

A Legacy for Boston's LGBTQ Community

“...while some things have improved, there's still a great deal of progress to be made.”

— Charlie Walsh

Charlie Walsh should write a book about his life. He has traveled and worked around the world—recently returning from a humanitarian trip to Ukraine. And he has been a wealth advisor to a diverse and remarkable roster of families and individuals, including some well-known athletes.

His first involvement with the Boston Foundation was as a member of our Professional Advisors Committee, which advocates for the importance of charitable planning. In 2014, he was asked to serve on the Advisory Committee of the Equality Fund at TBF. The Equality Fund was founded in 2012 to make grants to the most innovative nonprofits serving the diverse members of the LGBTQ community. It is also building a permanent endowment to benefit that community forever.

“Today, the world is more accepting of the LGBTQ community than it was when I was young,” says Walsh, who is leaving a legacy to the Equality Fund. “That was a time when you had to live two different lives. But, while some things have improved, there's still a great deal of progress to be made. The trans community is facing such serious obstacles that some younger members feel the only way forward is to commit suicide.”

He is also concerned about the quality of life for LGBTQ seniors—and particularly inspired by Boston's first LGBTQ-friendly senior housing complex called The Pryde, which received a recent grant from the Equality Fund.

Legacy donor Charlie Walsh is leaving a bequest to the Equality Fund's endowment.

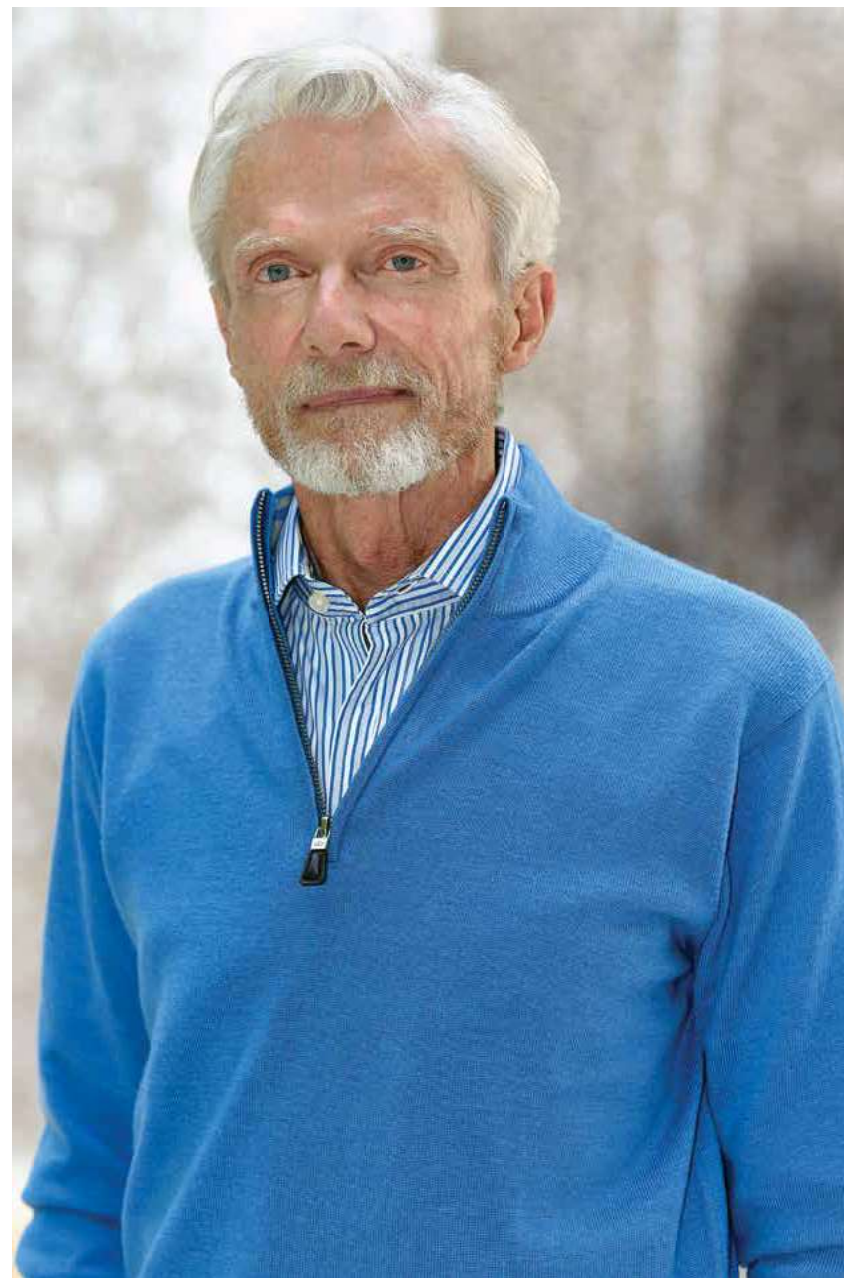


PHOTO: CRAIG BAILEY



The Pryde, which opened this summer, exemplifies the power and the potential of true community-based development. A project of LGBTQ Senior Housing, Inc., it's a masterful restoration of the massive Rogers Middle School in Hyde Park, offering 74 apartments, a large community center, a performance space, a library and a landscaped garden—as well as amenities all seniors need. And there is art from local Hyde Park artists lining its common spaces.

Gretchen Van Ness, The Pryde's Executive Director, points out that many older LGBTQ seniors yearn to find a home where they can be themselves without facing discrimination or harassment.

"This is the generation of Boston's LGBTQ community members who lost friends and family to AIDS and fought for the rights and liberties we have now," says Van Ness. "We stand on their shoulders and we owe them so much—especially basic dignity."



Tom went from the sensory deprivation of living in a basement studio with no light to an apartment at The Pryde with a skylight and plenty of room for his popular dog, Buddy.

PHOTOS: CRAIG BAILEY