

We refuse to be invisible®

SAGE's National Housing Initiative (NHI)

Quarterly Newsletter: April 2020

SAGE's NHI is dedicated to providing information that helps LGBT elders and allies make informed decisions when it comes to housing. For LGBT older people, finding a place that's welcoming—where they can feel free to be themselves and be treated respectfully and compassionately is a mainstay of our program.

April is National Fair Housing Awareness Month

National Fair Housing Month celebrates the passage of the Fair Housing Act in April, 1968, a national law that prohibits discrimination in the sale, rental and financing of housing based on race, color, national origin, religion, and gender. As progress has been made to maintain these protections, we continue to fight for explicit inclusion of gender identity and sexual orientation into Fair Housing Law.

Last month, SAGE [sued the Trump administration](#) for refusing to enforce anti-discrimination rules protecting LGBT people, as our communities are particularly vulnerable to COVID-19. SAGE also joined 100+ LGBTQ organizations in an [open letter](#) highlighting COVID-19's increased risk to LGBT people.

Breaking Isolation for LGBT Elders: SAGE Launches SAGEConnect!

SAGEConnect matches LGBT elders with volunteer community members and allies in the midst of the national pandemic. For many of our LGBT elders, the heightened need for social isolation has left them homebound with severely limited support networks. The one-to-one contact offered through SAGEConnect will help combat feelings of loneliness and disconnection during this unprecedented time of COVID-19, and ensure that elders are linked to resources if they are in need of help.

Through SAGEConnect, volunteers not only offer a social connection, but can also direct LGBT elders to other resources, like SAGE's National LGBT Elder Hotline, its National Resource Center on LGBT Aging, and our SAGE affiliates. Volunteers will be screened and offered training before receiving their match and must commit to a minimum of one fifteen-minute call per week, for a period of six-weeks. **We have a huge response from volunteers, but folks help by promoting this to elders (tenants, participants, LGBT elders in your community) who can benefit from this program.**

For more information, please see our [press release](#). Those interested in participating can sign at sageusa.org/sageconnect.

NYC Housing Updates: Stonewall House

As of April 8, Stonewall House has moved in approximately 86 Tenants (children and partners included). Some tenants with signed leases and keys are staying with relatives or their current homes and will not move in until the pandemic has subsided. There are no confirmed cases of COVID-19 in the building thus far, and the majority of tenants are isolating in their homes.

The NYC Housing Team has been reaching out to tenants via phone and email, as well as in-person home visits (maintaining social distance) on a weekly basis, and high-needs/medically complex individuals are spoken to several times a week. The Housing Team has also been monitoring any potential COVID-19 cases and is collaborating with property management if safety planning requires more in depth quarantine.

Director of NYC Housing Latisha Millard-Bethea and Senior Clinical Tenant Coordinator Lauren Feiring have been distributing food weekly to tenants. This food was the result of a donation of meal boxes via [LiveOn NY](#) and a delivery of groceries for each tenant through Teen Challenge. Stonewall House also received a donation of masks from Sprinkles, which were distributed to tenants along with groceries on April 8. Tenants express gratitude for SAGE and relief during on-site food distributions.

Thanks Latisha and Lauren for all the amazing work you all are doing for our residents!

[Read the Washington Post piece about Stonewall House amidst COVID-19 here.](#)

Centering Racial Justice in a Pandemic

**(Courtesy of the [Urban Institute](#))*

EARLY COVID-19 DATA FURTHER DEMONSTRATE IMPACT OF STRUCTURAL RACISM AND RESIDENTIAL SEGREGATION

Municipal health agencies reveal that Black people are disproportionately diagnosed with COVID-19 in the US, a trend that experts suggest is the result of compounded, systemic inequities in marginalized communities and existing disparities in health outcomes. Data from Milwaukee County show that though Black people make up 26 percent of Milwaukee's population, Black residents account for 81 percent of the county's recorded COVID-19 deaths. In New York, the neighborhoods with the highest rates of positive COVID-19 cases also have some of the city's highest populations of service workers, rent-burdened households, and people of color. Georges Benjamin, executive director of the American Public Health Association, says that public health officials should prioritize releasing racial and ethnic data so government agencies can focus their attention on "populations that we know historically are more at risk." "This is a public health crisis, but it's also a housing crisis and an economic crisis and a racial justice crisis," added Lena Afridi, director of policy for the Association for Neighborhood and Housing Development in New York. Read the full Pro Publica [here](#).

RESOURCES

COVID-19 Health Literacy Project

This critical resource was formed to create and translate accessible COVID-19 information into 30+ languages to help all patients know when, and how, to seek care. The materials are created in collaboration with Harvard Health Publishing. You can access the [Fact Sheets here](#).

Corona Virus Anxiety Workbook (English and Spanish)

The Wellness Society has developed a tool to help you build resilience during this unprecedented time. Download the workbook in English or Spanish [here](#).

Care for Your Corona Virus Anxiety

The state of the world can feel difficult and alienating. Anticipatory grief and trauma impact our ability to think clearly and to problem solve. It is ok to acknowledge we are struggling as a reminder of our humanity. Check out this [Virus Anxiety Toolkit](#) for a range of resources for support.

Silvernest Silver Linings COVID-19 Resource Library

Silvernest, a homeshare matching agency, knows that sharing a home during shelter-in-place can be stressful. Check out their [COVID-19 Resource Library](#), and [helpful tips on sharing a home](#) in the current environment.

Enterprise Community Partners

Click [here](#) for a list of New York City resources compiled by our colleagues at [Enterprise Community Partners](#) for housing providers and direct service staff working with elders amidst COVID-19.

National Resource Center

National Resource Center on LGBT Aging COVID-19 [Resource List](#)

Please feel free to forward any helpful information or questions to Sydney at skopprichardson@sageusa.org. Be well, friends!