Arson Destroys HIV Testing Clinic and LGBT Center

Here's how you can help rebuild the site, located in a mostly Black neighborhood of Dallas.

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Abounding Prosperity Inc.'s LGBT center and HIV testing clinic is now facing costly rebuilding efforts after a fire started by an arsonist on the morning of July 7 destroyed its facilities. No one was inside at the time.

A back office at the Abounding Prosperity (AP) building was gutted, and the rest of the structure suffered heavy smoke damage, reports Dallas TV station WFAA. Authorities are still searching for suspects.

Meanwhile, the South Dallas center is seeking to raise $50,000 via GoFundMe. "This community center is an important operation in AP Inc.'s mission to assist individuals living with HIV/AIDS and other communities that are at risk for contracting the virus," stated AP founder Kirk Myers on GoFundMe. "The community center is also a place where members of the LGBT community gain access to computers for a variety of needs including employment, educational, and insurance; in addition to those who use the safe space just [for] fellowship."

So far, 476 people have donated close to $22,000.

Located in a predominantly African-American and low-income neighborhood, the center was bringing safe and reliable health care to an underserved community, AP assistant director Tamara Stephnie told NBC DFW.

"These services are not easily accessible to a lot of people, and for someone to come and destroy it, it makes me very angry," Stephnie said.

One of its clients, Marcus Simpson has been relying on the center's services since he was a teenager. "Whoever committed the arson is a monster," Simpson told NBC. "I mean, to see them do something like this in a small community that's trying to build the community, it's sad."

In order to continue its work, Abounding Prosperity will set up a mobile HIV testing facility outside, but employees pointed out this will afford their clients less privacy.

Those with information about the attack on the center are asked to contact Dallas Fire-Rescue's Fire Investigation Office at 214-670-4319.

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