

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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## **Rising Ground to Host a Mardi Gras-themed Prom for Runaway and Homeless Youth on Friday, June 26, 2026**



Young people dancing at Rising Ground's first-ever prom for runaway and homeless youth in 2025.

Photo: Crissy Shoots.

(New York, NY – May 19, 2026) – For many teenagers, June means Prom – planning a “prom-posal,” deciding what to wear, and negotiating curfews. For runaway and homeless youth, the prom is frequently a rite-of-passage they do not get to experience. They may have had to drop out of school or move out of their school district, or they may be in school but cannot afford the ticket and associated costs.

Last year, Rising Ground staff decided it was an important milestone that young people supported by its runaway and homeless youth services should not have to miss. A prom committee was formed, including several staff members who had missed their own proms due to housing instability or the Covid pandemic, and a festive [Hollywood Glam-themed event](#) was held at Rising Ground's Safe Space drop-in center in Jamaica, Queens attended by over 100 young people.

"This was more than just an event, it was a powerful celebration of joy, dignity, and love for our youth," says Director, Racquel Jones. "We witnessed something magical: young people who have overcome so much walking with confidence, dancing freely, and celebrating themselves. That kind of memory stays with them, and with us, forever."

This year's prom will again be held at the Jamaica drop-in center on **Friday, June 26 from 6 p.m. and will have a Mardi Gras theme**. The event includes dinner, dancing, photo booths, the crowning of a king and queen, and special surprises. Rising Ground provides the young people with prom dresses and formal attire alongside access to a "glam squad" for their hair, make-up, and accessories thanks to partnerships with local businesses and volunteers generously donating their services.

Rising Ground is one of New York City's largest providers of services for runaway and homeless youth. In addition to the Jamaica drop-in center at 165-13 Jamaica Avenue that is open 24 hours, seven days a week to youth aged 14-24, it operates a drop-in center in Far Rockaway (1600 Central Avenue) and 11 Transitional Independent Living (TILs) residences throughout the city providing apartment-style shared living residences for youth aged 16-21. It also operates two crisis shelters. Combining educational, therapeutic, and recreational supports, Rising Ground provides young people with stability and guidance, helping them work towards achieving their education goals, finding employment, and securing permanent housing. In 2025, the drop-in centers

welcomed over 4,000 youth and its TILs provided shelter and guidance to 510 young people.

Throughout May and June Rising Ground is also holding an [Essentials Drive](#) for runaway and homeless youth. The drive puts donated items such as toiletries and personal care items, undergarments, socks, and outerwear directly into the hands of young people. Businesses interested in donating to the Essentials Drive or to the prom can contact Rising Ground at [Development@RisingGround.org](mailto:Development@RisingGround.org).

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*If you are interested in attending and covering the Rising Ground Prom on Friday, June 26 from 6 p.m. please contact Jennifer Scott, [JScott@RisingGround.org](mailto:JScott@RisingGround.org).*

### **About Rising Ground**

Rising Ground is a leading 195-year-old nonprofit human services organization, currently operating more than 100 programs at 143 sites across all five New York City boroughs and Westchester County, employing a workforce of around 1,800 people. Driven by the belief that each of us can thrive when life has hope and opportunity, Rising Ground provides caring support and proven paths to positive change, directly helping 30,000 program participants, reaching over 72,000 children, adults, and family members each year. Founded in 1831 as Leake & Watts Orphan House, Rising Ground has been at the forefront of supporting evolving community needs and is a leader in utilizing result-driven, evidence-based practices.

More info: [RisingGround.org](http://RisingGround.org)

