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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Pacific Pride Foundation Hosts LGBTQ+ Youth Conference and Prom

Santa Barbara, Calif., April 23, 2018 – Pacific Pride Foundation (PPF) provides programs and services to more than 10,000 people in Santa Barbara County and supports local LGBTQ+ youth with activities and resources year-round. Programs include regular youth group meetings in Santa Barbara and Santa Maria, summer leadership opportunities, in-school academic and social support, and the annual Youth Connect Conference and PROUD Prom.

In its fifth year, Pacific Pride Foundation's Youth Connect Conference and PROUD Prom was made possible by Deckers Brands and hosted more than 200 youth from the Central and South coasts at their world headquarters in Goleta on Saturday, April 14.

The Youth Connect Conference included speakers from Fighting Back in Santa Maria, Stephen Coyne from Deckers Brands, Shadille Estepan from Lady Gaga's Born This Way Foundation, and Sina Grace, writer of Marvel's Iceman comic series. Youth were led in interactive workshops about resilience and managing negative emotions as well as how to prioritize their creative endeavors after high school and navigate the professional landscape while finding a career they love.

Following the conference, teens were provided with dinner, makeup booths, and free UGG slippers before watching drag performances, taking pictures in front of UGG photo backdrops, and having a "dance-off" orchestrated by LA's DJ Young 1.

"Everything was ultimately amazing and blew me away. The rainbow decorations were awesome, the art activity in the beginning was a cool touch. All the staff were supportive and did an outstanding job at putting everything together," one youth said after the event. "This event helped me reconnect with people that I hadn't seen in years, meet incredible new people, and feel more fully myself than I have in possibly my entire life."

Pacific Pride Foundation has offices in Santa Barbara and Santa Maria. Community members can learn more at pacificpridefoundation.org.

Pacific Pride Foundation (PPF) is the largest LGBTQ+ center between Los Angeles and San Francisco, serving all of Santa Barbara County. It partners with 35 other educational and nonprofit agencies to create a thriving and visible LGBTQ+ community and prevent the transmission of HIV and HEP-C. PPF provides services and programs to more than 10,000 clients in the inclusive and diverse LGBTQ+ community including youth programs, elder programs, counseling services, sensitivity trainings, community events, and advocacy on LGBTQ+ issues.

PPF directly prevents the transmission of disease through its HIV/AIDS and HEP-C testing and prevention outreach and education, delivering 1300 free tests in the past year. PPF is the leader in programs for LGBTQ+ youth, serving 200 kids with mental health, suicide prevention, and anti-bullying programs, while providing them with a safe place and leadership opportunities. PPF is also addressing the opioid crisis through the only clean needle exchange program in the county, which collects about 100,000 used needles every year, and by distributing Narcan kits, which have saved 90 people from potentially fatal overdoses in the past year.

For more information or to make a donation please visit <https://pacificpridefoundation.org>.