A High Schooler's Perspective (and Advice!) on Transgender Advocacy

April 18 marks National Transgender HIV Testing Day.

April 16, 2019 By AIDS United

This post is by guest blogger Lexi, of the Michigan Organization for Adolescent Sexual Health.

Starting in the fall of 2018, I joined the Michigan Organization for Adolescent Sexual Health (MOASH), where I work to bridge communication between two groups of 13- to 24-year-olds, one for LGBTQ youth and one for transgender and gender-nonconforming youth.

I was presented with an opportunity to come to AIDS United's TLI (Trans Leadership Initiative) convening in the winter of 2019 in Washington, DC. I was more than excited and honored to be presenting MOASH's work with trans youth in front of the AIDS United team and the wonderful organizations that had also been funded through the TLI project.

As a 17-year-old trans woman coming from a simple town in Michigan, I find it often difficult to discover what other experiences may be like in different communities. But from this meeting, I was exposed to a plethora of different perspectives, motivations, and backgrounds surrounding the topics of supporting transgender people living with HIV. A group of perspectives that were relatively new to me was the role of race in transgender rights. A majority of people in attendance were from minority communities. They shared experiences that all had their own unique set of details but that all had the same core solution: Representation. Representation of minority groups, including the transgender community, is the utmost importance to ensure the safety of human lives. Something that was quite affirming to hear was that advocacy for transgender youth is critical — and that my work as an activist will be paying dividends in the future. Coming from my perspective as a child who was born in 2001, I believe that our communities need much more help than we are given. AIDS United is a forerunner for this underrepresented movement, and I support whatever work they are going to put forward to assist transgender individuals.

It is clear to me that the fight for transgender representation in all elements of life is vital to the goal of helping those who are in need of aid. While at the convening I was able to meet some remarkable people. I now carry their voices and ideas with me as I go through my blossoming life. Part of this trip for me was meeting with Justin Amash, my district representative in Congress. While MOASH and AIDS United had no part in organizing the meeting with him, I looked to them for advice on how to properly represent my communities. Since my meeting with Amash had to be

canceled due to snow, I plan to try to meet with him here in Michigan instead. I will hope to represent the communities of transgender students and give my perspective on how to properly support this community through legislation.

A piece of advice for those who want to be involved in advocacy: Be proud of your opinions. Being proud of who you are is also vital. You will meet people who do not share the same views as you. Staying firm on your position while respecting theirs is a sure way to make progress in this world. Young people can do so much for the world through advocacy. Be a representative for populations in your school, and make progress in the process.

I would like to thank AIDS United and MOASH for providing this wonderful opportunity to me. This project has given me many tools to push for transgender rights progress in my own school district. Making progress on the local level is just my way of contributing to the large picture of transgender rights. I hope to expand my transgender advocacy into college campuses while continuing to oversee progress at my high school.

Lexi is the MY Voice Liaison member at Michigan Organization for Adolescent Sexual Health (MOASH), a grantee of AIDS United’s Transgender Leadership Initiative.

© 2026 Smart + Strong All Rights Reserved.

http://beta.docker.poz.com/blog/high-schoolers-perspective-advice-transgender-advocacy