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David Mariner  
Sussex Pride  
(302) 265-4165  
youth@sussexpride.org

LaToya Baker  
Membership Coordinator  
I Am Me, Inc.  
latoya@iammecorp.org  
(302) 551 2743

*FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE*

## Sussex Pride and I Am Me Inc. Join Forces to Address Needs of LGBTQ+ Youth in Delaware

### Local LGBTQ+ Youth Process the Death of Nex Benedict, Discuss School Safety and Mental Health

Sussex Pride is proud to announce its partnership with I Am Me Inc. to host a thought-provoking panel discussion on the unique challenges faced by LGBTQ youth in the state of Delaware. The event will take place on Saturday, March 23rd, at the Mot Senior Center in Middletown, Delaware.

The panel discussion, or 'ME Youth Seminar', aims to bring together community leaders, advocates, and young people to address the pressing issues faced by LGBTQ+ youth in the state. This inclusive event will provide an open space to discuss and find collective solutions to support the emotional, mental, and physical well-being of LGBTQ youth.

LGBTQ+ Youth and Students and their parents recently gathered to remember the life of Nex Benedict at a Candlelight Vigil on March 2nd in Georgetown, Delaware. Nex died by suicide after experiencing relentless bullying at their school.

- Currently only two school districts in the state of Delaware have policies in place to protect trans and nonbinary youth.
- In a 2022 survey of LGBTQ+ Youth in Delaware, 17% of LGBTQ+ Youth self report attempting suicide.

Youth panelists will address these and other issues local youth face. Panelists include Jayden Taylor, Spencer Camlin, Vienna Cavazos, Bailey Weaver Ronks, and Lamar Angel Kellam.

The event will be moderated by the respected **Dan Cruce, Chief Operating Officer at the United Way of Delaware**. Cruce's extensive experience in community engagement and LGBTQ+ youth advocacy makes him an excellent choice to steer the meaningful conversation forward.

**State Senator Marie Pinkney** will provide the opening remarks, emphasizing the importance of addressing the specific needs of LGBTQ youth in Delaware. Senator Pinkney's strong commitment to equality and inclusivity makes her an exceptional choice to highlight the significance of this panel discussion.

"We are thrilled to partner with I Am Me Inc. in organizing this panel discussion," said David Mariner, the Executive Director of Sussex Pride. "This event will serve as a platform for open dialogue, fostering understanding, equality, and empowering our LGBTQ youth."

The panelists will share their insights, experiences, and recommendations to create a roadmap that will help ensure a brighter future for LGBTQ+ youth in Delaware.

Members of the press are invited to attend and cover this important event. Sussex Pride and I Am Me Inc. are available for interviews to provide additional information leading up to the panel discussion.

#### **Event Details:**

Date: Saturday, March 23rd

Time: 1:00 PM - 3:00 PM

Location: MOT Center 300 S Scott Street, Middletown, Delaware

#### **About Sussex Pride:**

Sussex Pride works to celebrate, strengthen, and support the LGBTQ+ community in Sussex County and the state of Delaware, working through a social justice lens. We focus on arts & culture, health & wellness, social and support groups, and advocacy for our community.

#### **About I Am Me Inc.:**

I Am Me Inc. was formed to offer safe social spaces with programs that uplift and unify the LGBTQ community. I Am Me Inc. has chapters in Delaware and Philadelphia.