

**PRESS RELEASE**

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**GRANT MONIES TO HELP TRANSGENDER COMMUNITY**

Joe McKee, the executive director of AIDS Project Worcester, is pleased to announce that the agency is the recipient of a \$16,000 grant from Greater Worcester Community Foundation that will support two specific outreach efforts to the transgender community in Central Massachusetts.

New Horizons is a weekly support group that has served more than 100 individuals from the transgender community since 2004. In addition, the program offers access to an emergency housing fund to help prevent homelessness, and offers free case management services and mental health counseling through AIDS Project Worcester.

New Horizons Navigator, which will be funded in part by the grant from Greater Worcester Community Foundation, will provide a part-time staff person who will help members of the transgender community navigate through obstacles often found in the health care and social services fields.

“Members of the transgender community often run into a host of barriers accessing services,” explains Jesse Pack, coordinator of prevention and education at AIDS Project Worcester. “Our goal is to connect people to care and accompany them to appointments if that is needed.”

Mr. Pack will also use some of the grant monies to host a multi-day “Train the Trainer Program” this spring, which will help to identify and address some of those barriers that prevent access to services.

Mr. Samuel Lurie, a nationally recognized educator about transgender health and services, will come to AIDS Project Worcester to train a core group from local institutions, organizations, and agencies in the medical or social service fields who can then provide informational trainings on how to help the transgender community overcome obstacles to access health and service opportunities.

“I believe a large part of the disparity in services is due to ignorance and bias,” says Mr. Pack. “Mr. Lurie will help talented, local educators increase their sensitivity to the needs of the transgender community.”

“We are very pleased that Greater Worcester Community Foundation supports our efforts to reach out to the transgender community,” adds Mr. McKee. “This is an under-served group that often exists below the social-service radar. We are happy to be able to expand our services to them.”

If you have questions about the grant, please call Mr. McKee or email him at [jmckee@aidsprojectworcester.org](mailto:jmckee@aidsprojectworcester.org). To learn more about the seminar, contact Jesse Pack at 508.755.3773, ext. 29, or email him at [jessep@aidsprojectworcester.org](mailto:jessep@aidsprojectworcester.org)

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