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Press Release

**Lost-n-Found Youth Celebrates 8th Anniversary
with New Look, New Leadership and New Home**

Youth homelessness organization partners with Park Ave Baptist Church in Grant Park to open new youth drop-in center, expand transitional housing. Service expansion coincides with November's Youth Homelessness Awareness Month

ATLANTA - November 1, 2019 - Just eight years ago this November, Lost-n-Found Youth was opening its doors for the first time. Now, less than a decade later, the once volunteer-run organization is one of the primary service providers for homeless youth in the city and the go-to organization for homeless LGBTQ youth, who, despite representing less than 5% of the overall population, account for 40% of youth experiencing homelessness.

Under the helm of newly-announced **co-directors Nasheedah Bynes-Muhammad and Ernest Walker**, LNFY is now moving into a new era and a new home, with the goal of expanding its reach and impact even further.

Over the last 12 months, the staff, with strong support from its board, has been working diligently to ensure the organization is efficiently and effectively meeting the needs of its clients and the community. This month the fruits of that labor will be revealed.

Not only will LNFY unveil a new logo and a refreshed mission and vision, but it will move into a new youth drop-in center and add additional beds and housing for its youth transitioning out of crisis. The changes are major for LNFY who will now be able to support more than triple the amount of youth it's currently able to house.

[New Partnerships, New Home, New Beginnings](#)

LNFY's growth is the direct result of its ongoing commitment to work directly with other mission-aligned community leaders and organizations to address the epidemic of youth homelessness. The new youth center comes out of a partnership with Park Ave Baptist Church in Grant Park, where LNFY will occupy the second floor of its campus.

The location provides optimal space for LNFY's programs and services as well as convenient access to public transit, greenspace and other amenities. Added benefit: just a floor above, through a partnership with nonprofit Lydia's House, LNFY will have 12 additional beds for emergency and transitional housing, raising its number from 6 to 18.

"Our partnership with Park Ave Baptist Church could not have come at a more critical time," **said Ernest Walker**, whose responsibilities include full time management of all client programs and services, including the youth center. "Our youth are thriving in our programs - finding jobs, accessing healthcare and regaining their self esteem - but having access to additional housing will dramatically increase our ability to effect change in their lives."

For example, LNFY's drop-in center annually sees a sharp uptick in clients during the cold weather months. With the additional beds, LNFY will now be able to provide onsite emergency housing along with its current offerings of food, clothing, showers, and case management.

"Being able to offer our clients a hot meal, a shower and now a warm bed, all under one roof, will be a game changer," added Walker.

"This partnership is a major step forward for our organization, and we're grateful to Park Avenue's leadership for believing in our mission," **said Nasheedah Bynes-Muhammad**.

"We're also thrilled to be in a community that is welcoming and supportive of the advancement of our work. We can go much further together than we can doing this work alone. There are many brilliant, passionate, hard working people living under bridges and in tents in Atlanta, and we can't tap into the full resources of our community until everyone has their basic needs met."

Filling the Gap

When LNFY was founded in 2011, it was out of a critical need for an LGBTQ-competent youth shelter and support center in the city of Atlanta. It's since expanded from its days as an emergency shelter to now providing comprehensive care that includes a 24-hour crisis hotline, emergency housing, transitional housing and a full-service day shelter, "youth center" that assists with job placement, healthcare, housing and educational opportunities.

Today more than 30 employees make up LNFY, many with long tenures in social services as well as shared experiences with the clients they serve. Its co-directors Muhammad and Walker are a great example. The leadership duo bring more than 50 years combined of professional experience to the organization. Bynes-Muhammad and Walker also bring a personal connection to the mission - both of the LGBTQ community and Bynes-Muhammad formerly homeless.

While dedicated to serving LGBTQ youth, its doors are open to all youth in need. In 2018 alone, LNFY aided more than 1,000 homeless youth, serving more than 17,000 meals, providing 2,688 nights in warm beds and handing out more than 300 tents, 500 blankets and 300 coats.

LNFY's service to the community also includes its **Lost-N-Found Thrift Store**. Through the store, LNFY provides free clothing to its homeless and at-risk clients, while also using proceeds from sales to fund other programs and services.

The store also serves as the first point of contact for many volunteers, donors and clients. LNFY takes pride in its role as an advocate and access point for homeless youth to overcome barriers to achieving self-sufficiency.

Anniversary Activities

Anniversary festivities will kick-off Sunday, Nov. 10 with a Sunday Funday Pop-up Brunch at Henry's Midtown, where LNFY will unveil its new mission and vision as well as its new brand identity, created through the generous sponsorship of local creative agency Moxie.

LNFY will then host a community open house Nov. 17-24 at its new youth drop-in Center in Grant Park. During the week, there will be opportunities to tour the space, serve meals to the youth center clients and other service projects.

On Tuesday, Nov. 19, LNFY will be part of the National Center for Civil and Human Rights' community dialogue and workshop on homelessness "Experience The Forgotten: The Dignity Museum."

For more information on LNFY, including the full list of anniversary events, please visit www.lnfy.org.

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LNFY Anniversary Event Calendar

- **Month-long:** National Youth Homelessness Awareness Month
- **Sunday, Nov. 10:** LNFY Anniversary Brunch + Logo Reveal, Henry's Midtown, 2-5 p.m.
- **Nov. 12 – 19:** Transgender Awareness Week
- **Friday, Nov. 15:** "An Evening of Magic" benefitting Lost-n-Found Youth
- **Nov. 16 - 24:** Hunger & Homelessness Awareness Week
- **Sunday, Nov. 17:** Benefit Brunch + Pop-up Thrift Store, Guac Y Margy's
- **Nov. 17-24:** Open House Week at New LNFY Youth Drop-In Center
- **Tuesday, Nov. 19:** ["Experience The Forgotten: The Dignity Museum": A Community Dialogue and Workshop on Homelessness at the National Center for Civil and Human Rights](#)
- **Thursday, Nov. 28:** Community Thanksgiving Dinner (Meal Service: Noon, 5 p.m.)

For full event details, visit www.lnfy.org/events