

YOUNG LGBTQ LEADERS GATHER IN WASHINGTON, D.C.

Point Foundation National Conference for Scholarship Recipients

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July 25, 2016 - Recognizing that leadership skills must be actively fostered, [Point Foundation](#) (Point), last week brought most of its 84 current scholarship recipients, and many of its alumni, to the Mayflower Hotel in Washington D.C. for a three-day (July 21 -24) National Leadership Conference. Point is the nation's largest scholarship-granting organization for lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and queer (LGBTQ) students of merit.

Point Scholars and Alumni traveled from around the country and as far as North Africa to engage in three days of workshops, panel discussions, and addresses by notable LGBTQ and allied elected officials, authors, business leaders, and artists. The 225 attendees, which included Point board members and trustees, participated in sessions about the upcoming election, being out as LGBTQ in the workplace, and serving the community through advocacy.

"There's a wealth of knowledge and experience within the extended Point community," said [Jorge Valencia](#), Point's Executive Director, and CEO. "I expect every Point Scholar and Alum will come away from our National Leadership Conference inspired and with many new connections that will help their academic and professional development."

Among the speakers who addressed the conference and participated in panels: **Randy W. Berry**, the State Department's Special Envoy for the Human Rights of LGBTI Persons; **Rep. David N. Cicilline** of Rhode Island; **Jason Collins**, 13-year veteran of the NBA and a member of Point Foundation's Honorary Board; **Raffi Freedman-Gurspan**, Outreach and Recruitment Director, Presidential Personnel Office; **Our Lady J**, Singer, activist, and writer on the Amazon's "Transparent;" **Alex Morse**, Mayor of Holyoke, MA and a Point Alum; and **Eugene Scott**, CNN Politics Reporter. Off-site visits included a private viewing of the LGBTQ collection at the Smithsonian National Museum of American History, led by curator **Katherine Ott**, and visits to the Capitol, the Library of Congress and the Supreme Court.

A highlight of the conference was the presentation of the Point Leadership Award to [Mara Keisling](#), Executive Director, National Center for Transgender Equality. Keisling, one of the nation's leading advocates for transgender equality, resolutely told the audience at conference's Leadership Dinner, "Policy-wise there is no 'defense' in LGBT work. There is only 'offense.'" Keisling also stressed the importance of service to others, saying "Life is service, and service is joy."

Point Scholar [Bridgette Davis](#), addressing her fellow Point Scholars and Alumni at the Leadership Dinner, said, "Each time I am at Point events, my future becomes clearer, more ambitious, and more inspired — because each of you and your achievements hold me to an incredibly high bar. You remind me what I am capable of — and what we all deserve."

Point is able to bring its intergenerational community of scholars, alumni, board members, trustees and staff together for the 2016 Leadership Conference, thanks to the generous support of sponsors and donors. Leadership Sponsor: **HSBC**. Contributing Sponsors: **Time Warner Foundation**, **Verizon**, and **Wells Fargo**. Special Session Sponsor: **Goldman Sachs**. National Media Sponsor: **The Advocate**.

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About Point Foundation: Point Foundation empowers promising LGBTQ students to achieve their full academic and leadership potential – despite the obstacles often put before them – to make a significant impact on society.

Since 2001 Point has provided more than 300 scholarships, making it the nation's largest scholarship-granting organization for LGBTQ students of merit. The Foundation promotes change through scholarship funding, mentorship, leadership development and community service training. www.pointfoundation.org | [facebook/pointfoundation](https://facebook.com/pointfoundation) | [twitter/pointfoundation](https://twitter.com/pointfoundation) | instagram.com/pointfoundation

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