

SAS

STREETWISE & SAFE



• 147 W. 24th St. 4th Fl., New York, NY 10011 • ph 212.929.0562 • Fall 2011 Newsletter •

SAS is Spreading the Word on Staying Streetwise and Safe



Building community and grassroots power at Have a Blast! Empower Your Community with SAS. June 9th, 2011.

Streetwise and Safe —also known as SAS—is a project by and for youth of color in New York City that shares the ins & outs, do’s & don’ts, and street politics of police encounters between LGBTQ youth of color and the police. We stand for and with LGBTQ and youth with experience trading sex for survival needs. We feel knowing your rights makes you more confident in protecting yourself during and after interactions with the police. We also know that the reality is that the police don’t always respect our rights but knowing what they are is important so that we can fight for them later. We also create a space to share strategies to stay safe from all forms of violence experienced by LGBTQ youth.

We invite you to visit our websites: www.streetwiseandsafe.org and www.justicemap.streetwiseandsafe.org to learn tips to stay Streetwise and Safe! We also invite you to follow our blog “Injustice Diaries” on our website and to join our campaigns: "Stop Using Condoms as Evidence of Prostitution" and "LGBT Youth of Color say NO to Stop and Frisk." We also hope you will join the national effort to stop the harmful anti-immigrant initiative known as Secure Communities, which will increase the vulnerability of LGBTQ immigrants of color to violence and deportation.

Lastly, please contact yul-san@streetwiseandsafe.org if you would like to invite SAS youth to do a Know Your Rights Workshop at your organization, drop-in space or group! We are excited to be able to build with you and share tips on how to stay streetwise and safe!

Inside...

- SAS is Fighting Injustice in New Orleans 2
- Reflections on the 2011 Allied Media Conference.....2
- SAS Outreach2
- A Poem for Liberation.....2
- STOP Stop & Frisk3
- SAS Highlights3
- SAS Campaigns and How to get involved!.....4

SAS Youth Leaders Speak Up and Speak Out!

“Last month I was able to give my first time Know Your Rights workshop with the youth at our friend organization FIERCE. Presenting what I learned in SAS to the FIERCE youth felt so invigorating. They took the information so well and seemed so excited to learn and to share their knowledge as well. I’m sure without a doubt that they will use the skills and information I handed out in their every day lives. I’m so happy I’m a part of such a great team at SAS that made all of this possible and can’t wait to do another Know Your Rights workshop again.” (Shanelle, SAS member)

“ 85% out of the 600,000 people that the NYPD stops and frisks each year are Black and Latin@. As an African American, traditionally oppressed throughout American history, I subconsciously expect to be stopped and frisked at random in my rapidly gentrified neighborhood. But I can only imagine how dehumanizing this experience is for people who come to this country to find work and reunite with their families; only to be subject to stop and frisk based on the fears and assumptions of often flawed police judgment. I’ve always thought how deeply connected our struggles are. As fate would have it, my first Know Your Rights Training was held at “Make the Road NY” an organization located in the Latino enclave of Bushwick. From the moment I stepped off the L train I felt a strong sense of Latino culture and heritage offset by an even stronger police presence. Make the Road was the perfect place to teach youth of color their rights when dealing with the police. We had great role plays, we shared a ton of information creatively and got great feedback. It is important to teach young people of color their rights because we are often born into communities where racial profiling and police encounters are a way of life. We have no alternatives! The NYPD has made it clear that they don’t plan on changing their profiling anytime soon, so I don’t plan on stopping training communities to be streetwise and safe either.” (Bilal, SAS member)

As a member of SAS I have had many times when my artistic abilities have been supported. One of my most memorable moments was when I was able to write a script and act in my very own “Know Your Rights” production entitled “Law and Order: Streetwise and Safe.” In this production, I was able to show real life situations faced by young people of color whose gender does not match traditional gender presentations and how the police use their power to search them to determine their gender and pressure them – which is not legal. My goal with this video was to put people on to the fact that they must wake up and start to want to know their rights! I want this production to reach all people of all colors, genders and sexual identities and light a fire under them to prepare them to stand up against all police injustices. (Jasmine, SAS member)

Who we are:

SAS members: Bilal, D, Ileana, Jasmine, Jonathan, Kimberly, Peter, Polly, Shanelle, Tree

SAS Co-Coordinator: Andrea Ritchie and Mónica Enríquez-Enríquez,
Administrative Coordinator: Bhavana Nancherla, **Community Education Coordinator:** Yul-San Liem,
Social Worker: Johannah Westmacott.

SAS Board: Anya Mukarji-Connolly, Syd Tarzwell, Nadia Qurashi, Pooja Gehi and Kenyon Farrow

SAS is Fighting Injustice in New Orleans!

Over the past year and a half, SAS has worked side by side with our partners at Women With a Vision and the Loyola University Civil Justice Clinic in New Orleans and the Center for Constitutional Rights in New York to develop a legal and organizing strategy to stop the injustice of a Louisiana law requiring people convicted of solicitation of oral or anal sex under a 200 year old "crime against nature" statute to register as sex offenders for 15 years to life, while individuals convicted of solicitation under the prostitution statute are not. Police and prosecutors have complete discretion when deciding which law to use to charge people for the exact same conduct – with disproportionate impacts on poor Black women and LGBTQ youth of color. In February 2011 we filed a law suit challenging the discriminatory and disparate punishment imposed under the two laws, and by August the Louisiana legislature abolished the distinction, and people convicted of solicitation under the "crime against nature" statute are no longer required to register as sex offenders. Unfortunately, the law did not stop the registration requirement for approximately 500 people who are already required to register as sex offenders solely because of a conviction under the old law - 80% of whom are African American. Women with A Vision, SAS attorney and co-coordinator Andrea Ritchie and lawyers at the Loyola Clinic and Center for Constitutional Rights continue to fight on their behalf to correct this ongoing injustice. For more information and to hear testimony from LGBTQ folks convicted under the statute as young people whose lives have forever been changed as a result, check out Women With A Vision's No Justice campaign website at: <http://wwav-no.org/programs/no-justice> and the Center for Constitutional Rights case page at: <http://www.ccrjustice.org/crime-against-nature>.

Reflections on the 2011 Allied Media Conference

As a SAS member I participated in the 13th Annual Allied Media Conference during the summer in Detroit, Michigan.

It was such an honor to attend many different workshops. I learned that through social media you can help change anything you want to change and communicate your message about anything you stand for and believe in fighting for. I was comfortable, the most comfortable I've even been because of the faces, environment and positive energies that surround the AMC. The most personally memorable workshop I attended was organized by the Healing Track, which is a coalition of collectives that specialize in healing, reiki, therapy and acupuncture. They create a beautiful and safe space to unwind and helped people release built up tensions and worries. I also enjoyed co-hosting our workshop "Bring on the Peace, Fight the Police" where we launched our multimedia website and we got to build with young queer and trans people across the U.S. and Canada. I also got the opportunity to be part of the Poetry Slam and it helped me get over my stage fright when performing my poetry. It gave me the chance to let others hear my talent. I was gratefully surprised by the reaction of my peers. That will be a night I will never forget. It motivated me to continue my involvement in the social change and equality for LGBTQ youth movement! This experience has produced such positive movement in my activism, mind frame and continuous growth to help change my community and other communities for the better. (D, SAS member).



During the summer after the Allied Media Conference, Streetwise and Safe members decided we wanted to work more on our spoken word. Most of us really had little to no experience related to poetry. So we decided to hook up and collaborate our skills at a little training at the CUNY graduate center with an ally named Arianne Benford. We basically learned the basic skills of poetry and how to share our own experiences and emotions down on paper. As a group we all had our cons & pros, but tried our best to progress and worked at any writing errors we had. I learned how to project my voice as I stand in front of a crowd to perform my poetry. (Ileana, SAS member)

SAS Outreach

What SAS is doing! By SAS member Peter.

The outreach materials Streetwise and Safe decided to use and design as a tool for expanding Know Your Rights knowledge against police enforcement are very helpful and creative.

Our first choice of outreach material is a little brochure that can easily fit in a wallet or pocket and that contains information about what to do and what not to do when your are confronted by the police. We wanted to clarify any myths and confusions about the NYC criminal justice system. With this SAS card we wanted to let people know where to find more information on other major topics such as arraignments, summons, warrants and more so we included our website www.justicemap.streetwiseandsafe.org.

Our second choice in expanding our work and letting our friends and their friends know about our work is a wristband with our main website www.streetwiseandsafe.org. We decided wristbands are trendy and popular within LGBTQ youth and youth of color communities, so we felt it would be a cool way to expand our work. Our final choice is a sticker with a short quote of hope "You are not alone" as well as our website with the rainbow colors as a background. Our goal is to spread the work of SAS and to be heard and known around the city and expand our activism across the nation!

No Service 09:55 92%

Where have you been? :)

I was locked up! They searched me and I got crazy!

Didn't I tell you that you don't have to consent and to ask are you free to go

No! Damn! I forgot!... And the cop totally felt me up. He said it was to see if I was a boy or a girl.

I felt so unsafe! They locked me up with the boys!

You should have told them you're a special category prisoner!

A Poem for Liberation!

I was walking down the street
The police saw me!
Now all of the sudden
the wall is what I see
I don't consent to this search
I was called a wench
Now I'm beat up
Waiting to see a judge
on a court bench
I think of things I should've done
But got so nervous
cause the cop had a gun
As he approached I said
Am I free to go?
He turned me around and said
No! you Ho!
Then I said
I don't consent to this search
But it doesn't matter, I'm of color
And my feelings get hurt.

By Ileana, SAS member.

STOP! Stop & Frisk

SAS is part of the movement to stop the NYPD's racist and discriminatory "stop and frisk" practices!...Here is a blog post from the SAS Injustice Diaries by SAS member Bilal:

Stop & Frisk Touches City Officials

At the close of each summer, the predominately Caribbean and Black enclave of Crown Heights celebrates Jouvert and the West Indian Day Parade. It is a highly anticipated and memorable celebration of the music, food, customs, community and the enduring hope and indomitable spirit that is West Indian culture in Brooklyn. But for Brooklyn councilman Jumaane Williams and Public Advocate staffer Kirsten Foy, the parade would become another memorable example of the widening chasm between the NYPD and Black working class communities, often set off by miscommunication and cultural misunderstandings. The two public servants were making a routine passage through police checkpoints en route to the Brooklyn Museum when they were stopped by police for what councilman Williams believes was his dreadlocked hair and dark skin color. Even after the two showed the appropriate identification, they were still apprehended by police for undetermined reasons. Council member Williams would like answers as evidenced by a recent press conference. Sadly due to the NYPD's ultra aggressive, unconstitutional and unfounded stop and frisk policies, more hardworking men, women and LGBTQ people of color will be detained while on their way to the bodega or on their way to the Brooklyn Museum. STAY TUNED FOR MORE on a mounting city-wide campaign to challenge the NYPD's stop and frisk practices!

SAS joins Steering Committee of city-wide campaign to address NYPD's stop and frisk practices and more...

SAS was recently invited to join the steering committee of a city-wide campaign to address daily violations of the rights of New Yorkers by the NYPD, including the racially discriminatory use of "stop and frisk," profiling based on race, gender and gender identity, sexuality and sexual orientation, homelessness and disability, and criminalization of our communities through "broken windows" policing. Our allies on the steering committee include Bronx Defenders, the Center for Constitutional Rights, John Jay College, the Justice Committee, Make the Road New York, Malcolm X Grassroots Movement, New York Civil Liberties Union and Picture the Homeless. Together we are working to eliminate unlawful and discriminatory police practices and targeting of our communities, and increase police accountability through community organizing, "know your rights" education, and legislative changes. To find out more or get involved, contact andrea@streetwiseandsafe.org!

Did you know... last year the NYPD stopped and frisked over half a million New Yorkers, 85% of whom were Black or Latin@. The cops found a reason to arrest in only 7% of cases, and found weapons in less than 1% of them. This year, the Department is on track to stop and frisk over 700,000 people, including many young women and LGBTQ youth of color.

SAS Highlights!

THIS YEAR SAS:

- Moved to 147 W. 24th St., 4th fl in New York and is now sharing the building with our allies at FIERCE, Queers for Economic Justice, Sylvia Rivera Law Project and Audre Lorde Project.
- 10 youth leaders participated at the 13th Annual Allied Media Conference & launched our interactive "know your rights" website.
- Collaborated with our partners at Community United Against Violence (CUAV) in San Francisco to release the statement "**(LGBTQ) Organizations Call for the Immediate Elimination of ICE's "Secure Communities" Program**" a harmful initiative that will further criminalize young people of color who are also immigrants and LGBTQ youth.
- Conducted over 20 youth-led "know your rights" trainings with community organizations in New York City and across the country.



Image: Climbing Poetry—Alix and Naima performing at SAS's annual grassroots fundraiser and inspiring us!

- Joined the Steering Committee of a city-wide campaign to challenge discriminatory policing and targeting of our communities and increase police accountability.

- Launched our campaign "Stop Using Condoms as Evidence of Prostitution." SAS members, along with staff and youth from the Hetrick-Martin Institute in New York City, co-hosted a community forum with Manhattan District Attorney Cy Vance bringing together over 50 LGBTQ youth of color and currently or formerly homeless LGBTQ youth to speak out on the impacts of this practice on their efforts to stay safe and healthy.
- Held a summer long Spoken Word Program for SAS members which honored the ways in which storytelling and healing are part of our movement building work.
- Coordinated a ground-breaking workshop at Creating Change centering the experiences of homeless LGBTQ youth who are, or are perceived to be, involved in the sex trades.



Raffle Winners at "Have a Blast! Empower Your Community with SAS"

Thank you for your ongoing support for LGBTQ youth rights!

Grassroots Donors: Rachel Aimee, Amanda Alexander, John Blasco, Melissa Broudo, Namita Chad, Brendan Conner, Gail Cooper, Atom S. Cianfarani, Climbing Poetree (Naima Penniman & Alixa Garcia), Carrie Davis, Alex Del Valle, Annette Dickerson, Jai Dulani, Shereen D'Souza, Tara Ellison, Ana María Enríquez, Fanny Enríquez, Mónica Enríquez, Harvey Epstein, Jennifer Flynn and Bela August Walker, Breana George, Natalie Havin, Imani Henry, In Su Hu, Sarah Jenny, Noah Lewis, RJ Maccani, Kelly McGowan, Socheatta Meng, Maryse Mitchell-Brody, Anya Mukarji-Connolly, Bhavana Nancherla, Alicia Ohs, Jennifer Parish, Stephanie Pope, Laurie Prendergast, Caryn Prescott, Nadia Qurashi, Rage, Lorraine Ramirez, Audacia Ray, Nathan Riley, Jack Ritchie, Celiany Rivera, Flannery Rogers, Chase B. Strangio, Olga Talamante, Syd Tarzwell, Marie Tatro, Maya Vazquez, Brecklyn Walters, Laura Waterbury, Kyona Watts.

Foundations: Astraea Lesbian Foundation for Justice, Arcus Foundation, Liberty Hill Queer Youth Fund, North Star Fund, Left Tilt Fund, Sparkplug Foundation, Stonewall Quarter Share Fund, Common Counsel Foundation.

Supporters who threw fundraiser parties for us: Native Youth Sexual Health Network, Hey Queen! and NLG Next Generation NYC.



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Join SAS in saying **NO** to injustice, criminalization and in-security!

Stop NYDD's Unlawful and Discriminatory Stop and Frisk practices!

Contact your local councilmember and ask them to support legislation to be introduced this spring that would stop discriminatory policing practices and increase police accountability!!!

SAS Takes Petitions to the Manhattan District Attorney & Co-Hosts Community Forum with organizations working with LGBTQ Youth

I am just speaking my mind. I feel like using condoms to try and say that you are involved in the sex trade is ridiculous. In March and April I was getting signatures for a petition to pass a bill to stop authorities from using condoms as evidence of criminal activities. I had more than 50 signatures from friends, family, people in my community, and people that I don't even know. Most of the people could not believe that the government would stoop that low to lock us up. I am strongly against this and I was outraged when me and my coworkers and lots of different organizations (Hetrick Martin Institute, Ali Forney Center, Streetwork, Callen-Lorde) met with Manhattan District Attorney Cyrus Vance this past May to try to inform him about how that law isn't cool. He really sat there and listened to how everyone feels about this issue and said that he took everything into consideration and that he will talk to his staff and that we will hear from him and his colleagues and then he left. I am still waiting for him and his colleagues to let us know what is going to happen with this. (Polly, SAS member)

NO Condoms as Evidence!

Sign a petition to stop police and prosecutors from using condoms as evidence:

<http://www.petitions.com/petition/condoms/>

Call Manhattan District Attorney

Cy Vance and ask him to take a stand by adopting a policy that his office will not use condoms as evidence of intent to engage in prostitution-related offenses!
(212) 335-9291



JOIN US IN COMING OUT AGAINST S-COMM!

Sign onto and circulate the **LGBTQ Statement Against S-Comm:**

<http://www.cuav.org/article/11>

Sign the petition to the new White House Liaison on LGBT issues asking them to Come OUT against the ICE Secure Communities (S-Comm) program at: bit.ly/scommlgbtq

Collect and send stories of impact and resistance to S-Comm to: lgbt_scomm@streetwiseandsafe.org