

## Parent Affinity Groups

In collaboration with the Director of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion, parents create opportunities for families to come together and support each other in various affinity groups. These groups offer opportunities to meet in person to reflect on experiences, explore new concepts through guest speakers, and, at times, welcome the whole community for celebrations and parent education opportunities. Potlucks are also held to bring adults and children together, often to mark the beginning and end of the school year.

- Since its inception in 1991, the **Parents of Children of Color (POCOC) group** has been a coalition of parents whose purposes and goals are to share experiences, identify common needs, and seek solutions that enable families of children who identify as children of color or multiracial—including Black/African-American/Caribbean/of African descent or ancestry, Hispanic and/or Latinx, Asian (East, South East, South) American & Pacific Islander, or Indigenous—to deal more effectively with the diversity issues they face in our society. The group also helps to think of ways for their children to build a positive self-image and help them feel comfortable being themselves while being part of the broader Bank Street community.

Each year, POCOC invests time and care in bringing the community together by organizing the “Bank Street’s Got Talent” talent show, which is an opportunity for children of color, as well as the larger community, to present their talents and skills while developing stage presence, confidence, and voice. Many children have become performers and leaders in our school following opportunities like these.

- The **Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Questioning, Intersex, Asexual (LGBTQIA+) Headed Families Affinity Group**, created in 1999, is a group of queer, trans, and non-binary families and allies who come together to talk about and identify common needs, interests, and goals. They also support each other and consider ways to increase visibility and voice within our own community.

Throughout the year, the LGBTQIA+ community organizes events, such as the Bank Street VISIBILITY Exhibit, which celebrates diversity and pride, supports social justice, and promotes equity in order to combat prejudice. The VISIBILITY Exhibit features photographs of Bank Street students, families, faculty, staff, administration, and alumni who identify as LGBTQIA+ and/or loved ones with similar identities. Additionally, the LGBTQIA+ group, along with the Director of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion, organizes a series of pride events during Pride month, such as attending and marching in the New York City Pride Parade and hosting an evening pride party at school.

- With support from the Learning Specialist team, the **Learning Diversity Support Group (LDSG)** supports families in the Bank Street community who have children with diverse learning needs. The group dedicates time to sharing information and resources. While building community and increasing collaboration between the school and families, this group seeks to decrease the stigma around learning

support and learning differences. A guest speaker is brought in each year to provide parent education related to particular learning needs of children in our community.

- The **White Anti-Racist Affinity Group** is a place for White parents to discuss and explore their experiences as White people living in a racist society. The group seeks to learn about and examine White culture and privilege in order to actively work toward helping Bank Street to be an anti-racist institution and to continue to disrupt White supremacy. A guest speaker is brought in each year to provide parent education.
- Previously known as Touched by Adoption, the **Adoption Affinity Group (AAG)** provides social support for Bank Street families that were formed or expanded by adoption. The group advocates within the School for Children on issues surrounding adoption, provides related programming, and helps increase teachers' understanding of adoption and how curriculum can reflect and support adopted children. The AAG group works in conjunction with other parent affinity groups on school-wide events, creating opportunities for awareness and education for the broader school community. In order to support and create a robust group, the group collaborates with other nearby schools on parent education and additional opportunities.
- Since its inception in 2022, families in the **Raising Gender-Diverse Children** group come together to share, listen, and support each other while seeking out information and resources on their journey of raising transgender, non-binary, or otherwise gender-expansive children and teens. This group also collaborates with the school to strengthen the policies and initiatives that support their gender-expansive children and families.
- In this **Jewish Families Affinity Group**, Jewish Families gather to celebrate and share commonalities including stories, experiences, and observances, while also learning about differences among themselves. Through this process, families can learn ways to support each other, further understand themselves, the collective understanding as members of the Jewish community, as well as reflect on the rising antisemitism in NYC and increased violence against Jews the world over. Some of these meetings will be facilitated and moderated by experts in the field and support the families' interests through connection and celebration while embracing their Jewish identity, however it manifests within school and household.