11 HIV Community Groups Get a $3,000 “Hug”

Here’s how some of them use The Campbell Foundation’s year-end Holiday Hug grants to help their HIV clients.

January 6, 2021 By Trent Straube

Here’s a bit of cheer to help ring in the new year: Eleven HIV community groups in Florida each have received a $3,000 grant to use however they wish. The unrestricted funding arrived courtesy of The Campbell Foundation, which typically funds HIV research but awards these Holiday Hug grants at the end of each year to support local nonprofits serving the HIV community.

“The pandemic has impacted everyone in a variety of ways. For nonprofit organizations, it has created an even heavier burden,” said the foundation’s executive director, Ken Rapkin, in a press release. “Most in-person fundraising events have been canceled or postponed, and the nonprofit sector has dealt with decreased donations; we are very proud of our community partners for continuing their efforts to help those living with HIV/AIDS, especially since much funding has been shifted to COVID-19 research and vaccine development.”

Holiday Hug recipients this season include:

- AH Monroe (Key West)
- Basic NWFL (Panama City)
- Broward House (Fort Lauderdale)
- Care Resource (Miami-Dade and Fort Lauderdale)
- Children’s Diagnostic & Treatment Center (Fort Lauderdale)

- Comprehensive Care Clinic/Broward Health (Fort Lauderdale)
- Compass Community Center (West Palm Beach)
- FoundCare (West Palm Beach)
- Latinos Salud (Miami and Wilton Manors)
- McGregor Clinic (Fort Myers)
- SunServe (Wilton Manors)

Stephen J. Fallon, PhD, the executive director of Latinos Salud, which offers screenings for HIV and sexually transmitted infections, said his organization has been doing extra work amid the COVID-19 pandemic. “Since many other providers were closed, our lab costs hit three times normal expenditures. The Campbell Foundation’s Holiday Hug helps us continue to serve the community with free services and all who are diagnosed get linked into lifesaving care.” He noted that thanks to the help of the foundation, Latinos Salud tested more than 5,000 community members in 2020.

The COVID-19 pandemic affected nonprofits in another way: Many experienced a significant drop in donations. That was the case for SunServe, which offers mental health, housing and other services to the LGBTQ community. “We could not continue to help the thousands of people who reach out to us without [the support of The Campbell Foundation],” said Gary S. Hensley, SunServe’s executive director of operations.

At Compass Community Center, executive director Julie Seaver said the Holiday Hug grant money helped provide food pantry cards to members of its LGBTQ youth program.

Launched in 1995, The Campbell Foundation has awarded more than $11 million in HIV research grants and $1.3 million in grants for direct services. The foundation funds nontraditional or alternative projects that build on clinical, laboratory-based research.

For recent examples of research it has funded, see “Exploring New Ways to Prevent HIV and STIs in Women,” “Can a Single Vaccine Injection Functionally Cure HIV?” and “What Is BG18, and Can It Lead Us to an HIV Vaccine?”

In related news, the foundation, which is based in Fort Lauderdale, Florida, turns 26 in February,

an anniversary it will likely mark with a virtual event. To read about last year's milestone, see "Celebrating Campbell Foundation's 25th Year of Funding HIV Research."

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