

Leadership Broward Foundation Presents a Lifetime Achievement Award to Plantation Resident James Gress

BY JILL SHARPE

Jim Gress signed on to serve runaway and homeless youth at Covenant House Florida even before the Fort Lauderdale beachfront facility opened. He began as an assistant team leader in August of 1985, one month before the first teen arrived at the facility, and rose, through the ranks to the executive director post he holds today.

Under Gress's leadership, Covenant House Florida today reaches nearly 200 youth per day in Fort Lauderdale and Orlando through street outreach, crisis shelters, and transitional housing projects, making it one of the largest agencies serving runaway youth in the State of Florida.

As a 30-year veteran of Covenant House Florida, Gress experienced firsthand all the milestones of the organization, starting with its opening, to the launch of the programs relating to youth education, addiction, health and counseling, to the development of supportive and transitional housing projects, to the opening of a second shelter in Orlando.

Leadership Broward Foundation (LBF) will honor Gress with a Lifetime Achievement Award for his passion and commitment to serving homeless youth for nearly his entire career, at their 2016 Profiles in Leadership Gala, hosted by the Hyatt Regency Pier Sixty Six Resort & Spa on October 15th.

"Gress more than deserves this award, especially considering the impact of his work on the vulnerable population served by Covenant House," said Michael L. Gaylor, Ed.D., CEO of Leadership Broward.

Gress's notable accomplishments at Covenant House include: overseeing the research, approvals and building of a shelter for homeless and runaway teens in Orlando; developing and administering the successful Covenant House Addictions Management Program (CHAMP); and securing four years of Centers for Disease Control grant funding for a HIV prevention program targeting homeless youth.

Gress holds a Master's in Social Work (MSW) from Barry University and a Bachelor's of Science Degree in Criminal Justice Administration from Pennsylvania State University. He is a member of the Academy of Certified Social Workers and the National Association of Social Workers and has served as a clinical field instructor for Barry University.

"I'm truly honored to have been selected to receive this prestigious recognition from Leadership Broward," said Gress. "But it's even more important to me that this honor shines a light on the work of Covenant House Florida - work that I've been committed to for 30 years - providing shelter and services to homeless youth and young adults who are in great need. It is a privilege to have been a part of helping more than 35,000 young people since we opened our shelter doors."

For sponsorship, tickets and more information about the 2016 Profiles in Leadership Gala contact Patty Sacco at 954-767-8866 or patty@leadershipbroward.org.

