



Sample Letters for Organizing (II)

The following is a letter from the activist group PISSR (People In Search of Safe Restrooms) to the San Francisco LGBT Community Center.

Use this letter as a guide for careful and sensitive ways of opening conversation about gendered bathrooms.

What if you had to think twice when trying to access a restroom to relieve yourself? What if you entered a bathroom most appropriate for your gender identity only to be escorted out by the police? Or even more traumatic had an accident because no one would let you use a toilet in either the men's or women's room because they had a preconceived notion that your presence would upset some unspoken bathroom balance. All of these examples and more are just some of the obstacles that gender-variant, differently-abled, and some not so stereotypically male or female folks encounter when trying to do something as simple as use a toilet.

PISSR (People In Search of Safe Restrooms) is a group of gender-variant, differently-abled and traditionally gendered individuals who are very interested in creating safe bathroom space for people who do not fit the binary gender construct of female and male, or have special circumstances that might require a differently gendered caretaker to escort them to the toilet. We recognize that even in San Francisco, many people have no safe places to go to the bathroom. They get harassed, beaten, and arrested in both women's and men's rooms and many avoid public bathrooms altogether, hence developing health problems. We understand that this affects people with a range of gender identities including people who do not identify as female or male, transgender people who do identify as female or male, as well as many masculine and butch women, and feminine men. Therefore we are committed to establishing gender-neutral bathrooms and we believe that all people, regardless of their gender identification or presentation have the right to access safe and dignified restroom facilities without fear of harassment, judgment, or violence.

So where does the SF Center come in? In response to these issues the New York GLBT Center has implemented multi-stall gender-neutral bathrooms on every other floor of their building. Currently the San Francisco LGBT Center only has one gender neutral toilet. By the very nature of the LGBT Community Center it seems that your organization would be a good first candidate for the sorely needed implementation of such bathrooms. How exciting and culturally appropriate it would be if the Center were the first organization in the city of San Francisco to formally create multi-stall gender-neutral bathrooms for future benchmarking practices locally and nationally!



Toilet Training

COMPANION GUIDE FOR ACTIVISTS AND EDUCATORS

We have been consulting with the Transgender Law Center as well as have a working relationship with the HRC LGBTAC and we have found that there are no legal barriers prohibiting the creation of multi-stall gender-neutral bathrooms in the city. So what might multi-stall gender-neutral bathrooms look like? Well, we have ideas but would relish the opportunity to more precisely develop a model specific to the needs of the SF LGBT Community Center. We have a panel that would be willing to make a presentation to the Center staff and board. As a leader of the LGBT community, establishing multi-stall gender-neutral bathrooms at the center would set a positive example to both organizations and businesses throughout the city with the end result being SAFE restrooms for all.

We hope that our letter has been compelling enough to call you to attention. Please contact us so we can set a date to make our presentation and begin the process of the Center's participation in creating safe restrooms for all.

With best regards,

PISSR (People In Search of Safe Restrooms)