



Anova Statement of Support – The Forgotten 519

RE: Immediate action to stop the premature and preventable deaths of people experiencing homelessness

On Monday, July 25th, 2022, The Forgotten 519 shared a statement and launched a petition that called on the City of London to take immediate action to stop the premature and preventable deaths of people experiencing homelessness in their community.

As the community's sexual assault centre and violence against women shelter operator, Anova knows very well about the devastating impact of homelessness, and supports the work of The Forgotten 519. The action items outlined by The Forgotten 519 are worthy of consideration.

We are grateful to groups like The Forgotten 519 who do the radical work of dismantling systems that have long been challenging. At Anova we also understand the tension that exists for publicly-funded organizations to do this type of work.

To be clear, we stand with any and every organization that is doing the incredibly difficult work of saving the lives of Londoners, and we recognize The Forgotten 519 is fulfilling an important gap.

This moment is not about pitting groups against each other – that is a distraction.

This moment should be about remembering that too many preventable deaths have been occurring in our community.

This moment should be about the recognition that more needs to be done, and we believe that more can be done.

This work is messy and pressure-filled. So, while we call on the City of London to revisit the request of The Forgotten 519, we also call on everyone who is part of this discussion (Anova included) to sit in the uncomfortable space in the hopes that new ideas, strategies and plans may be created.

And while we all sit in this space together, we must always remember who is most impacted – those who are experiencing homelessness. Whatever discomfort we feel as leaders pales in comparison to the struggle our fellow humans who are unhoused are experiencing daily.

We encourage all who live in our communities to consider supporting this work and thinking critically and creatively about how we make our community safer, for everyone.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "J. Rodger".

Jessie Rodger, RSW, MSW
Executive Director