**Nearly 30 year old HIV organization, originally CANDII House, expands mission into LGBT work and rebrands as LGBT Life Center**

**Norfolk, VA** - CANDII House (Children AIDS Network Designed for Interfaith Involvement) , more recently known as ACCESS AIDS Care (AIDS Care Center for Education and Support Services)/The LGBT Center of Hampton Roads, has formally expanded its mission and changed its name to LGBT Life Center.

“We’re incredibly proud of our nearly 30 year history in Hampton Roads. When we started in 1989, we focused on women and children living with HIV/AIDS. Over the years, as HIV has changed our work has changed. We’re ready to meet the diverse needs of our Hampton Roads community, and our commitment to ending the HIV/AIDS epidemic in Hampton Roads remains as strong as ever,” said Stacie Walls-Beegle, Chief Executive Officer of LGBT Life Center.

*Mission: LGBT Life Center is a trusted leader that empowers the LGBTQ communities and all people affected by HIV through improving health and wellness, strengthening families and communities, and providing transformative education and advocacy.*

In 2011, ACCESS AIDS Care opened the LGBT Center of Hampton Roads with a grant, in part, from the Elton John AIDS Foundation. Since then, the community has increasingly asked for LGBTQ related programming and services. Walls-Beegle went on to say, “One of our most requested services is for LGBTQ knowledgeable doctors, therapists, and for LGBTQ youth support groups and programming. We’re thrilled to be expanding our mission from HIV/AIDS work to include LGBTQ health and wellness. We must start addressing the health disparities that exist in our community for LGBTQ individuals. Social stigma and, sometimes accidentally, culturally insensitive health care professionals keep LGBTQ people from accurately reporting on their own well-being, as well as from seeking out treatment. The LGBTQ community cannot not afford, nor should they have to face, barriers to treatment and preventative care like PrEP, a daily pill over 90% successful in blocking HIV when HIV negative individuals come into contact with the virus.”

The agency has always responded to those in our Hampton Roads community who are most critically in need. Today, with major advances in medication, people living with HIV lead long, healthy lives. We now know that individuals who receive treatment can become undetectable (unable to pass the virus on to others) and medication like PrEP, a daily pill that blocks the virus, can stop HIV before it takes hold. LGBT Life Center will continue its work as a leading HIV service provider in Hampton Roads, and will grow and expand service options for the HIV and LGBTQ communities. LGBT Life Center will develop strategies to address regional health disparities; including, opening an LGBTQ friendly PrEP clinic, and create a continuum of care by integrating medical and behavioral health.

For more information on the LGBT Life Center, please visit www.lgbtlifecenter.org or call 757-640-0929.

ABOUT LGBT LIFE CENTER: LGBT Life Center was formerly known as CANDII House, Full Circle CANDII, and ACCESS AIDS Care/LGBT Center of Hampton Roads until June of 2017 when it expanded its mission and rebranded as LGBT Life Center. LGBT Life Center is a trusted leader that empowers the LGBTQ communities and all people affected by HIV through improving health and wellness, strengthening families and communities and providing transformative education and advocacy.

###