



NY commits millions to Bea Arthur shelter for homeless LGBT youth

By Wisconsin Gazette

July 10, 2012

<http://chicago.gopride.com/news/article.cfm/articleid/31170625>

NEW YORK CITY -- The city of New York has committed \$3.3 million to help renovate a residence for homeless LGBT youth. The residence will be named for Bea Arthur, the star who left \$300,000 to the Ali Forney Center in her will.

The city council and Manhattan borough president approved the \$3.3 million in funding to help transform a city-owned building into a shelter for lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender youth, according to a press release from Ali Forney.

In 2011, the waiting list for the center's 77 shelter beds in New York grew to 199, an increase of 40 percent over the prior year.

Executive director Carl Siciliano said Arthur's gift in 2009 helped the center operate through the leanest years of the recession, when the center was falling behind on its rent.

The city funding announcement adds to an already big news week for the center. Later this week, Siciliano will be recognized at the White House as a Champion of Change.

"It is thrilling that as we celebrate the 10th anniversary of the Ali Forney Center, we are also being recognized by the White House for our pioneering work on behalf of homeless LGBT youth," he said. "When we opened the Ali Forney Center, the challenges we faced were daunting; there was very little awareness of the plight of homeless LGBT youth, especially on the federal level, and it was difficult to obtain support for our work.

"I am very grateful to President Obama for recognizing the needs of homeless LGBT youth and incorporating their care into his vision of ending youth homelessness. I am also grateful to the White House for recognizing the quality, innovation, and importance of the Ali Forney Center, which is a testament to all of the individuals who have served on the board, staff and as volunteers."