

LGBT Outreach Committee

The Palm Springs Police Department LGBT Outreach Committee

Mission Statement

“A voice for the LGBT community, offering suggestions to further the effectiveness of the Palm Springs Police Department’s commitment to diversity.”

An outstanding example of the diverse volunteer groups working with the Palm Springs Police Department is the PSPD Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transsexual / Transgender Outreach Committee (PSPD LGBT Outreach Committee).

Because the LGBT resident population and tourism industry is an important demographic in Palm Springs, the Department has a long history of collaboration and cooperation with LGBT citizens. One of the more important but less well-known of our Department’s many volunteer opportunities, the LGBT Outreach Committee is the perfect fit with our philosophy of partnering with the community to fight crime and improve the quality of life in our beautiful city.

The PSPD LGBT Outreach Committee was formed in 2001 in response to a series of assaults and robberies of gay men in the Warm Sands area. Because the suspects were targeting gay men, the crimes were obviously motivated by bias – in other words - Hate Crimes. Community members approached the department and requested that an hoc group be formed to alert the members of the gay community and to begin to provide education on how to avoid becoming a victim, what to do if you became a victim, how to report a hate crime, and to lessen the reluctance that some people have to report such crimes.

A series of community meetings were held to discuss these topics. The committee grew from there, and some of the original members are still active contributors. The current membership draws from motivated citizens and sworn officers and civilian employees of the Department, including several acknowledged leaders on LGBT issues in our community. The Committee meets monthly to dialogue on LGBT topics and issues, including changes in law and legislation.

Some of the committee’s accomplishments:

- Developed the PSPD Hate Crimes wallet card
 - Placed counter displays with cards in approximately 50 businesses and hotels
 - Hosted Community Forums addressing hate crimes or current LGBT topics
 - Joint community meetings with the Anti Defamation League, LGBT and law enforcement experts to further community relations
- Presentations to the Palm Springs Human Rights Commission and City government
- Continued community education
 - Media presentations including broadcast media, video and editorial articles in local newspapers
 - Presentations to local School Districts including students Gay/Straight Alliance
- Recruitment efforts and appearances at Palm Springs Pride
 - Consultation on security issues at celebrations and rallies

To obtain more information about the PSPD LGBT Outreach Committee, contact Captain Walter Combs at 760-323-8120.