



PRESS RELEASE

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Albuquerque, NM—Casa Q, a local nonprofit providing safe living options and services for homeless LGBTQ youth, is celebrating its fifth anniversary this year, having housed and supported nearly 50 teens age 14 to 18 since opening February 2015.

“I’m proud and excited about the excellent outcomes we’ve had for queer youth over the past five years,” said Board Chair Andrew Gans. “We hope we have helped give them the skills to become amazing adults. Casa Q started as an ambitious dream among a group of friends and has become a safe, warm home and important resource for Albuquerque and New Mexico.”

In 2012, a group of caring adults noted the lack of services and safe places for homeless teens, particularly those who are lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer and questioning (LGBTQ). An estimated 30-40% of all youth experiencing homelessness in the U.S. are LGBTQ. A local Albuquerque survey of more than 100 homeless youth found that nearly half self-identify as “gender queer.” There was very limited housing for homeless teens in our community and no other housing program specifically designed to support LGBTQ teens.

Each founder brought their own community connections and work resources—in government, business, and social services—to quickly move their strategic plan to action, opening the house after only two years. The original concept was to provide a safe place for LGBTQ teens who had been evicted from their homes and families and teens already experiencing homelessness or gaps in the foster care system. The average stay for youth in the Casa Q house is 6 to 9 months, with a maximum stay of 24 months. The founders are still involved through events, fundraising, and committee engagement.

“Casa Q’s success is due in large part to the support of the community, both financially and with volunteer hours,” said Cristy J. Carbón-Gaul, Founder and Immediate Past Board Chair.

“I love our mission serving youth in our house and in aftercare once they turn 18. But I also believe we matter to all young people beginning to discover who they are and deciding if there’s a place in the world for them,” said Board Treasurer and incoming Board Chair Mark Hartman. “Knowing there’s a community of loving supportive people matters to every child, not just the ones who might need our services.”

“Unlike emergency shelter programs, Casa Q provides residential and transitional living services in a home-like environment, complemented with comprehensive and individual case management,” noted Program Director Steven Serrano. “We provide case management, educational support, and community engagement opportunities for every young person we support. Our goal is to care, build hope, and inspire their future.”

Casa Q’s mission is to provide safe living options and services for LGBTQ youth, as well as allies, who are at risk of or experiencing homelessness. Founders, staff, board members, and donors will celebrate the 5th anniversary at an event February 21st.

For more information, contact Jennifer Mastripolito, Chief Administrative Officer, at director@casaq.org.

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