

# First Affordable LGBT Senior Housing to Rise in South Florida

By Samantha Goldberg

**Carrfour Supportive Housing and the Pride Center are developing the apartment community, which marks the first phase of the master-planned redevelopment of the five-acre Equality Park campus.**

Miami—Hoping to provide more housing options to one of South Florida’s underserved populations, Miami-based non-profit Carrfour Supportive Housing has teamed up with non-profit LGBT community center The Pride Center to develop the area’s first affordable housing community for low-income LGBT seniors. The Residences at Equality Park will be located just north of Fort Lauderdale, and marks Carrfour’s first development in Broward County.



The Pride Center’s Equality Park Campus, which is set to undergo a significant redevelopment

The community will be built in two phases, with the first one bringing 48 apartments, 34 of which will be reserved for low-income seniors with disabling conditions like physical illnesses or disabilities due to complications from HIV/AIDS. The remaining units will be for seniors earning less than 60 percent of the area median income (AMI), or about \$35,000 per year. The first phase of construction will begin in fourth-quarter 2017 and completed in late 2018. For the second phase, which will add another 74 units, a construction start date has not yet been determined.

Carrfour is hoping the community will help ease the burden on LGBT seniors, “who face a variety of unique challenges in securing housing,” Stephanie Berman, president & CEO of Carrfour, told MHN. “They face higher rates of discrimination in securing housing and encounter bias and sometimes even hostile treatment from landlords as well as fellow tenants.”

She added that LGBT senior’s disparities in income, fewer familial resources as well as the general increased demand for senior housing “create an environment ripe for housing discrimination against LGBT seniors across the country.” LGBT seniors are also four times less likely to have children and twice as likely to live alone than heterosexual older adults, so they are often without caregivers, Berman explained.



The Pride Center

Because of this, Carrfour is partnering with The Pride Center to provide residents with access to community services, health care, financial planning and social networks.

Carrfour will serve as the project developer, operator and service coordinator, while The Pride Center will provide residents with the onsite support services, health care navigation, senior support groups, counseling and recreational activities.

The community also marks the first phase of the redevelopment of the five-acre Equality Park campus, which The Pride Center owns and is located at the corner of North Dixie Highway and Northeast 20th Drive in Wilton Manors. The campus is slated for significant redevelopment, including plans for a new multi-use center at the eastern end of the site on North Dixie Highway, as well as a new outdoor pavilion, boathouse cafe and picnic area on the banks of the Middle River. Additional parking structures are also planned.

Equality Park currently offers 30,000 square feet of office and meeting space for programs and services, serving the rapidly expanding population of aging LGBT adults in Broward County.

“Wilton Manors, a city in Broward County and home of the Pride Center, ranks number two nationally in percentage of same-sex couples. Thousands of these adults age 55 and older access services from the Pride Center annually,” Berman told MHN.

The Residences at Equality Park will also join a growing national trend of senior affordable housing communities being built in conjunction with LGBT community centers in major cities across the country, such as Los Angeles, San Diego, Chicago and Philadelphia.

Carrfour has secured more than \$200 million in financing, tax credits and subsidies to develop and manage more than 1,500 affordable units in 17 communities in South Florida. The company plans to deliver another 266 units over the next two years.