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## United Methodist Women Issues Grants to Thwart Suicide Among LGBTQ Youth

NEW YORK – United Methodist Women, the largest denominational, lay women of faith organization in the world, today announced it has awarded two grants for work to thwart suicide among LGBTQ youth. The organization committed to the needs of women, children and youth awarded two \$50,000 grants to The Trevor Foundation and the Tyler Clementi Foundation for their work to prevent LGBTQ youth suicide.

According to the Center for Disease Control and Prevention, suicide is the third leading cause of death for youth between the ages of 10 and 24, resulting in approximately 4,600 lives lost each year. Another 157,000 young people are injured during suicide attempts each year. LGBTQ youth are three to six time more likely to attempt suicide than other youth.

“When we witness a problem, our faith compels us to act,” said **Shannon Priddy, president of the United Methodist Women board of directors**. “These grants are about supporting young people. Given that LGBTQ youth have an increased risk of being bullied in school and online, and since bullying increases the risk of depression and suicide among youth, we have a responsibility and the great honor of doing as much as we can to create environments that are safe and inclusive for LGBTQ youth, and to support organizations who are doing the same.”

Harriett J. Olson, United Methodist Women CEO, said the special grants were part of the organization’s response to the actions of the 2019 Special Session of General Conference.

“The way children and youth understand the church’s stance taken at the 2019 General Conference is particularly harmful to LGBTQ youth who are already at higher risk for suicide,” Olson said. “Our board directed us to look for an exceptional opportunity to offer financial support to organizations working with LGBTQ youth to intervene and prevent suicides.”

Olson said the organization remains open to all women who commit to its purpose and mission focused on the needs of women, children, and youth. Likewise, the more than 90 United Methodist Women-related National Mission Institutions around the country continue to serve all women, children, youth and families in their service area without regard to race, religion, sexual orientation or identity, Olson said.

## About the Grantees

**The Trevor Project** is the leading national organization providing crisis intervention and suicide prevention services to LGBTQ young people under 25. The Trevor Project offers accredited life-saving, life-affirming programs and services to LGBTQ youth that create safe, accepting and inclusive environments over the phone, online and through text. They receive 45,000 phone calls from young people needing assistance each year.

**The Tyler Clementi Foundation's** mission is to end online and offline bullying in schools, workplaces, and faith communities. The Clementi Family created the foundation in honor of their son, brother and friend who ended his life at the young age of 18 after a horrible act of cyber-harassment and humiliation because he was gay. The Foundation shares information on the suicide risk facing many LGBTQ youth and urges young people to stand up to bullies.

*United Methodist Women is a movement of women turning their faith, hope and love into action on behalf of women, children and youth since 1869. Members' financial gifts support ministries and programs empowering women, children, and youth in the United States and more than 100 countries around the world.*

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