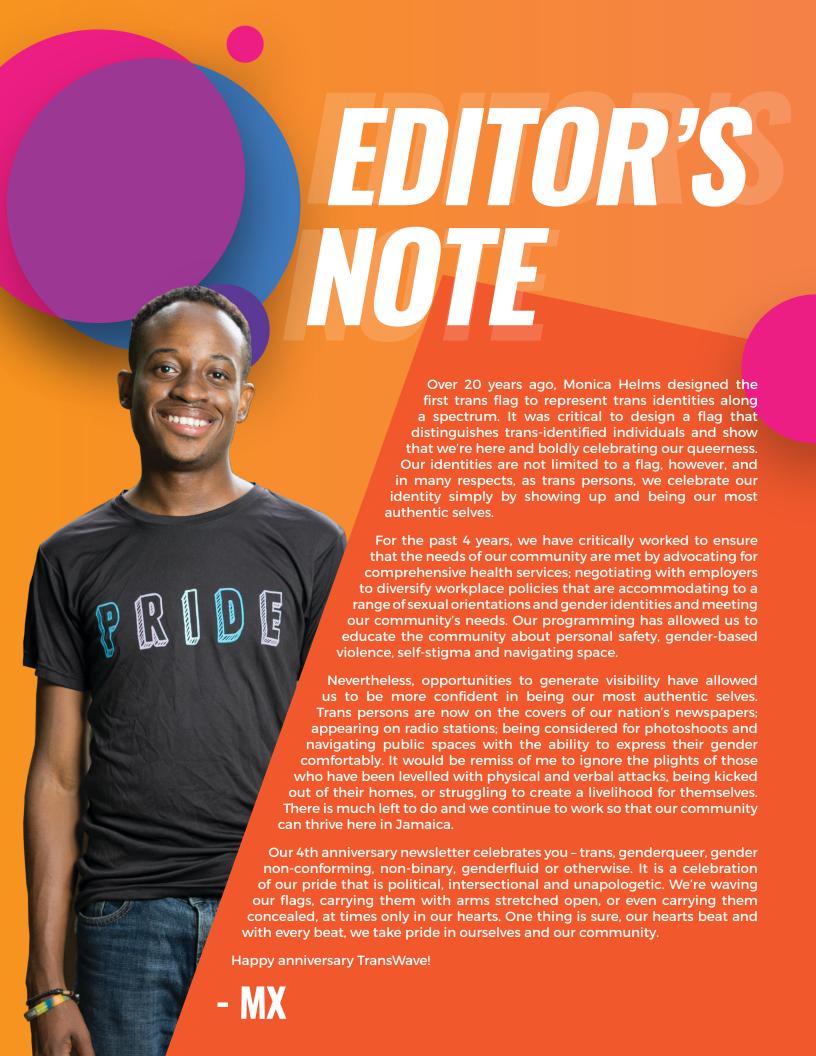


### 4<sup>TH</sup> ANNIVERSARY

NEWSLETTER





## MESSAGE FROM THE ED

TransWave Jamaica celebrates four years of TRANStastic work and I am both humbled and proud of this milestone. When I co-founded the organization on the heels of a workshop organized by We-Change, I never imagined that this would have been our reality. We have benefited from a nurturing environment as an affiliate of J-FLAG and through support from key partners in civil society, particularly JASL and CVC.

TransWave's mission is to promote change which results in the social inclusivity, recognition of rights and the legal protection of the transgender and gender non-conforming community.

TransWave has formed its own unique identity and projects that seek to advance trans health and well-being. Through our advocacy initiatives we have increased the dialogue around trans issues and have amplified the need for inclusion and trans-affirming services and support. Our community engagement and outreach activities have created much needed space and opportunities for trans people to talk about issues that affect them while building community and camaraderie. Our media and communications outreach has helped to reflect the diversity and vibrancy of our community while creating a platform to highlight the challenges experienced by our community.

The resilience and resourcefulness of our community is a key factor to our success and we salute the fierce trans people who have blazed a trail which we now follow. TransWave Jamaica continues to grow and transform the lives of our community. Our staff component has increased from one part-time staff in 2016 to now having 5 full-time staff, one part-time staff and a contingent of ambassadors along with a newly founded board. Our work has only just begun.

TransWave envisions a fifth year of continued organizational growth and impact as we work towards reclaiming Jamaica and creating a nurturing and supportive environment where transgender and gender non-conforming Jamaicans can thrive. I am proud of the work we have done and look forward to our continued growth and success. Join me in celebrating our fourth anniversary! Cheers to the TRANStastic team!

- Neish McLean

## MESSAGE FROM THE FROM CHAIR BOARD CHAIR

It is a privilege and an honour to congratulate TransWave Jamaica on achieving the milestone of our fourth anniversary. Anniversaries tend to associate themselves with times of reflection and greater hope for the future, and this is no exception.

From humble beginnings, what TransWave Jamaica has accomplished in a few years is remarkable; and a testament to our hard work, passion, and commitment to advancing the health, well-being and human rights of the Jamaican transgender community. The past four years have been formative and saw TransWave Jamaica establishing the structure we would need to achieve scalability and sustainability.

In 2018, we were supported by six (6) generous funders and executed six (6) signature events. Furthermore, we increased

2018, we were supported by six (6) generous funders and executed six (6) signature events. Furthermore, we increased our regional and international engagements, which has led to an expansion in our networks and opportunities for collaboration. Numerous visibility campaigns were conducted last year, and we have successfully continued to implement three (3) of our ongoing projects.

Looking towards our fifth (5th) year, I see only greater things in our future. We will continue to build community, implement novel initiatives which cater specifically to our transgender family, and advocate for greater equity and inclusion on the national level. On behalf of the Board of Directors, thank you for your partnership and support this year, and we look forward to working with you to have an even greater impact in the years to come.

- F.J. Genus

A big
congratulations to
TransWave on their fourth
anniversary. They have done
so much for me. I have felt
loved being around my
community. Words can't
explain. Thank you all for
being a part of my life.

- Terrikay

Congratulations on doing four years of excellent advocacy work

- Loraine

Felicitations TransWave.
You've hit another milestone. I am
beaming with pride. Trans people are
often forgotten, so I want to commend you
for creating spaces where we can be
#TRANStastic Happy 4th anniversary!

- Rich

Heartiest congratulations to TransWave Jamaica on your 4th anniversary. Over the years you have been a ray of hope for many Jamaican trans people who, through you, have found and accepted themselves and who have ultimately become empowered to live their truth. You have helped to mold and build my partner and for that I'm forever grateful. Transwave, continue to inspire and uplift. You are valid. You are appreciated. Thank you and I wish you many more successful years.

- Tiana

### COMMUNITY

Congratulations
TransWave for your awesome
work. The transgender community in
Jamaica, I can say for a fact, has
benefited from your service. Being an
ambassador is an honour and I'm happy to
be apart of this TRANStastic movement. I
look forward to many more awesome
years to come.

- Tony

Congratulations on 4 years of brilliant work! Your presence is so incredibly impactful and necessary. Keep thriving.

- Ro-Ann

Four years?!

Wow. Thank you for providing a safe space for people who are beautifully different. Thank you for providing support in all the ways we have needed. Thank you for being my family! Can't wait to celebrate many more years.

- Zye

Congratulations on doing timely and tough work TransWave. So many people all over the world look up to you and find joy in what you're accomplishing. Bunch of goodies!

– Fatimah

I congratulate TransWave on their 4th anniversary. Our community has come a far way. Being apart of the community has come a far way. Being apart of the community has come a far way. Being apart of the community community has come a far way. Being apart of the support and love. Created by TransWave has given me hope that things will continue to advance. I really appreciate the support and love. This is my haven. I feel happy when I join with my family for all the events thanks to TransWave.

This is my haven. I feel happy when I paniel

Congratulations
TransWave Jamaica on
providing four years of visibility,
empowerment and support to a
growing trans community. They are
indeed blessed to have such an
organization in service to them.
Here's to four more years of
absolute greatness!

- Sean-Claude

# MESSAGES from our Partners



Happy 4<sup>th</sup> Anniversary TransWave Jamaica! It's amazing to see how much you have grown and how far you have come since 2015. J-FLAG is proud of the significant work you have done to advocate for the health and wellness of the Jamaican transgender community. TransWave plays a critical role in the local and regional LGBT movement. Your work to ensure the voices and realities of transgender and gender non-conforming persons are represented and included in the advocacy and activism continues to help improve access to and enjoyment of rights for LGBT people. You have much to be proud of. We are proud of you and grateful for all the work you do. Have a happy anniversary.

Congratulations on marking this 4-year milestone, TransWave!

WE-Change is happy to share this congratulatory note, joining your celebrations of achievements and successes; as an organization whose journey parallels our organization's in many ways, your continued growth is an encouragement to ours.

As you chart your journey of service towards becoming an institution that resonates with and represents the trans community - one of Jamaica's most underserved vulnerable communities, we wish you more favorable opportunities and environments that will enable your success.

Here's to more.





Equality Youth Jamaica wishes to congratulate and salute TransWave Jamaica for four years of dedication to making Jamaica a better place for Jamaicans of all identities. TransWave has, over the years allowed us to reimagine a country where the needs, opinions and dreams of all citizens can be held in high regard. The Equality Youth team gives and will continue to extend our full support to TransWave. We see the far reaching impact your work has left on the lives of trans and non-binary people, and we see your commitment to continuing to build on the foundation you have laid.

Happy Birthday and congratulations TransWave!

Jamaica AIDS Support for Life (JASL) would like to congratulate TransWave Jamaica on reaching their 4th year anniversary mark. This is a significant milestone for the Human Rights sector as TransWave provides well needed advocacy for people of trans experience. The population is often ostracized and misunderstood, however, with a strong and dedicated organization such as TransWave, Jamaica stands to benefit from a deeper understanding of trans people. We at JASL are committed to working with TransWave and people of trans experience, to ensure that our services continue to be trans inclusive and trans specific, as we fight to end the HIV epidemic. Once more, we congratulate you on 4 successful years of operation.





UNAIDS sends a heartfelt congratulations to TransWave on their fourth anniversary of representing and serving the trans community of Jamaica.

This anniversary is a testament of TransWave's commitment, persistence and unwavering advocacy for the rights and wellness of trans people, who remain one of the worst hit by discrimination, stigma, violence, exclusion and most affected by the HIV epidemic.

HIV is an issue of social injustice, deeply rooted in inequalities, social exclusion and fuelled by harmful gender norms and limited access to education and opportunities. Transwave is a beacon of hope for the rights of the most marginalized, and UNAIDS is proud of our ongoing partnership and fruitful collaboration.

Looking forward to many more anniversaries to come!

Four years ago, a few bold activists set out to organize themselves into a fledgling organization (TransWave Jamaica), as there was no established network of persons of trans experience in the island. Today, the organization has already had a significant impact on the lives of members of Jamaica's trans community. This cadre of brave young advocates, has been able to create safe spaces for Jamaicans of trans experience while continuing to work towards a more inclusive Jamaica. Through the hard work and determination of members of your team, Jamaica is becoming a more welcoming space for persons of trans experience than it was four years ago. By working tirelessly and bravely, beyond the borders of Jamaica, TransWave has also been able to take its place among some of the most influential civil society groups across the region.

The Caribbean Vulnerable Communities Coalition (CVC) is therefore honored to have been able to support the growth of TransWave over these past four years and we look forward to continuing our work with you as together we seek to further build a more inclusive Caribbean region.





Congratulations to the TransWave team on your fourth anniversary! GiveOut is working to grow giving to support LGBTQI human rights activism around the world. Having launched in January 2018, we were proud to include TransWave in our very first portfolio of grants partners. This year, we are delighted to be renewing our support for this incredible organisation, which works tirelessly to protect and promote human rights, raise awareness and celebrate the trans community in Jamaica. We are providing a grant under the Antonia and Andrea Belcher Trans Fund, generously sponsored by trans businesswoman Antonia Belcher and her wife Andrea. We look forward to even more fruitful collaboration in the future and we can't wait to see what TransWave does next – happy anniversary!



#### WHAT WAS IT LIKE VISITING JAMAICA?

It was so important and meaningful to me personally, professionally and spiritually. It was incredible to be surrounded by nothing but Black people and to see Black Trans folx outside of a US context living their lives. We're everywhere!

#### WHEN YOU GOT THE OPPORTUNITY TO COLLABORATE WITH TRANSWAVE, HOW DID YOU FEEL?

I feel honored to have been trusted with the responsibility of narrative-building and storytelling for TransWave, and to have been invited into y'all's world and family.

#### WHAT WAS IT LIKE WORKING BEHIND THE SCENES OF OUR TRANS PRIDE JA CAMPAIGN?

It's always amazing to build and collaborate with other Black Trans folx, and to use my gifts as a creative in service of my people. TransWave is like a big, loving family, and it was so healing to be in a space together where we're not made to feel ashamed of who we are.

#### BASED ON YOUR OBSERVATIONS, HOW WOULD YOU DESCRIBE THE TRANS COMMUNITY IN JAMAICA?

The three words that come to mind are: brave, resilient, fighter. I think there's a particular solidarity among Trans folx in Jamaica, where it's like we're all cousins, making our way through societies that don't want us to survive, and yet here we are, thriving, showing out, and loving on each other. I say "we" because folx made me feel like a cousin, too, even in my short time in Kingston.

#### WHAT'S THE ONE THING THAT YOU WOULD LIKE TO WORK ON WITH TRANSWAVE IN THE FUTURE?

I would love to be involved in more Trans Pride JA tings! I feel like I have a lot to learn from TransWave as an organizer, because the way y'all are able to move people? It's awe-inspiring.









ransWave Jamaica held its second annual Trans Health and Wellness Conference on June 25, 2019, at the Knutsford Court Hotel in Kingston Jamaica. The conference covered topics such as visibility, research and its usefulness in global spaces for advocacy, sexual and reproductive health of trans people and the future of the community in Jamaica. Members of the

community spoke on the various panels sharing their experiences and hopes for Jamaica as transidentified people. Neish McLean, the Executive Director, reflected on the success of the conference stating that "the Trans Health and Wellness Conference provided the space for meaningful discussions about trans health and wellbeing. Inclusion and equality are at the center of TransWave Jamaica's advocacy and is an

integral conversation as the organization works to advance the health, welfare, and well-being of the transgender community in Jamaica. For this reason, the conference was hosted in an effort to reaffirm a holistic image of the local trans community and to discuss the barriers which exist in trying to achieve inclusion and equality".

With the tremendous support we have received, TransWave will continue to work towards the affirmation of the identity of trans people, and for the full recognition of our gender identity in all spheres of life. We encourage accounting for gender identity when conducting research and collecting data. Furthermore, we call for the Jamaican government and for policymakers to take a holistic and trans-inclusive approach to transgender health and well-being using the process of self-determination for transgender people to access affirming healthcare and social support services.



Many thanks to our moderator, Carla Moore for guiding our program for the day. To our partners who brought greetings, UNAIDS, Jamaica AIDS Support for Life and Equality for All Foundation Jamaica Ltd, thank you for sharing and setting the tone for the day along with our Board Chair, F.J. Genus. To our panelists (Renae Green, Shelly Trim, Mickel Jackson, Kyym Savage, Emani Edwards, Tony Lawes, Rich Richards, Stephon Duncan, Paris Lewinsky, Dorraine Young, Alex Sterling, Emme KrisTi, and Anika Walsh), thank you for your insights!



We look forward to seeing you and others for our third annual Trans Health and Wellness Conference in June 2020!

















#### **Enforce Tolerance And Respect** In Schools

Share this Story: G V f Recommend 7

Published: Saturday | May 11, 2019 | 12:14 AM

I am grateful for the platform that The Gleaner has given J-FLAG to discuss issues the LGBT community face in Jamaica and providing spaces for us to do so.

Just two days ago, an article was published amplifying the struggle of LGBT youth and bullying nationally. I am not surprised by the words of J-FLAG's executive director that, "a 2015 study was done, and it shows that a significant number of the students who ere interviewed said they don't believe that the teachers would ever do anything about it, so they don't even bother to talk to the teachers about the challenges they

Offen, students who are labelled as different by others are exposed to homophobic/transphobic slurs. This cycle is perpetuated by the lack of serious penalties against bullying that reinforce a measure of tolerance and respect.

#### Transgender candidate for 2021

Former PNP activist starts campaign to run as independent in St Andrew North Eastern

BY KIMONE FRANCIS Senior staff reporter francisk@jamaicaobserver.com

Wednesday, July 03, 2019 228 Comment









### TransWave in the News

### 'I'm finally a Trans people should be respected and treated as equals . LGBT activist says sex reassignment surgery saved his life

#### Editors' Forum | LGBTs Want **Seat At National Table**

Share this Story: G 🔰 f 😱 Recommend 124



Published: Sunday | May 5, 2019 | 12:38 AM | Carlene Davis - Gleaner Writer

Members of the lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) community are insisting that they be included in national campaigns that focus on the protection of the rights of the vulnerable in society

#### Rent Act Does Not Protect **LGBT Community**







Published: Thursday | March 21, 2019 | 12:10 AM

THE EDITOR, Sir.

Housing is a major challenge for the LGBT community, with many persons having issues finding living spaces. This challenge is due to a lack of protection from discrimination in the legislation on housing. The Rent Restriction Act, which was passed in 1944, was crafted to protect tenants from landlords acting unreasonably and oppressively. However, based on the legislation, this is not afforded to members of the LGBT community.

Neish McLean wakes up a little bit happier these days. The 34-year-old Jamaican lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) activist, who was born a female, is now embracing his life as a trans man after undergoing successful top surgery, as part of his gender reassignment procedure.

Born and living in Kingston before moving to Portmore at age 10 years with his parents and two siblings, McLean said he pretty much grew up as a tomboy and was always certain of his sexuality.

"Growing up, I always preferred to play with boys. The freest times of my life were when I was outdoors just being a kid. I was not seen as my sex or my gender, I was just a kid, but I did realise that the boys didn't like when I beat them at rollerblading. I think a lot of individual moments came together to define who I was as a person. I knew who I was attracted to, internally I knew who I was, but I came to a point where I realised that the external world didn't see me as I saw myself," McLean shared with The Sunday Gleaner in a sit-down interview last week.



## CONTACT US TO ORDER YOUR TOTE TODAY!





## RICH FOR 2021

What's your name, how do you identify and where are you from?

My name is Rich. I'm trans masculine and I'm from Grants Pen, St. Andrew.

#### Five fast facts about you:

- a. Favourite food?My mother's beef lasagne
- b. Favourite songs?This is Me, A Million Dreams, Read All About It
- c. Favourite place in your constituency? Sunset Drive, on my walking path because it gives me a direct view of the constituency
- d. Favourite fruit?

  Pomegranate
- e. Favourite colour?

  Orange

#### When did you start in politics? I started at the age of 15

#### Why are you interested in politics?

I'm interested in politics because of the deficiencies that exist in my community. It's also a means by which one can effect change.

#### Which constituency are you running for in 2021? And why?

I'm tendering my bid for candidacy in St. Andrew North Eastern (SANE). SANE is my home. I have been working and I'm eager to work. The landscape is familiar. I've done the calculations PD by PD. I feel bonded to SANE; we have a vast political history filled with hope and tears. I've been toiling here in the comfort of the people of SANE.



#### You recently decided to become an independent candidate for your constituency. Why did you make that decision?

I became an independent candidate because at that point in time it was the option available to me. I have a distinct love for people and representation. I've always positioned myself politically. I no longer signify with the dimensions of the box that

both political parties have drawn for young people. I have been working in SANE for over a decade and I do believe the people deserve quality representation. There are too many dormant MPs in Gordon House. We the people should demand more. I'm unapologetic in who I am and I'm unafraid in my pursuit as I seek to solidify my bid.

#### What has the experience been like so far? Is it easy or difficult?

The experience has been prodigious. Oh my! It's immeasurable and I'm humbled to be where I am right now. The journey, the moments, the memories and the encounters have been truly amazing. The people have been warm and receptive and sometimes arrogant but I welcome all perspectives. Nothing worth doing is ever easy.

### For other persons within the LGBT community who are interested in politics but scared of the visibility or the infighting, what would be your message to them?

If you love it do it. Jump in. Instead of identifying the roadblocks in the system, help clear the roads. Infighting exists. Wherever there are ambitions as humans we can be territorial and individualistic by nature. As LGBT Jamaicans, we're at an important juncture of the movement. It's crucial that we bring solutions and not criticize the structure that exists.

#### What do you think about the current state of politics in Jamaica in 2019?

The current state of politics is inexplicable. in Jamaica There exists the two range understanding theory and explanation. The elected officials ask for understanding and the electorates ask for a reason to understand but no explanation was brought forth so there is no understanding. The fabric of our constitution once woven with rules and meaning that defined the Jamaica of that era needs to be revisited and revised and an injection of purpose administered to our politicians.

#### What is your vision for your constituency and by extension Jamaica?

In a synopsis, I believe that any human, by virtue of their connection to Jamaican soil should be represented in the various ministries, social and educational programs, policies and legislation. I hope for a system where students can pursue their education in an environment conducive to learning, where we no longer glorify dons but seeks to abolish systems of tyranny. I hope for a Jamaica where women are free to walk the streets and not subjected to harassment, where pathways or shortcuts don't end in tragedy for children. The full scope of my vision can be seen in September when I publish my intentions for my constituency.



PHOTO CREDIT: PRIDEJA

Anika was serving culture under her Japanese umbrella at the Pride Breakfast party.



Jessica Dolly rocked animal print realness at the Pride Breakfast party. 10s across the board!



at the Pride Sports Day.



You're only ONE SWIM away from a good mood!



Am I too cool for the summer?



A family that slays together stays together.



Rosheka is every tulle girls' dream. Step out and slay...the tulle way.



Happiness is a day at the pool!

