o/x community while widening our embrace. Galaei provides services, support, and advocacy for all QTBIPOC communities. All of these programs provide life-saving linkages to resources and care. We are proud to be a unifying force that mobilizes the marginalized QTBIPOC peoples in Philadelphia with our primary and centering force being love, care, and affirmation for QTBIPOC.

**PROGRAMMING:**

- Youth Programming (SPLAT)
- Prevention and Education Programming (POP)
- Trans services (TINGS)
- Community Wellness
- Breathe Again: A healing support for people seeking holistic ways to manage mental health.
- Pride and National Coming OUT Day (Philly Pride 365) (Organize the two LGBTQ celebrations in June and October to celebrate the queer and transgender community.)

**UPLIFT Center for Grieving Children/ LGBTQ Youth Programming:**

<https://upliftphilly.org/programs/uplift-resources/lgbtqia-youth/>

**Philly Hope Line:**

<https://upliftphilly.org/programs/uplift-resources/philly-hopeline/>

1-833-PHL-HOPE (1-833-745-4673)

Mondays-Thursdays 10 a.m. – 4 p.m.

CLOSED on weekends, holidays, and during Uplift office closures

- Queer & Trans Grief and Loss Support Group - check back to their website periodically for when they list their support group sessions for the fall.

**Restorative Connection Therapists** - Philadelphia-based network of trauma-informed, somatic therapists for people who are queer, transgender, nonbinary, LGBTQIA, and/or who have survived trauma or systemic oppression. <https://www.restorativeconnection.com/resources.html>

***LGBTQ-Friendly Housing: there is no one shelter that is only for LGBTQ Youth; however, these agencies have programs in place to place youth in the safest place possible.***

**Valley Youth House:** Helps homeless youth find housing and provides one-on-one mentorship to foster and non-foster youth. I suggest call first because they have various locations set up in the city for first-come-first serve walk-ins on a daily basis <https://valleyyouthhouse.org/>

- Runway Hotline: 610-691-1200
- • The Synergy Project: 1-888-House-15 (1-888-468-7315) (LGBTQ-focused)
- • Philadelphia Crisis Line: 215-685-6440
- Services: Housing, Life skills/independent living, mental health support, emergency services

**Michael S. Hinson Jr. Resource Center:** (Head of household is a minimum of 18 yrs old.)

- Michael Hinson Resource Center (MHRC) is located at 1701 W. Lehigh Ave. The MHRC supports participants as they seek housing-related services or permanent housing. Recreational programming is regularly offered to help participants associate fun with recovery, including regularly scheduled movies and games. The MHRC also has a peer mentorship program where participants are able to support and guide one another.
- The community room is open Monday through Friday from 8:00 AM to 4:00 PM and closed on weekends and holidays. MHRC is open as an after-hours center for those that need help later on in the day. On holidays and weekends, MHRC is open from 3:00 PM to 7:00 AM.
- Phone #1 267-737-9099
  - The After-Hours program provides one-night, overnight accommodations for single men who are experiencing homelessness. It is housed at the

There is additional access to space during the colder months under the Winter Initiative.  
(December 1- April 30)

**National LGBTQ Support Agencies:**

- **The Trevor Project** - A national nonprofit that focuses on suicide prevention for LGBTQ Youth in crisis. Available 24/7

<https://www.thetrevorproject.org/>

- [Chat With Us](#)
- Call Us: 1-866-488-7386
- Text Us: 678-678

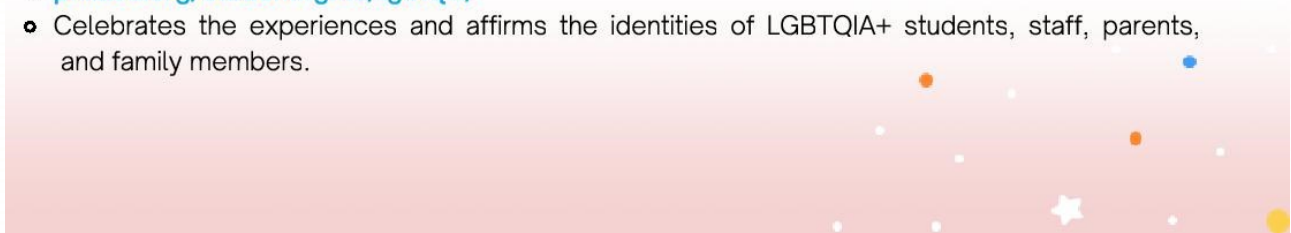
- **Trans Lifeline** - Trans Lifeline connects trans people to the community support and resources we need to survive and thrive.

<https://translifeline.org/>

1-877-585-8860

**LGBTQIA+ at the School District of Philadelphia**

- [philasd.org/studentrights/lgbtqia/](https://philasd.org/studentrights/lgbtqia/)
- Celebrates the experiences and affirms the identities of LGBTQIA+ students, staff, parents, and family members.





## 988 Suicide and Crisis Lifeline

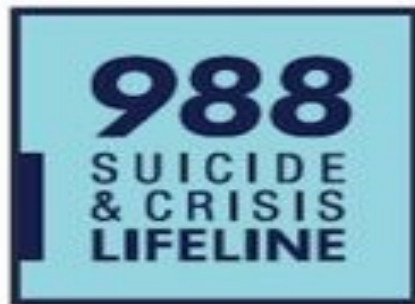
### Need Help NOW?

If you or a loved one are experiencing a suicidal crisis or emotional distress

**CALL [988](tel:988) or [\(215\) 685-6440](tel:2156856440)**

**Lifeline Options for Deaf + Hard of Hearing:** For TTY users, use your preferred relay service or dial 711 then 988.

[HealthyMindsPhilly.com/988-Philly](https://HealthyMindsPhilly.com/988-Philly)



Philadelphia County residents now have a new, easier way to connect to behavioral or mental health crisis services.

The 988 Suicide and Crisis Lifeline offers 24/7 access to compassionate, trained professionals. Callers experiencing suicidal feelings, substance use, and/or mental health crisis or any other kind of emotional distress will receive counseling, guidance, and direction for receiving prompt evaluation and treatment services.

988 serves as a universal entry point so that no matter where you live in the United States, you can reach a trained crisis counselor who can help.

<https://dbhids.org/about/organization/behavioral-health-division/988-suicide-and-crisis-lifeline/>

# **Northwest Victim Services**

## **Northwest Victim Services**

**6023 Germantown Avenue**

**Philadelphia, PA 19144**

**215.438.4410**

**267.808.0350, Executive Director, Melany P. Nelson**

**267.584.9692, Rysheda Elliott, Peer Support Victim Advocate**

**267.584.5424, Rachael Reyes-Vazquez, Bilingual Court Advocate**

**267.804.2041, Wynter Downing, Youth Engagement Coordinator**

**267.804.2042, La’Nita Harris, Victim Advocate**

Offering FREE Services to those affected by a Crime in the Northwest Section of Philadelphia