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## **MEDIA RELEASE**

### **New Avenues for Youth integrates Sexual & Gender Minority Youth Resource Center (SMYRC) into organization's services**

**PORTLAND, OREGON: 3.13.2015** – New Avenues for Youth is incorporating SMYRC, Portland's Sexual and Gender Minority Youth Resource Center, into the agency's comprehensive programming for foster, at-risk, and homeless youth. The transition, initially beginning as a partnership between Q Center and New Avenues earlier this year when SMYRC moved to New Avenues' Joyce N. Furman building downtown, builds upon organizational synergy and provides important stability to SMYRC.

SMYRC's efforts to engage disconnected youth and New Avenues' vision of every youth having a safe place to call home created a partnership that has now evolved into leveraging resources and coordinating outreach by integrating SMYRC's staff and services. "It's been imperative at Q Center to ensure ongoing stability and the best home possible for SMYRC" says interim board member LeAnn Locher. "We believe an LGBTQ youth program should be run by an organization that excels in youth programming, and New Avenues for Youth is a solid, proven and vital community asset to provide just this."

At this moment, New Avenues' priority is stabilizing SMYRC's current range of services for LGBTQ youth, including a drop-in space and activities in downtown Portland, support for rural youth as part of Washington County Pride Project, and access to community counseling through a partnership with Cascadia Behavioral Healthcare. New Avenues will also be taking on Bridge 13, SMYRC's long-standing technical assistance program that trains service providers, educators, and students on how to enhance the safety and accessibility of their services and spaces for LGBTQ individuals.

"LGBTQ youth are among the most vulnerable young people in our community," says New Avenues for Youth's Executive Director, Sean Suib. "Integrating SMYRC into New Avenues for Youth's services will allow us to reach more youth and have a greater impact in preventing youth homelessness by creating better opportunities and outcomes for LGBTQ youth. While we're aware the program has unmet needs, New Avenues for Youth is committed to providing a permanent home for SMYRC, and we hope the community will wrap around this new alignment of services and help us maximize this opportunity."

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#### **About New Avenues for Youth**

New Avenues for Youth takes a complete approach to addressing youth homelessness and its root causes, delivering support and resources that enable foster, at-risk, and homeless youth aged 14-24 to overcome their barriers and realize their potential. For more information about New Avenues for Youth, visit [www.newavenues.org](http://www.newavenues.org) or call (503) 517-3909.