



FINDING SAFETY & SHELTER  
FOR LGBTQ YOUTH

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**Lost-n-Found Youth Continues  
Service to Homeless Youth Amidst Pandemic**

*Nonprofit Provides Shelter, Meals and Support Services to Homeless LGBTQ Youth in Crisis*

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**Story Highlights:**

- Lost-n-Found Youth remains open during COVID-19
- Organization maintaining pandemic safety measures, including quarantine, social distancing and stay-at-home orders, until further notice
- Report: Homeless LGBTQ youth at higher risk of infection, long-term impact without interventions
- Youth Perspective: LNFY client among frontline workers at Emory Hospital
- Ways to Help & Get Involved

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**ATLANTA** - April 20, 2020 - [Lost-n-Found Youth](#) (LNFY) is continuing to provide shelter and support services to Atlanta's homeless youth during the COVID-19 pandemic, including daily meals and emergency and transitional housing.

At the emergence of the global health crisis, Lost-n-Found was able to respond immediately, adapting its operations and facilities to ensure continuation of service and shelter for its clients, who are considered one of the pandemic's more vulnerable populations.

While the organization is open to all homeless youth between the ages of 18 and 25, it is unique in its focus on meeting the needs of homeless LGBTQ youth.

"We could not afford to miss a beat," said **Nasheedah Muhammad, director of Lost-n-Found**. "As one of the only organizations in the city specifically resourced to support homeless LGBTQ youth, it was imperative that we were able to provide continuity and consistency for our clients."

The nonprofit worked with the Fulton County Board of Health to get its youth drop-in center and its emergency and transitional housing in compliance with federal, state and local guidelines, including those offered by the Center for Disease Control (CDC) and the World Health Organization (WHO), both of which gave specific instructions for facilities serving the homeless.

Even as state bans are being lifted, LNFY is maintaining previously implemented pandemic measures until deemed safe by health officials and local infection rates have subsided.

Because of its service to a high-risk population, LNFY has also been proactive in testing, which is being facilitated by the Board of Health.

**Pandemic's Impact on Homeless LGBTQ Youth:** As the pandemic continues to make its impact globally, the risk to homeless LGBTQ youth remains high. According to health experts, [including officials at the CDC](#), unhoused people are among the most vulnerable as they're not able to comply with most, if any, of the social distancing and prevention guidelines and have increased likelihood of underlying condition.

LGBTQ youth represent a large percentage of the unhoused population. Even before the spread of coronavirus, LGBTQ youth represented over twice the overall youth rate in reports of unstable housing ([Baams, Wilson, & Russell, 2019](#)).

"We don't want our youth to take a step back on their path to stability and independence because of COVID-19," said **Muhammad**. "During this time, our goal is to provide them with safety and support, so that they're ready to forge ahead once the quarantine has been lifted."

**LNFY Youth on the Frontlines:** One youth in particular who can speak to the benefit of having a place to sleep and a support system during this time is **Aerglo Richardson**. Richardson, 20, is a nurse technician at Emory Hospital. Safety and stability have been especially important as her duties at Emory have put her directly in the face of the pandemic.

"I'll be forever grateful to Lost-n-Found," said **Richardson**, who prior to finding Lost-n-Found had been sleeping in her car. Richardson moved into LNFY's transitional house just weeks before quarantine orders went into effect.

"I no longer feel like I'm in survival mode. In the hierarchy of needs, if you don't have the basics fulfilled, you can't go further or do much with your life. It even started affecting me at work. Finding something that stabilized me was really important. The longevity that Lost-n-Found provides is pretty fantastic. Everyone recognizes that we're safe here. It feels like family."

**Revenue Challenges During the Pandemic:** To maintain its programs and services, LNFY's leadership has had to explore creative ways to bring in revenue while protecting its clients and staff. Like other nonprofits, donations have slowed. Lost-n-Found also temporarily closed its thrift store at the beginning of March, its primary source of revenue.

"We've been very resourceful during this period," said **Muhammad**. "The thrift store has been no exception as we've been exploring ways to reopen virtually until we're able to open our physical doors again. But despite it's closure, we've fortunately been able to retain most of our thrift store staff and transition them to other support roles within the organization. Our biggest challenge now is revenue."

In-person volunteer efforts, including donation drop-offs, have been suspended until further notice in accordance with social distancing measures, but the hotline remains active. LNFY is also hosting a series of virtual fundraisers in the coming weeks to help off-set expenses.

For more information on Lost-n-Found Youth and its efforts, visit [www.lnfy.org](http://www.lnfy.org). Youth in crisis should call the helpline at (678) 856-7824.