

## **Belmont Human Rights Commission OBSERVES the TRANSGENDER DAY OF REMEMBRANCE**

The Belmont Human Rights Commission (BHRC) observes November 20th, the Transgender Day of Remembrance and issues this statement as a pledge to make Belmont a safe and welcoming space for people of all genders. We mourn the transgender people who were lost to violence, and we hold their memories and those that they leave behind in our hearts. We believe that the best way to honor those lost is through educating ourselves and taking action to address the bias that transgender people face in our community.

The emergence of the Transgender Day of Remembrance is partly connected to our local history. On November 20, 1995, William Palmer brutally beat and murdered Chanelle Pickett, a 23 year-old, Black transsexual woman, in Watertown. Despite strong physical evidence against him, Palmer was only convicted for assault & battery by a jury in the Middlesex County Superior Court. On November 28, 1998, Rita Hester, a 35-year-old, Black transgender woman was stabbed to death at her apartment in Allston, and no one has been charged to this day for this heinous crime. Most recently, Jahaira DeAlto, a community activist, was murdered in Boston on May 2nd of 2021. These murders sent a chill through local and national transgender, LGBTQ, and queer communities. In response to these murders and to honor transgender lives, San Francisco-based transgender activist Gwen Smith created the first Transgender Day of Remembrance in 1999. The [Human Rights Campaign](#) (HRC) was able to track 44 fatalities in 2020, the most violent year on record since 2013 when HRC began tracking crimes against transgender people. The majority of these were Black and Latinx transgender women.

Transgender people will continue to be harassed, persecuted, and murdered until society moves beyond outdated views of gender identity and recognizes the rights and dignity of the transgender community.

If you have experienced discrimination in Belmont and feel like your rights have been denied as a result of your gender identity, please contact the Belmont Human Rights Commission at (617) 993-2795 or [belmont.hrc@gmail.com](mailto:belmont.hrc@gmail.com). If you need support around your gender identity or are looking to connect with others in the transgender community, there are many great organizations in this area that are here to help. Contact us for a list or go directly to any of the following: [Fenway Health](#), [BAGLY](#), [MASSBATS](#), [Compass](#), [Queer Asian Pacific Islander Alliance](#) (QAPA), [GLAD](#), and the [Trans Club of New](#)

[England](#) (TCNE). If you are supporting a transgender or gender expansive child, there are resources for you at [PFLAG](#), [Fenway Health](#), and [Belmont LGBTQ Alliance](#).

The Belmont Human Rights Commission is dedicated to fighting discrimination in all forms and increasing visibility and awareness of issues regarding diversity and discrimination in our community. If you have experienced discrimination in Belmont, please contact us at [belmont.hrc@gmail.com](mailto:belmont.hrc@gmail.com) or call 617-993-2795.

Sources:

1. <https://www.masstpc.org/wp-content/uploads/Chanelle-Pickett-A-Life-Cut-Short.pdf>
2. <https://www.wbur.org/news/2020/07/15/two-decades-after-her-death-rita-hestersfamily-reflects-on-her-spirit>
3. <https://www.hrc.org/news/hrc-mourns-jahaira-dealto-transgender-woman-of-colorkilled-in-boston>
4. <https://hrc-prod-requests.s3-us-west-2.amazonaws.com/FatalViolence-2020ReportFinal.pdf?mtime=20201119101455&focal=none>