March 28, 2011

AVP condemns West Village bias attack; raises awareness of recent spate of hate violence citywide

At 4:30 on Sunday morning, March 27, Damian Furtch was at a McDonald's in New York City's West Village neighborhood when he noticed two men looking at him. Feeling uncomfortable, Furtch left the restaurant, followed by the two men, who proceeded to punch him and call him an anti-gay slur. Furtch suffered facial injuries and required stitches from the attack.

In a little over a month, AVP has seen a troubling amount of hate violence affecting New York City. On February 22, Barie Shortell, a 29-year old gay man, was viciously beaten in Williamsburg, Brooklyn by a group shouting anti-gay slurs. On February 26, Staten Island resident Ronald Jones beat and choked his friend, Robert Jenkins, to death. Jones has told police that he was driven into a murderous rage by Jenkins' unwanted sexual advances. And on March 12, five men entered a party in Woodhaven, Queens, shouting anti-gay slurs and brutally attacked 18-year old Anthony Collao when he tried to flee. Collao died from the injuries he sustained. Collao did not identify as gay; however, this did not stop his alleged assailants from making an assumption about his identity and targeting him for violence.

"Recent attacks in Brooklyn, Queens, Staten Island and now the West Village shows us that violence affects all of us," said Sharon Stapel, Executive Director of the New York City Anti-Violence Project. "This is a wake-up call for every New Yorker: we must work to end violence this culture of violence—and not just violence against LGBTQ people—but all violence. We can end violence through the conversations we have, the relationships we build, and the connections we make. Together we can make our city safer for all people."

AVP encourages you to report any anti-LGBTQ bias, including hate speech, bullying, harassment, and physical violence, to our **24-hour bilingual (English/Spanish) hotline at 212-714-1141** where you can speak with a trained counselor or online on our secure reporting form.

Find out more about the New York City Anti-Violence Project at our website and Facebook page.