

Black and Pink

Criminal Justice Issues and Prisoners' Rights

<https://www.ketv.com/article/formerly-incarcerated-man-opens-transitional-home-for-lgbtq-persons/30990558>

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A national organization based in Omaha opened a transitional living home for LGBTQ people coming out of the correctional system.

The Black and Pink organization calls it a first of its kind living space for an underserved community.

The Lydon House held its ribbon-cutting ceremony Sunday. Omaha Mayor Jean Stothert, City Councilman Ben Gray and Nebraska State Sen. Megan Hunt were all in attendance.

The mayor signed a proclamation naming the day Lydon House Day."

It was a moment of pride for Dominique Morgan, who opened the home, as it fell on the 11th anniversary of his release from the system.

The Lydon home is nestled into a neighborhood near the UNMC campus.

"It was a cold Sunday night 11 years ago wishing that I could walk into something warm like this, Dominique Morgan said.

He's talking about the night he was released from the Nebraska prison system with nothing to his name.

"I was incarcerated in the juvenile system from about 14-17. Experienced a year of homelessness and was in the adult system from 18-27, Morgan said.

He felt his record as incarcerated person 56892 would haunt him and hold him back. Now, he wears it proudly to help others.

"I realized that everybody has a 56892. Everybody has something that comes into your life that can prevent you from your greatness. And you sometimes need to climb over it, go around it give someone a boost, Morgan said.

He took that mission a step further by opening the Lydon House as a safe haven for LGBTQ people coming out of incarceration.

"Its really for everyone and that's what excites me as well, that we can create a very inclusive space that's loving and safe for everyone, Morgan said. "We won't turn anyone away."

Morgan said incarcerated people are required to list an address before release. Many go to homeless shelters, but Morgan said some shelters dont allow for LGBTQ people to thrive.

Now, as executive director of the Black and Pink organization, Morgan is working to house three people in the home next month. The main floor will offer services, like Alcoholics Anonymous and other reentry programs. The people living in the home will have no deadline to leave. Morgan believes with the right programming, theyll leave on their own to become independent.

"We wanted something that was not only, You can come here, but, We want the best for you and we're going to walk through this with you," Morgan said.

State Sen. Megan Hunt called Sundays ribbon cutting emotional.

"Feeling the weight of the importance of this space to them, I feel like I really absorbed a lot of that and yeah, it was an emotional day for me, Hunt said.

Hunt added that this house is what the community needs and will help an underserved population stay out of prison.

"If we want to find solutions to problems of incarceration we have to make sure that supports are in the community, Hunt said.

To be an urban city, to be a city that welcomes everyone, we need these kinds of services and these are the kind of organizations that we need.

Morgan, and the Black and Pink organization, are working to open a youth centered home.

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