



Contact:

Shakira Croce, Communications Manager
646-757-7052; scroce@amidacareny.org

The Amida Care Fund at Stonewall Community Foundation Announces 2016 Grant Awards for HIV/AIDS Initiatives at NYC Community Organizations

New York, NY (December 1, 2016) - The Amida Care Fund at Stonewall Community Foundation announced today that it has awarded new grants for innovative HIV prevention and services to several of its current grantees, to help them continue their important work in the communities they serve. The 2016 grantees are HEAT, Pride for Youth, Sylvia Rivera Law Project, and Translatina Network. Grant recipients are selected based on their outstanding work to address HIV/AIDS in LGBTQ communities throughout New York City.

Amida Care, the largest Medicaid special needs health plan (SNP) in New York State, specializes in providing comprehensive coverage and coordinated care to New Yorkers with HIV/AIDS and other chronic health conditions. The Amida Care Fund at Stonewall Community Foundation was established as part of Amida Care's privately funded Live Your Life Wellness Program and is focused on supporting work that advances Governor Andrew Cuomo's Blueprint to End the AIDS Epidemic in New York State by 2020.

The Fund supports HIV education, prevention, intervention, and treatment programs that engage New Yorkers who are at greater risk of HIV infection—such as young men of color who have sex with men (MSM) and transgender women—and those who are HIV-positive but not virally suppressed or receiving necessary access to care.

“As we observe World AIDS Day, we can feel inspired and hopeful when we look at all the important strides we've made toward ending the HIV/AIDS epidemic; but our job won't be done until we reach the communities that are still most severely affected, such as transgender individuals and young MSM of color. Stigma, discrimination, and social challenges like poverty, unemployment, unstable housing, and lack of access to health services prevent our vulnerable communities from accessing HIV prevention tools like pre-exposure prophylaxis (PrEP), HIV testing, and linkage to treatment and care,” said Doug Wirth, President and CEO of Amida Care. “We are proud to work in partnership with the Stonewall Community Foundation to renew our support to community-based organizations that do innovative work on the ground to help people in New York's LGBTQ communities.”

“Lifting up New York City-based organizations that are working with marginalized communities is a fundamental part of our mission,” said Jarrett Lucas, Executive Director of Stonewall Community Foundation. “We need to be proactive in helping young people in particular. Queer and trans youth of color are resilient in the face of many barriers and disadvantages, but their resilience needs to be supported with adequate resources. We are honored to continue our work with Amida Care to provide this much-needed grassroots funding to our grantee partners.”

Grant awards support a range of HIV-related programs and services:

HEAT (Health and Education Alternatives for Teens) is the only program of its kind in Brooklyn that provides comprehensive medical and mental health care, supportive services, and access to clinical research for HIV-

positive and at-risk youth. Its YMSM/T Health Project works to eliminate the spread of HIV among low-income black and Latino young men who have sex with men and transgender youth. The Fund's \$3,000 grant award to HEAT will support the YMSM/T Health Project's House Calls program, a community-based HIV and sexually transmitted infection (STI) screening initiative.

Pride for Youth seeks to enhance the health, wellness, and cultural competency of LGBTQ young people through supportive services, education, and youth development. Serving Long Island and Queens, the organization is receiving a \$4,000 grant from the Fund to bring its PrEP (pre-exposure prophylaxis) and PEP (post-exposure prophylaxis) outreach programs to more at-risk youth in Queens, with a particular focus on reaching young MSM of color (trans-inclusive) and individuals who might not have ready access to traditional health care.

The Sylvia Rivera Law Project works to guarantee that all people are free to self-determine gender identity and expression, regardless of income or race, and without facing harassment, discrimination or violence. The project's Transgender Healthcare Initiative is an HIV prevention and care program that provides direct legal services to transgender and gender-nonconforming clients to address the challenges that lead to disproportionate HIV infection in these communities. The Fund's \$5,000 grant will help to support the goals of the initiative, which include increasing access to gender-affirming identity documents and safe, affordable health care; addressing the underlying causes of the infection; providing legal services and referrals, including assistance with matters related to accessing care; and training service providers on creating trans-inclusive and affirming services.

Translatina Network, a program housed within the LGBT Community Center in Manhattan, is a network of transgender Latinas whose aim is to promote the healthy development of transgender people through outreach, education, and capacity building, allowing the creation of a safe, productive, and equitable environment. The \$3,000 grant award will support the program's HIV education and community outreach activities targeting transgender women of color, who are disproportionately impacted by the HIV epidemic.

The Fund's grant selection committee is composed of Amida Care executives and senior staff who have many years of experience working directly with HIV-affected populations in New York and an in-depth understanding of the communities served by the grant recipients. Amida Care's goal is to continue to raise more money to increase the Fund and expand financial support for this critical work. To donate, please visit <http://www.amidacareny.org/about-us-donation.htm>.

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