

MIST LGBTQ NEWSLETTER



March 2025

Page 1

Mist LGBTQ Foundation Celebrates **Holika Dahan** at **Stories Cafe**



Mist LGBTQ Foundation celebrated Holika Dahan, a significant festival on 13th March, at Stories Cafe, a queer-owned and inclusive establishment. The event brought together Team Mist, Stories Staff, community friends, and allies to mark the occasion.

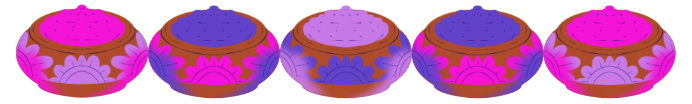
The team created a beautiful rangoli, set up a bonfire, and performed traditional rituals, infusing the celebration with a sense of community and togetherness.

This joyous gathering showcased the foundation's commitment to inclusivity and diversity, highlighting the importance of embracing all identities.

The event was a testament to the power of community and the spirit of celebration, demonstrating that festivals can be a time for people to come together and strengthen bonds. By hosting Holika Dahan at Stories Cafe, Mist LGBTQ Foundation promoted a sense of belonging and acceptance.



Mist LGBTQ Foundation Hosts Vibrant and Inclusive Holi Celebration in Pune



Pune, Maharashtra - March 14: Mist LGBTQ Foundation organized a spectacular Holi celebration in Mundwa, Pune, bringing together the LGBTQ community and allies in a joyous display of color, music, and unity. The event aimed to create a safe and inclusive space for LGBTQ individuals to celebrate without fear or judgment. The celebration featured a Punjabi dhol tasha performance, a DJ spinning traditional and modern tracks, and a vibrant atmosphere that fostered a sense of community and belonging. Proceeds from the event will support the foundation's initiatives, including mental health support, crisis support, and advocacy programs.



"Mist LGBTQ Foundation's Holi celebration proved that festivals should be for everyone—a place where joy is shared, identities are embraced, and no one is left out," said Sriram Sridhar, Executive Director at Mist LGBTQ Foundation.

The event also highlighted the foundation's health initiatives, with 25+ individuals availing of their HIV testing and prevention services in exchange for free party passes.

The celebration demonstrated the power of community and inclusivity, setting a powerful example for how love, music, and acceptance can bring about real change.



Mist LGBTQ Foundation: Amplifying Trans Voices and Advocating for Inclusive Healthcare

The recent closure of the Mitr Clinic's three branches in Pune, Hyderabad, and Thane has left the transgender community in a precarious situation. The clinic, which provided essential healthcare services, including hormone replacement therapy (HRT) and mental health counseling, shut down due to the cessation of funding from USAID.

This development has exacerbated the existing healthcare gap for trans individuals, who already face significant challenges in accessing dignified and affordable medical care.

Complexities of Trans Healthcare

Trans individuals often require specialized care due to the complexities of HRT, which can impact blood pressure, metabolism, and organ function. However, many doctors lack the necessary training, leading to misdiagnosis or inadequate treatment. Stigma and discrimination further complicate healthcare access, with some doctors refusing to treat HIV-positive patients or using birth names instead of chosen names.



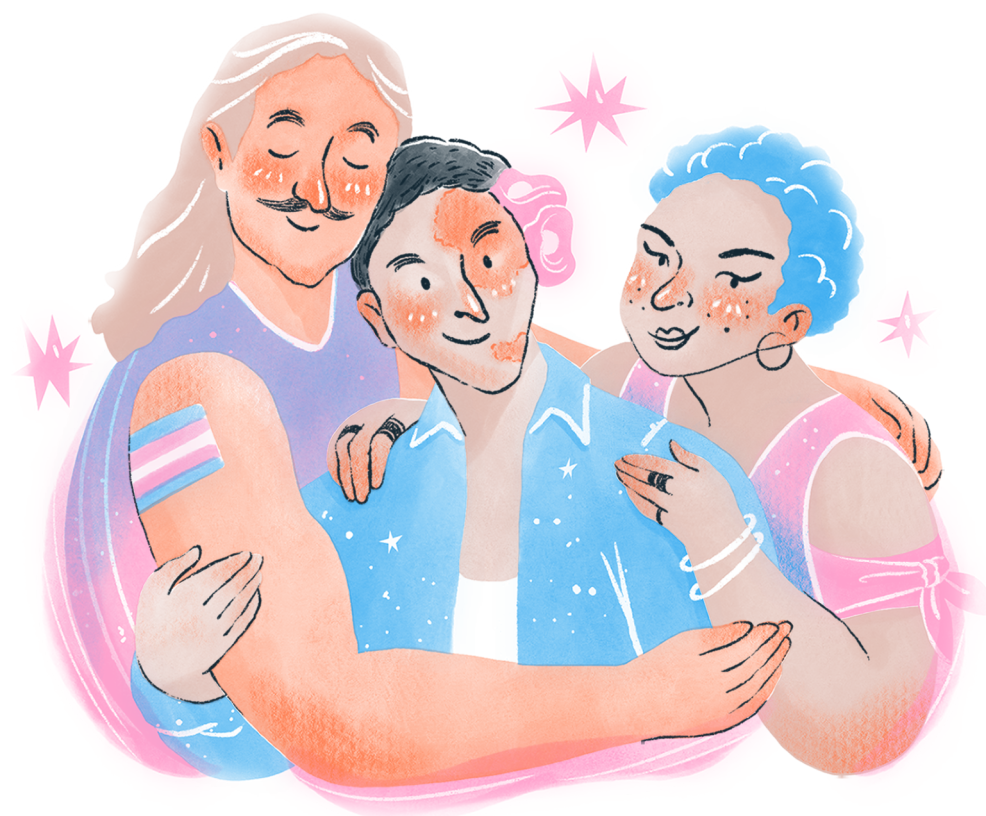
A Beacon of Hope: Mist LGBTQ Foundation's Initiatives



Despite these challenges, organizations like Mist LGBTQ Foundation are working tirelessly to address the healthcare needs of the trans community. On Transgender Day of Visibility (TDOV), the foundation organized a vibrant celebration in Pune, featuring a free health check-up camp, HIV testing, and gift and ration kits for attendees. This initiative not only provided essential healthcare services but also fostered a sense of community and belonging.

Breaking **Stereotypes** and Challenging **Misconceptions**

TDOV events like the one in Pune serve as a powerful reminder of the need to challenge misconceptions and stereotypes about the trans community. By amplifying trans voices and promoting inclusive initiatives, we can work towards creating a more accepting and equitable society.



The Road Ahead: Policy Changes and Community Support

To ensure lasting change, it's essential to push for legislative reforms, workplace inclusivity, and social acceptance. Organizations like Mist LGBTQ Foundation are committed to advocating for policy changes and providing community support. By working together, we can create a world where trans individuals are not just visible but fully embraced, empowered, and protected under the law.

Conclusion

The Transgender Day of Visibility celebration in Pune exemplifies the impact of community-driven initiatives in promoting inclusivity and health equity. As we move forward, it's crucial to sustain our commitment to creating a society that values and respects the dignity and rights of all individuals, regardless of their gender identity. By amplifying trans voices and supporting inclusive initiatives, we can build a brighter future for everyone.



Support Mist LGBTQ Foundation: Donate Now to Sustain Critical Operations Amidst Uncertain Times

*When Support Fades,
Solidarity Shines Brighter*

The rollback of DEI policies in the U.S. threatens global support for LGBTQ+ initiatives, including Indian organizations like ours. To sustain our work in healthcare, employment, and advocacy, we seek your support.



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DONATE

In India, where LGBTQ+ rights are still evolving, and legal protections are limited, the withdrawal of global support could set back many community-driven initiatives that rely on external funding.

As we face uncertain times, we rely on your support to sustain our operations. Mist LGBTQ Foundation has been at the forefront of promoting LGBTQ+ rights and inclusivity in India. Donate to us today and help us continue our critical work, including advocacy, community support, and education.

Your contribution will make a tangible difference in the lives of LGBTQ+ individuals in India.



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