

Youth of Color Thinking Outside the ‘Gender Box’

Intelligent. Spiritual. Emotional. A month ago, if you had asked which sex these words described, a young person from Latin American Youth Center (LAYC) would almost certainly have said “a woman.” But after an exciting new relationship that GenderPAC’s Community Partners initiative has developed with LAYC to explore gender stereotypes and gender-based violence is helping young people develop a more complex understanding of gender.



As part of GenderPAC’s work to raise awareness of hyper-masculinity, sexism and homophobia among youth groups serving young men of color, Community Partners Manager Khaleaph Luis lead a group of 35 youth April, 30 at the Latin American Youth Center in Washington, D.C. in a workshop that explored gender stereotypes and gender-based violence. (pictured above)

Role play exercises that drew comparisons between police harassment and street harassment of girls, discussions of media representations in *Hip-Hop: Beyond Beats & Rhymes* of men as violently masculine, and other activities helped the youth not only explore words, characteristics and values associated with masculinity and femininity, but also gain an appreciation of the oppressions experienced by both men and women of color.

GenderPAC’s work with LAYC to begin to fully address issues of hyper-masculinity, sexism and homophobia as obstacles to academic achievement, job-readiness, and relationships with men and women continues this summer as a part of their 10 week summer camp program for middle school youth.

GenderPAC’s Community Partners initiative works to increase the effectiveness of community groups serving young men of color. Community Partners works closely with community groups in 5 key cities (New York, Washington D.C., Chicago, Atlanta, Los Angeles). To learn more about the Community Partners initiative, visit www.gpac.org/community.