

# Charles R. DiGruccio

Born and raised in Queens, Charles DiGruccio is a passionate high school English teacher in the Bronx with over 20 years of experience. He is dedicated to advocating for marginalized communities, creating safe spaces, and empowering others. He also supported aspiring educators as a field specialist at Fordham's Graduate School of Education, where he helped guide student teachers through lesson planning, setting goals, and reflecting on feedback.

In his teaching career, Charles has worked with students at all levels. Over the years, he has taken on leadership roles as an ELA department leader, coordinator of student activities, and model teacher with a lab classroom. He has mentored colleagues, led professional development workshops, and organized key school events like graduations and proms. Charles was also a finalist twice for the prestigious NYC Big Apple Teaching Award, an honor recognizing exemplary teachers in New York City. He is trained in restorative practices, social-emotional learning (SEL) advisory, and youth mental health first aid. His dedication to creating supportive, inclusive environments is central to his work both in the classroom and as an advocate. He remains deeply committed to providing students with the tools they need to succeed while also making sure they feel valued and seen.

Charles moved to Peekskill in 2019, drawn by its diversity, natural beauty, and vibrant community—a place where he immediately felt at home. The town's warm, inclusive spirit made him feel grounded, and he quickly became part of its active community life. He enjoys attending events like the farmers' market, holiday tree lighting, New Year's Eve Ball Drop, and summer Jazz Fest concerts, and often walks along the riverfront with his dog, taking in the peaceful mountain views.

Since joining Peekskill Pride in 2020, Charles has played an integral role in organizing community events such as Family Pride in the Park and, in 2022, he co-chaired a month-long series of events for Coming Out Day. As the liaison between Peekskill Pride and the Peekskill high school GSA, Charles ensures that the needs of young people in the LGBTQIA+ community are met. In 2024, Charles was appointed president of Peekskill Pride—the same year the organization received the NAACP Community Empowerment Award. He has also collaborated with other local organizations to advance LGBTQIA+ initiatives in Peekskill.

At the heart of everything Charles does is a deep desire to advocate for those who are marginalized—to be someone in their corner and to ensure equity, fairness, and safety in the communities he serves. Peekskill is home to Charles because it's a place where differences are embraced, voices are celebrated, and neighbors show up for one another.