



**OUT**  
MEMPHIS

HEALTH & WELLNESS  
YOUTH & FAMILIES  
COMMUNITY & CULTURE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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JUNE 5, 2019—OUTMemphis: The LGBTQ+ Center for the Mid-South announced today that it is the recipient of a \$25,000 grant from FedEx Corp. to support services and programming for LGBTQ+ youth in Memphis. The gift will assist the center in providing its range of impact-driven services for youth ages 13-25, which include social support groups for youth and families, trainings and outreach at Memphis-area schools, and the Metamorphosis Project, a wrap-around network of services for youth age 18-24 experiencing homelessness and instability. The Metamorphosis Project's Youth Emergency Center, a shelter and drop-in center, is currently under construction and will open operations in late 2019. The FedEx Global Citizenship grant will support the organization's efforts to sustain and grow youth services looking ahead.

Stephanie Reyes, Director of Development, said: "Our Youth Services program started a decade ago with a youth group, a food pantry and a closet full of interview clothes. As more and more young people came to the center from across the South looking for support, we realized that we had a mandate to expand and fill the gaps we were seeing." Nationally, 40% of youth experiencing homelessness identify as LGBTQ, largely due to family conflict – of that number, the largest percentage of homeless youth are both black and LGTBQ, a significant community in majority black cities like Memphis.

Five years ago, OUTMemphis began providing case management to youth clients and identified a significant need for hygiene supplies, bus passes, and other emergency services. With support from the community, The Youth Emergency Services Program gradually expanded to a holistic approach to supporting young adults who find themselves without ways to care for basic needs. Beginning in 2017, OUTMemphis began receiving support from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) which allows the organization to provide a full year of rental assistance and case management to 18-to-24-year-olds experiencing homelessness. This program is one of just two youth-specific housing programs in Memphis and the only one dedicated to LGBTQ youth for hundreds of miles in every direction. At the end of this 2019, the

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Metamorphosis Project will again significantly expand its housing and emergency services program with a Youth Emergency Center, located at 2055 Southern Avenue. The space will host a drop-in center for any young person in need under 25 and an emergency shelter for LGBTQ youth ages 18-24.

Today, OUTMemphis's youth services program is a thriving and continually expanding piece of the many programs and services that the community center offers to the LGBTQ+ community. There are multiple social-support groups for youth and families, advocacy work and professional development trainings offered at schools, libraries, health and housing providers, and more to support safe spaces for kids and teens. In the coming year, OUTMemphis will continue its events, services, and advocacy aimed at suicide prevention, anti-bullying, sexual education, community building, educating parents and teachers, and celebrating LGBTQ youth at all stages. When the shelter opens operations, The Metamorphosis Project will be one of the only housing programs with wraparound services for LGBTQ youth in the country. Molly Rose Quinn, Executive Director, says, "The growth of our youth services program across the spectrum of young Memphians that we serve – and our capacity to provide even more looking ahead – is not possible without the enormous support that OUTMemphis receives from the community, including the partners who made the emergency center possible and believe in the work we are doing. We are so grateful that FedEx sees the value of the work we are doing with youth in Memphis and wants to be a part of it. We hope that as we grow, more companies will take their lead and get involved with the work that is being done locally."

OUTMemphis has previously worked with the FedEx Express LGBT and Friends Employees' Network, and is pleased to now receive this major corporate grant supporting the positive work OUTMemphis has been doing in the Memphis community since our founding in 1989."

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