



Ali Forney Center for Homeless LGBTQ Youth Opens an HQ Near NYC's GMHC

The Ali Forney Center's new headquarters and drop-in center expands support to homeless LGBTQ youth, often at risk for HIV.

October 19, 2023 By Laura Schmidt

The [Ali Forney Center](#) (ACF) recently opened a new center and headquarters in Manhattan, continuing its commitment to support and save the lives of homeless LGBTQ youth. As a bonus, the new 24-hour center is located in the same building as GMHC, the nation's first [AIDS](#) service organization, making [HIV](#) care and resources more accessible to AFC clients.

A ribbon-cutting ceremony was held September 27 to celebrate AFC's new space, which boasts 30,000 square feet of office space on the building's second floor and a drop-in center occupying the building's entire third floor, according to [Gay City News](#). Dozens of people attended the ceremony, including local elected officials, activists, donors and more.



[View this post on Instagram](#)

A post shared by GayCityNews (@gaycitynews)

Additional space was needed as AFC's executive director, Alex Roque, told Gay City News that the organization has seen a 20% increase in demand since 2016.

"This move will allow us to keep pace with the increased need for our services, allowing us to double the medical, mental health and overall care spaces we can offer," Roque said.

The new headquarters offers a wide range of on-site services for LGBTQ youth between ages 16 and 24, such as overnight programming, medical and [mental health care](#), [substance use](#) counseling, meals, career education and more.

Founded in 2002 and named after a gender-nonconforming youth who was murdered in 1997, the AFC has grown exponentially over the years. The organization used to contain just six beds and closed at 5 p.m. weekdays. Roque acknowledged that the limited schedule negatively impacted LGBTQ youth who needed AFC's services.

"It's that broken pride that gives me the courage and boldness to have this vision that says we need to be a 24-hour drop-in center," Roque said.

Today, the organization never closes its doors, serves more than 2,000 people each year and provides over 70,000 meals annually.

Addressing the crowd at the ceremony, Bronx City Council Member Althea Stevens said, "Moving to this space is absolutely amazing because that means [AFC] will be able to serve young people, save more lives and really transform this city."

Activist and author of *The Risk It Takes to Bloom: On Life and Liberation*, Raquel Willis spoke at the ceremony about her experience growing up in Georgia and coming out to her parents.

"In Augusta, Georgia, as you could imagine, there weren't places like AFC," Willis said. "I tip my hat to you all for creating a haven for folks who do, unfortunately, get kicked out just for being their brilliant, amazing, beautiful selves and living in all of their glory as queer and trans young people."

In related news, in June 2022, the [Ali Forney Center celebrated 20 years](#) of helping rehome youth. A few months later, GMHC, originally known as Gay Men's Health Crisis, marked Founders Day and its 40th anniversary. And speaking of its founders, [Larry Kramer, the iconic AIDS activist who died in 2020, was remembered at a memorial](#) service this past summer.