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Second Report

Since the last report the major event has been the Desiree Alliance conference in New Orleans. This was a weeklong conference on sex work that I attended with several members of Project SAFE as well as members of SWOP-Philly and SWOP-Baltimore, two other organizations I am apart of. My focus was on the activism and advocacy track where I attended a variety of presentations and workshops that provided a better intersectional lens to approach my work from. It was a wonderful opportunity to network where I was able to meet and connect with truly inspirational leaders in this movement. I also began to distribute the Substance Consumption Facilities advocacy booklets I made as part of my internship that were well received.

At the conference I co-facilitated the drug user caucus that allowed us to create space for an open and honest conversation about substance use in the sex work community. At Project SAFE almost all of the community we serve are both sex workers and substance users, however the larger sex worker movement has failed to address their specific needs. By creating these spaces at conferences in both harm reduction spaces and sex work spaces we can start to bridge the gap in these communities in order to create more comprehensive resources.

I was also able to connect with people in Atlanta and New Orleans who have created sex worker run and led diversion programs that will heavily influence the perspective I bring in trying to create a LEAD program in Philadelphia. Upon returning there was a community stakeholder meeting about LEAD and I felt much better equipped to voice my concerns as well as having a clear idea on the type of program I would like implemented.

Updates on Projects:

-Substance Consumption Facilities:

At this point I will be mailing out physical copies of the booklet to other harm reduction organizations that could potentially utilize this resource in their own advocacy. I will also be creating a presentation/workshop around the booklet and trying to find places in Washington, DC, Baltimore, and Philadelphia where I can present it to move on to the next phase of this project.

-Harm Reduction Outreach:

I am continuing to do work with outreach, as well as maintaining the bad date sheet. At the end of the month my projects on expanding these efforts should be able to go into effect. I am also working to expand who has access to the bad date sheet as

there has been an increase of violence towards are community and this could be a helpful tool to combat it.

-Public Advocacy:

There is a bill (HB 262) that seems to be moving forward in Philadelphia that would regulate strip clubs at the expense of the workers. While this bill is meant to combat human trafficking, it is likely to push vulnerable women into exploitive and coerced situations if working in a strip club is no longer accessible to more marginalized communities. We are working to shut down this bill by launching several advocacy efforts around this to rally support of those within the industry as well as with media and politicians. We are also seeking the support of other social services organizations that have similar values.

-Restructuring:

Project SAFE has gone through some major leadership changes recently and we are in the process of restructuring the organization. I will likely get a more permanent position within the organization following my internship that I will manage remotely from Baltimore until graduating and relocating here permanently in December. We will have several meetings throughout the rest of the summer to discuss how to do this in a way that most benefits the organization and the work we do.

I am continuously grateful for this experience and the funding I was able to get in order to do such amazing work. The end of the summer seems to be approaching too soon but I am glad to know it won't mean the end of my work with Project SAFE.

Best,

Nina Ovian