

4-2023

Gender Liberation and Mutual Aid: Blog Post

Chyenne "Chy" Tyler
Winona State University

Mary Jo Klinker
Winona State University

Follow this and additional works at: <https://openriver.winona.edu/feministqueerpraxis>



Part of the [Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender Studies Commons](#)

Recommended Citation

Tyler, Chyenne "Chy" and Klinker, Mary Jo, "Gender Liberation and Mutual Aid: Blog Post" (2023). *Feminist & Queer Praxis*. 3.

<https://openriver.winona.edu/feministqueerpraxis/3>

This Blog Post is brought to you for free and open access by the Women's, Gender, & Sexuality Studies at OpenRiver. It has been accepted for inclusion in Feminist & Queer Praxis by an authorized administrator of OpenRiver. For more information, please contact klarson@winona.edu.

Gender Liberation and Mutual Aid

Combating Anti-Trans Political Violence

Anti-Trans legislature is defined as any political movement that is meant to attack trans affirmative healthcare - predominately Trans and gender non-conforming children. In 2023 alone, 489 anti trans bills have been introduced in the United States in State legislature, 361 of them are currently active while 44 of them have passed. The attacks range from blocking drag performances in public to outright removing transgender children from safe and loving homes. It is critical to combat the creation of legislature that effects transgender and gender non-conforming individuals in our rural communities. According to trans scholar Jules Gill-Peterson: "Mobilizing against the overwhelming cruelty of anti-trans political violence today requires being clear about what is actually at stake...we can oppose transphobia on material grounds, full stop. And we can demand resources like housing, education, and healthcare for trans people *because we demand them for everyone*...Instead of thinking of trans children as victims whose lives need to be saved, we can demand that they be given the resources needed to pursue lives worth living" ("Anti-Trans Laws Aren't Symbolic. They Seek to Erase Us From Public Life"). Gill-Peterson's vision offered us a path for localizing solidarity and queer affirmation.

Mutual Aid: Building a Gender-Affirming Closet and Resource Event

In combination with community partners such as the Advocacy Center of Winona, queer community members consisting of parents and LGBTQIA+ youth, and local makeup artists our Queer Theories and Politics class created a gender-affirming closet and resource event: "Spring into the new you." During the event, folks were able to acquire free resources: makeup, jewelry, clothing, wigs, a rainbow cake (gayke), pizza, books, skincare, haircut coupons, and even information from folks with lived experience on binders and other trans affirmative healthcare. The largest takeaway from this event was the bridging community, students, and our studies. Realizing that no one is truly alone through mutual aid.



What is Mutual Aid?

As theorized by legal scholar Dean Spade: "The framework of mutual aid is significant in the context of social movements resisting capitalist and colonial domination, in which wealth and resources are extracted and concentrated and most people can survive only by participating in various extractive relationships. Providing for one another through coordinated collective care is radical and generative." (Spade "Solidarity Not Charity") Mutual Aid is not new, much like STAR in 1970, collective care and community organizing recognize that current programs and the state do not supply the necessary things to provide safety for trans and gender not conforming people.



In 1970, Street Transvestite Action Revolutionaries (STAR) was founded by Sylvia Rivera and Marsha P. Johnson. It was created to address issues faced by street people, trans people in prison, poor/homeless youths, and other marginalized people who were not being adequately supported or represented by the other LGBTQ organizations. STAR created safety for trans youth, which Rivera and Johnson weren't afforded as kids. They formed STAR House: "We fed people and clothed people. We kept the building going. We went out and hustled the streets. We paid the rent. We didn't want the kids out in the streets hustling. They would go out and rip off food. There was always food in the house, and everyone had fun" (STAR qtd in Feinberg) STAR provided support to LGBTQIA+ youth in a world of oppression, which continues today.



History: Grounding ourselves in the radical histories of social change



Photograph of Sylvia Rivera from the 1983 Christopher Street Liberation Day Parade holding a banner for Street Transvestites Action Revolutionaries (STAR) that reads "AND GOD CREATED HE AND SHE BUT HE ALSO CREATED ME!".

Student Reflections

“No kid should have to justify their existence, and in this place, they could just be! That’s queer joy.”

”In bottom up grassroots approaches we seek to support ourselves and community, it was important to work with LGBTQ+ partners and validate their experiences, to seek solidarity”

"By offering resources and affirmation to our younger community members who might struggle to find it elsewhere, we actively aided in the support of those who came to our event. We showed them that there are people who are willing to help. In Trans Care, Hil Malatino discussed: “Preservative love is shorthand for all of those acts that keep a being alive and intact, and it is characterized by a specific response to the vulnerability of another. It means “to see vulnerability and to respond to it with care rather than abuse, indifference, or flight” (Ruddick qtd in Malatino 67). Our class took on the role of preservative love offering a form of collective care for those who attended."

“I didn’t have any knowledge of queerness growing up, and I hope that in doing events like these where there is a diverse variety of gender expression and identities, the kids will remember that good things happen when we look out for one another.”

