



# LGBTQ+ Safety and Inclusion

## WHY COVENANT HOUSE NEW YORK

At Covenant House New York, our commitment to youth facing homelessness goes way beyond their first moment of crisis. In order to truly help a young person change their life, we know that opening a door is just the initial step in a long journey. We must provide transformational programs that give our youth the tools and support they need to build a future of their own.

## PROGRAM DETAILS

When LGBTQ+ youth become homeless, most seek shelter and services from mainstream or non-LGBTQ+ specific agencies. It is critical that Covenant House, the largest provider of services to young people facing homelessness in the Americas, offer LGBTQ+ youth a welcoming, affirming, and safe environment, as well as tailored programs and services which proactively recognize the unique challenges, risks, and traumas faced by these youth.

Not only are LGBTQ+ youth 120% more likely to be homeless, they have a harder time accessing safe housing at every point along the housing continuum, from shelter to permanent housing. With our unique offering of resources, including housing, food, education, workforce development, counseling, and other trauma-informed services created with the goal of positive youth development, Covenant House New York is a lifeline for LGBTQ+ youth and young adults experiencing homelessness — and we continue to implement new initiatives to support this high-risk community.

## IMPACT

We have enhanced our LGBTQ+ services and program offerings at Covenant House New York in response to a steady rise in the number of young people who come to us identifying as LGBTQ+. Between 2021 and 2022 alone, that number rose from 27% to 34%.

## SERVICES



## LEARN MORE

[covenanthouse.org/chny-investment](https://covenanthouse.org/chny-investment)



## MEET CARLA\*

Carla is transgender and uses they/them pronouns. They moved to New York City last year from Honduras because their parents - and the society-at-large - were not accepting of their gender identity. In fact, when Carla was sexually assaulted in their home country and notified the police, the police refused to do anything about it. Carla felt very unsafe and alone, so they fled.

When Carla first came to New York City, they moved in with an aunt. However, the aunt's husband did not accept their gender identity and threw them out shortly thereafter. Carla learned about Covenant House New York from other young people experiencing homelessness in the city and found their way to our crisis shelter in midtown Manhattan.

In addition to receiving immediate care, food, clothing, and other essentials, Carla had the opportunity to meet with David Miranda, Esq., who speaks fluent Spanish and is a part of the LGBTQ+ community himself, to discuss their legal situation. Carla entered the U.S. on an asylum claim and is currently docketed for removal proceedings. David has been working with Carla to represent them on their asylum claim, and also to get them work authorization.

Carla recently moved into our supportive transitional housing program, where they can stay for up to two years. Despite the uncertainties in Carla's life, they have the support they need to continue moving forward with their personal and professional goals.

*\*Not their actual name.*

## LEADERSHIP

Since 2014, Covenant House has been in collaboration with True Colors United to help us implement best practices to welcome and serve LGBTQ+ youth and create trainings and policies to reinforce our practice of unconditional love and absolute respect.

In the past year, our Senior Youth Development Specialist has been instrumental in fostering this nurturing community. She has raised the attendance at our Gender and Sexuality Alliance events, including panel discussions, workshops, and recreational activities, from 4-6 youth per session to 12-20 youth.

## ABOUT COVENANT HOUSE NEW YORK

Covenant House New York is proud to be New York City's largest provider serving youth experiencing homelessness. So much more than a shelter, we provide affirming and transformative services so each young person can create their own path to independence. Our doors are open 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, 365 days a year.

