Oregon’s First Hospice for People With HIV Added to National Register of Historical Places

Juniper House provided compassionate end-of-life care to Portlanders when most facilities refused to admit people with HIV and AIDS.

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Juniper House, Oregon’s first hospice for people with HIV, has been added to the National Park Service’s National Register of Historical Places in recognition of its significant impact on social, medical and LGBTQ history, according to Portland.gov.

In the late 1980s, Juniper House became the first end-of-life care home for people in living with HIV and AIDS in the Northwest, according to Ernestina Fuenmayor of Salazar Architect, who researched and wrote Juniper House’s nomination document. During a time when most health care facilities refused to admit people with HIV and AIDS, the historic building offered compassionate care, support and comfort to those in need.

"By honoring the physical edifice of Juniper House as a highly significant landmark, we are not only honoring the lives of those who were so lovingly cared for there, we are honoring the true spirit of Oregon," property owner Joe Doherty MSW, PhD, told Portland.gov.

Built around 1902 as a single-family residence, the three-level house was transformed in 1987 into an end-of-life care facility by founders Doug Foland, Jan Weyeneth and John Trevitts, who sought to address the rapidly increasing need for personalized support and care for people living with HIV and AIDS in Oregon.

By 1988, between 13,000 and 18,000 Oregonians were living with HIV and AIDS, according to Portland.gov.

Despite operating for only two years (May 1987 through September 1989), Juniper House

impacted many people and inspired several more end-of-life care facilities throughout the state, including Our House, which still operate today.

Juniper House nurses and other caregivers offered comfort and pain management for anyone in need, filling a critical void in compassionate end-of-life care for Oregonians with HIV and AIDS. Juniper House also educated the public about HIV transmission, misinformation and stigma surrounding HIV and AIDS.

Maintained by the National Park Service, the National Register of Historic Places is the nation's official list of historic places. National Register nominations are reviewed by local, state and federal agency experts against long-established eligibility criteria.

Properties identified as historic sites gain land use protections against demolition and may also receive preservation and rehabilitation incentives.

Today, the landmark designation speaks volumes as President Donald Trump's executive orders continue to strip away protections for transgender and gender-nonconforming people, who experience higher rates of HIV compared with the rest of the population.

"HIV and AIDS history is vital to our history, not just for LGBTQ+ communities, but also for health and organizing," said LGBTQ+ Historic Sites Project associate project manager Cayla McGrail. "Juniper House reflects a piece of this story by centering community activism, mutual aid and resilience."

To read more, click #LGBTQ or #Hospice. There, you'll find headlines such as "Cancer Researcher Loses Gender-Related Grant After Trump's Executive Orders," "Massage Therapists Ease the Pain of Hospice Patients — But Aren't Easy to Find" and "What If Hospice Services Weren't Just for the Dying?"

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