

COMMUNITY announcement

# JOE TREMBLY ADVOCATES FOR BROWARD'S LGBTQ HOMELESS INDIVIDUALS

National studies show LGBTQ youth have more than double the risk of being homeless than non-LGBTQ youth and 40 percent of all homeless young people self-identify as LGBTQ.

► Kirk Englehardt

**J**oe Trembly is happy to help humanize the issue of LGBTQ homelessness if it means increased recognition of the problem and more resources to fight it in Broward County.

The 53-year-old Fort Lauderdale resident was once a homeless gay man and forced to take shelter in a Fort Lauderdale dumpster. Today, he is the homeless management security officer at Keystone Halls, a 90-bed transitional housing facility for veterans and others who are experiencing homelessness, including individuals suffering from chemical dependency.

Trembly's outreach efforts and commitment to helping South Florida's LGBTQ homeless population are attracting the attention of funders like the Community Foundation of Broward, which recently announced a \$75,000 grant to Keystone Halls for a new LGBTQ transitional housing program for 45 individuals who are experiencing homelessness because of negative circumstances in their lives.

The grant to Keystone Halls was one of five awards totaling \$300,000 from the Community Foundation of Broward as part of its Broward Pride Program, with the goal of uniting Broward's diverse community to ensure equality, justice and inclusion of Broward's LGBT neighbors.

"Oftentimes what we find is that people still don't want to identify (as LGBTQ) in order to obtain services or they don't feel safe in the shelters, especially for transgender individuals," said Trembly.

"I am open with who I am there, which obviously creates an opportunity for some individuals, who will then ask me about other services. I want Keystone Halls to be known as a safe place, that when you think of LGBT homelessness,

Keystone comes to mind, then people will not feel so uncomfortable coming."

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#### Homeless Stigma, Invisible Population Believe Extent of Problem

LGBTQ homelessness is undoubtedly a major issue of concern in Broward County, which has Florida's largest percentage population of same-sex couples and is likely home to the largest overall LGBTQ population in the state. But actually counting the LGBTQ homeless population is hard to do, because of the stigma attached to being homeless, coupled with the desire by many LGBTQ individuals to remain invisible at homeless shelters that serve the general population.

A national study released in late 2017 by Chapin Hall at the University of Chicago showed LGBTQ youth have more than double the risk of being homeless than non-LGBTQ youth. Similarly, a detailed national 2012 study of homeless LGBTQ youth by researchers at the Williams Institute of UCLA showed that



Joe Trembly, who 30 years ago was a homeless gay man living on the streets of Fort Lauderdale, speaks to LGBTQ community leaders at the Community Foundation of Broward. The Foundation recently announced the award of five grants totaling \$300,000 as part of its Broward Pride program, including a grant to an innovative program championed by Trembly. Credit: Community Foundation of Broward

nearly 40 percent of all homeless young people self-identify as LGBTQ.

"Even without concrete local statistics, we know LGBTQ homelessness exists," said Linda Carter, President/CEO, Community Foundation of Broward. "It's our role to identify issues that matter in Broward County and support bold, innovative projects like the Keystone Halls LGBTQ transitional housing program, to begin to meet those needs."

#### Broward Pride, A Report to the Community

The Community Foundation of Broward recently produced and

distributed "Broward Pride, A Report to the Community," which captured the voices of more than 50 Broward residents who came together in multiple meetings to analyze the current state of LGBTQ acceptance and inclusion in Broward. The report is available for download at <http://cfbroward.link/BrowardPrideReport2018>

For more information about Keystone Halls, the Broward Pride study or about the Community Foundation of Broward, please email Kirk Englehardt, Vice President of Marketing and Communications at the Community Foundation ([kenglehardt@cfbroward.org](mailto:kenglehardt@cfbroward.org)) or call 954-761-9503. **SFGN**