

## **LifeMoves - New Haven Inn**

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# New Haven Inn (NHI) Program Overview

- Second LGBTQ+ specific homeless shelter in the United States.
- Opened Dec 2018 in collaboration with Santa Clara County Office of Supportive Housing.
- Max capacity of 20 clients, with 5 beds reserved for transgender individuals. Since opening, half our clientele have consistently been transgender.
- NHI is communal living style and not separated by gender. The average length of stay is 90 days.

# NHI Program Overview

- As part of the LifeMoves program, as many necessities as possible are provided to clients. Clients participate in a range of supportive services including: intensive case management, substance abuse treatment, job and housing search assistance, financial literacy education, and mental health support. In addition, clients are required to save 50% of their income while in program to ensure that they leave the shelter with funds to help them move forward.
- Clients work with their case manager to develop an individualized case plan that focuses on their goals, including income and housing, and to tackle their specific barriers.
- NHI is a clean and sober environment which provides support surrounding trauma, mental illness and substance abuse as part of our daily programming.
  - LifeMoves' Behavioral Health Program provides student therapists for weekly one-on-one therapy with our clients, as well as workshops and groups focused on mental health.

# NHI's Mission

- No one can break the cycle of homelessness and build a life for themselves if their basic identities are being questioned and judged.
- We cannot control what our clients experience in the wider world – homophobia and transphobia, in addition to other intersecting factors and traumas – but we try to help them navigate these barriers.
- We give people an environment where they can express who they know themselves to be, or discover who they are, with the security that they will be respected unconditionally.
  - Many clients enter using one name and set of pronouns; after a few days at NHI and seeing how committed we are to creating a safe space, they will let us know what name and pronouns they truly want us to use.
- We celebrate the diversity of experiences and identities that come through our doors, and this is essential to giving our clients the confidence they need to succeed.

# Creating an Inclusive Space

- In order to create an inclusive and welcoming space, NHI has:
  - Staff trained in LGBTQ+ cultural competency
  - Weekly “Gender 101” workshop to go over the basics of gender/sexuality, explain terminology, and establish respectful ways to interact with each other
    - Ex: reminding everyone – clients, staff and volunteers – to ask each other their pronouns and offer our own during introductions



- All gender sleeping arrangements and bathrooms – we do not separate by gender at all
- Gender-affirming clothing and accessories that help clients present the way they want to

# Challenges

- Clients face higher barriers to obtaining income/housing and pursuing their goals.
- Clients have a great deal of trauma and many have never been in a space safe enough to learn healthy coping/self-sufficiency/interpersonal skills.
- Staff assist clients as much as possible while maintaining strict professional boundaries and avoiding secondary trauma.