

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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**LGBTQ YOUTH DELIVER TRAINING VIDEO TO THE NOPD
YOUTH TELL THEIR STORIES AND WHAT THEY NEED TO FEEL SAFE**

BreakOUT!, an organization of lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and questioning (LGBTQ) youth ages 13-24 that is sponsored by the Juvenile Justice Project of Louisiana, will offer the New Orleans Police Department (NOPD) a video this afternoon to let the NOPD know what LGBTQ youth in the city need to feel safe.

The video, titled “We Deserve Better,” is intended for use in the Department’s training curriculum and was developed after meetings between *BreakOUT!* and representatives in charge of training and policy in the NOPD, including Deputy Superintendent Stephanie Landry.

The youth describe experiences they have had with the NOPD and offer their recommendations to individual officers to improve relationships with the LGBTQ youth community. Many of the examples echo stories discovered by the Department of Justice in their 2011 investigative report of the NOPD, which named bias toward LGBTQ individuals one of their top concerns.

The youth, some of whom have experience with homelessness after they were kicked out of their homes for being LGBTQ, discuss the difficulty of being fearful for their safety on the streets and also with the police, who they say assume that all transgender women are sex workers.

They also discuss two recent murders of young transgender women in New Orleans, further describing the need for youth to feel safe with the NOPD.

The youth teamed up with film production company, FosterBear Films, to produce the video in time for the NOPD’s new training program, which will start in late January.

BreakOUT! youth hope that in addition to showing the video to officers, that the Department will institute a model LGBTQ-policy in the NOPD, such as in Washington, D.C. and San Francisco.

“The youth and film crew have worked tirelessly to develop this video for the Department in time for their January training and are extremely brave to share their stories. We are hopeful that the NOPD will accept this opportunity to hear directly from the young people affected. We all want the same thing- a safer New Orleans, a professional police department, and better relationships with the people who are supposed to protect us,” said *BreakOUT!* Director, Wesley Ware.