



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Public Health Institute of Metropolitan Chicago Granted \$50K from the Hollister Confidence Project to Support, Affirm, and Engage LGBTQ+ Youth Throughout Illinois

CHICAGO, IL - Public Health Institute of Metropolitan Chicago today announced it is one of the 2023 recipients of the Hollister Confidence Fund grant program, a 501(c)(3) charity that supports individuals and non-profits working to strengthen confidence and mental wellness in teens. As a recipient, Public Health Institute of Metropolitan Chicago (PHIMC) will be granted \$50,000 to support its Illinois Safe Schools Alliance (the Alliance) program in creating safe and affirming spaces with and for LGBTQ+ young people. The announcement comes in celebration of Hollister's World Teen Mental Wellness Day, an annual event held on March 2 that the global teen retailer founded in partnership with the National Day Calendar to dismantle the stigma around teen mental health.

"The vision of LGBTQ+ young people and their allies has always guided the work of Illinois Safe Schools Alliance," said Karen Reitan, President and Chief Executive Officer for Public Health Institute of Metropolitan Chicago. "And right now, they are imagining ways to create safe and affirming environments for themselves. Support from the Hollister Confidence Project will provide opportunities for these young leaders to sharpen their skills as they gather stories from their peers throughout Illinois to determine priorities for LGBTQ+ youth-led advocacy, and then launch youth-led projects to advance those priorities." The Illinois Safe Schools Alliance program is currently seeking applicants for its 2023 Youth Advisory Board, which is made possible through support from the Hollister Confidence Fund grant program. Interested middle school and high school students in Illinois who are committed to LGBTQ+ justice issues can apply at bit.ly/YAB2023.

"We know that supporting teens' mental health journeys are imperative to their overall wellbeing – which is why we continue to champion initiatives that are dedicated to these causes," said Kristin Scott, Global Brand President at Abercrombie & Fitch Co. "It is our privilege to continue to give back through our Hollister Confidence Project, and to contribute to the incredible work these organizations are doing for our communities."

The Hollister Confidence Fund is part of The Hollister Confidence Project, a year-round, worldwide initiative dedicated to helping teens feel their most comfortable, confident and capable. This year's grant recipients were selected by The Hollister Confidence Project's advisory board, which consists of mental health experts, educators and Hollister brand representatives. Twenty-one non-profit organizations and projects nationwide will be given grants totaling \$1 million, all to build further confidence among teens across a variety of communities.

For more information on the Illinois Safe Schools Alliance at PHIMC, visit ilsafeschools.org, and to learn more about the Hollister Confidence Project, click [here](#).

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Public Health Institute of Metropolitan Chicago (PHIMC) advances health justice and strengthens public health through innovation and partnerships that align people, strategies, and resources. A program of PHIMC, the Illinois Safe Schools Alliance promotes safety, support, and healthy development of LGBTQ+ youth in Illinois schools and communities through advocacy, education, youth organizing, and research.