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The NYC Department of Social Services and Destination Tomorrow Announce First-Ever Transitional Housing Program for Transgender New Yorkers

High-quality Shelter will Offer 150 Beds and Critical Supports to Help TGNC New Yorkers Experiencing Homelessness Stabilize Their Lives

Ace's Place will Be the First City Shelter for Transgender Individuals in The Nation

NEW YORK – The NYC Department of Social Services (DSS) and Destination Tomorrow today announced the opening of Ace's Place, the country's first-ever city-funded shelter dedicated to serving and supporting Transgender and gender non-conforming (TGNC) individuals experiencing homelessness. Against the backdrop of a sustained attack on Transgender rights nationwide, this landmark moment serves to strengthen New York City's legacy as a sanctuary for the LGBTQ+ community. Ace's Place will provide high-quality transitional housing and specialized support for TGNC New Yorkers experiencing homelessness. Through this first-of-its-kind program, the city stands as a beacon of safety, dignity, and empowerment for TGNC community members navigating housing insecurity. This program will employ innovative approaches to support shelter residents, including a culinary arts program, taking advantage of Destination Tomorrow's two state-of-the-art commercial kitchens. At this site, Destination Tomorrow will provide comprehensive wraparound services in a trauma-informed setting while facilitating vital connections to community-based resources.

"We couldn't be prouder to make this historic announcement that strongly affirms our values and commitment to strengthening the safety net for transgender New Yorkers at a time when their rights are roundly under attack," said **Department of Social Services Commissioner Molly Wasow Park**. "Ace's Place will offer Transgender New Yorkers a safe place to heal and stabilize in trauma-informed settings with the support of staff who are deeply invested in their growth and wellbeing. We are grateful to have found an incredible partner in Destination Tomorrow, an organization that is rooted in serving the community and has invaluable expertise in addressing unique barriers to housing for TGNC New Yorkers."

"New York City has long been a leader in advancing LGBTQ+ rights and protections, and we're proud to continue that tradition with the opening of the nation's first city-funded shelter dedicated to supporting transgender individuals," said **Department of Homeless Services Administrator Joslyn Carter**. "We're thrilled to celebrate this milestone alongside Sean Ebony Coleman of Destination Tomorrow, whose tireless advocacy for transgender New Yorkers has been instrumental in creating real, lasting support for those experiencing homelessness in the community."

"This shelter is a hard-fought declaration that our Transgender and gender nonconforming siblings will no longer be pushed to the margins," said **Sean Ebony Coleman, founder and CEO of Destination Tomorrow**. "Ace's Place is a community-driven answer to systemic neglect, and it's only the beginning. Destination Tomorrow is proud to partner with New York City to make this shelter a reality, and we look forward to providing hundreds of TGNC individuals with the holistic services they need to access long-term housing and economic empowerment."

Destination Tomorrow is a national LGBTQ+ organization that serves the community through educational, financial, housing, health and personal support programs. Destination Tomorrow's partnership with DSS reflects this mission and expands the nonprofit's slate of services. The grassroots organization emphasizes providing support to vulnerable members of the LGBTQ+ community that takes them off the path of requiring emergency care, and focusing on economic, social, and mental empowerment.

This site will offer a wide array of on-site and off-site services, providing TGNC New Yorkers with the support that will help them achieve long-term housing and financial agency. On-site services will include case management, individual and group counseling, permanency planning and housing placement assistance, referrals to medical and mental health services, support groups, independent living, life skills and financial literacy workshops, and assistance securing employment and academic supports including college preparation.

There will also be a full-time psychiatric nurse practitioner onsite who will work closely with the social workers and other credentialed staff to provide comprehensive mental health support. On-site clinical staff will provide health education through coaching and counseling with the end goal of improved health outcomes and increasing clients' self-sufficiency. This model will offer specialized services to address depression, anxiety, and other challenges our residents may experience. Destination Tomorrow will also employ holistic approaches to health and mental wellness with programs offering yoga and meditation. In addition, Destination Tomorrow is developing a work study program for culinary arts, this will provide hands-on experience and internship opportunities for residents seeking careers in hospitality and food service. DSS and Destination Tomorrow will work closely with key community stakeholders to identify collaborative ways to better serve and support New York City's thriving LGBTQ+ community.

"Callen-Lorde is thrilled and immensely proud that our longtime community partner, Destination Tomorrow, is opening the nation's first city-funded shelter specifically for Transgender and gender non-conforming individuals," said **Kimberleigh Joy Smith, EVP of Policy and Advocacy, Callen-Lorde Community Health Center**. "This historic milestone reflects what's possible when Trans-led organizations are empowered to lead and design solutions for their own communities. Destination Tomorrow is once again meeting the moment — providing not just shelter, but critical care, services, and dignity. As allies, we are committed to supporting efforts rooted in the leadership of those most impacted by systemic inequity. At Callen-Lorde, we believe that real change comes from empowering our most vulnerable LGBTQ+ community members with the tools and support they need to move beyond emergency care — toward long-term economic, social, and mental well-being."

"The opening of the country's first city-funded TGNC shelter is more than historic — it is lifesaving," said **Chanel Lopez, Deputy Director of LGBTQ+ Affairs for the New York State Executive Chamber**. "For far too long, my community has been pushed to the margins, forced to navigate systems that were never built with our safety or dignity in mind. This shelter represents what's possible when we center community voices, invest in affirming care, and lead with equity. Destination Tomorrow is setting not only a local, but a national standard — and I am proud to witness this moment."

"Destination Tomorrow has been a consistent and transformative leader for the Transgender community and beyond. I am so proud of Sean Ebony Coleman, Sage Rivera and the entire team for stepping up and leading in this historic moment," said **Nadia Swanson, Director of Advocacy and Global Programs, The Ali Forney Center**. "Trans New Yorkers face tremendous violence in

traditional shelter settings — and now our Transgender siblings will have a safe place, by community for community. The path to healing and permanently exiting homelessness is successful when we prioritize affirmation, safety and opportunity. Ace's Place is not only a refuge in times of crisis, but a call to action to the rest of the country to ensure our government is protecting Transgender kids, youth and adults — and funding Transgender leaders to sustainably grow to meet the needs of their community.”

"Destination Tomorrow's new shelter is a powerful step forward in affirming that gender expansive people deserve safety and dignity," said **Elisa Crespo, Executive Director of Stonewall Community Foundation**. "In a city as vast and resourceful as New York, no one should be left behind — and this space ensures our most vulnerable neighbors are seen, valued, and supported in their journey towards stability."

"We are proud to congratulate Destination Tomorrow on the opening of the first TGNC shelter funded by New York City," said **Cristina Herrera, Founder & CEO of Translatina Network**. "This historic milestone ensures that housing-insecure Transgender and Gender Non-Conforming (TGNC) New Yorkers now have a safe, affirming place to sleep and receive vital social services. This is more than just a shelter — it's a bold step toward equity, dignity, and inclusion for our community."

"This shelter is more than a roof. It's a declaration that trans and gender non-conforming people deserve safety, dignity, and care on our own terms," said **Tabytha Gonzalez, Transgender activist and former Human Rights Specialist for NYCCHR**. "Destination Tomorrow has always led with love and purpose, and this city-funded space reflects what's possible when community vision meets institutional support. As someone who has experienced housing insecurity and has fought for TGNC liberation across systems, I know how lifesaving and affirming housing can be. This is not just a win for our community. It's a blueprint for the future."

"Congratulations to the entire Destination Tomorrow team for turning this bold vision into reality," said **Bryan Ellicott-Cook, New York City-based Transgender Advocate**. "For far too long, Transgender and non-binary people — especially Black and Brown Trans people — have been forced to navigate systems never built for us. This shelter, created for Trans people by Trans people, represents safety, dignity, and a tangible investment in our community's right not only to survive, but to thrive. It continues to show what we have always known — that Trans people are the ones taking care of each other, from elders to youth, from healthcare to housing and beyond. I'm proud to stand in solidarity with this groundbreaking step toward equity and care."

About the Department of Social Services (DSS): The Department of Social Services, comprised of the Human Resources Administration (HRA) and the Department of Homeless Services (DHS), serves millions of New Yorkers through a broad range of services that aim to address poverty, income inequality, and homelessness. HRA serves over three million New Yorkers through the administration of more than 15 major public assistance programs. DHS oversees a broad network of shelters, services, and outreach programs dedicated to helping New Yorkers experiencing homelessness get back on their feet. DSS is central to the City's mission to expand and strengthen access to the safety net for low-income New Yorkers and connect individuals experiencing homelessness to permanent housing. For more information, visit nyc.gov/dss and stay connected on Twitter @NYCDHS and @NYCHRA.

About Destination Tomorrow: Destination Tomorrow is a national LGBTQ+ organization with centers located in New York City, Atlanta and Washington D.C. that serve the community through educational, financial, housing, health and personal support programs. Founded in 2009 by Sean Ebony Coleman, this grassroots organization puts an emphasis on providing support to vulnerable

members of the LGBTQ+ community that takes them off the path of requiring emergency care, focusing on economic, social and mental empowerment on a holistic level. As a nationally recognized leader in the Transgender community and the first African American of Transgender experience to operate an LGBTQ+ center in the State of New York, Sean plays a key role in advocating for policies that directly impact the lives of millions of LGBTQ+ individuals.

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