



Fall 2025

Season of Giving, Season of Growth

Message from the President

Over the past year, the Gamma Mu Foundation has taken important steps to modernize and strengthen our connection with donors. After 38 years, we recognized the need to embrace new tools and fresh approaches to better serve our donor community and engage younger generations of supporters.



With the help of a consulting partnership, we've automated key processes in our NEON system. Donations are now recorded instantly, donors receive recognition messages based on their giving level, and each donor can log into a personal account to view giving history and update contact information.

We also launched a new website featuring news, events, and improved access to reports. Our newsletters are expanding to include stories about scholarship and grant recipients, along with insights from donors and board members.

When Cliff Pettit announced the closing of the Gamma Mu Social group, we introduced regional donor gatherings, including the very successful inaugural Celebration West. These events will continue in the year ahead as part of our efforts to bring the community together.

As we begin our fall appeal, I invite you to continue supporting this work. With your generosity, we will build on last year's record awards, add new named scholarships and grants, and remain committed to uplifting LGBTQ+ communities, especially in rural and underserved areas.

With gratitude,

John Ellis
President
Gamma Mu Foundation



Summer Meeting 2025 Highlights: Stronger Grants, Record Scholarships, Deeper Connections

The Gamma Mu Foundation is celebrating a year of record-breaking scholarships, stronger grants, and deeper connections with our donor community. Together, we're not just funding programs, we're building a shared story of progress, belonging, and lasting change. That spirit came through at the Summer Meeting, held on July 10, 2025, at The University Club in Chicago. [Read the Full Story and View the Photos >>>](#)

"At 92, I was once again impressed at the Summer Meeting by the quality of work and dedication that has defined the Gamma Mu Foundation since its beginning."

~ Glenn Stevens, Oak Tree Society Member

Strong Financial Standing

- President John Ellis shared that the Foundation's accounts stood at \$5.4 million as of June 30, 2025.

Grants and Scholarships

- 21 grants totaling **\$193,399** were awarded this year.
- 10 Community Support Services projects, 10 HIV & Health Initiatives, and 1 Public Education & Research project,
- Applications were stronger than ever, thanks to clearer guidelines and our first-ever webinars with 200+ participants.

On the scholarship side, the Foundation reached a new milestone:

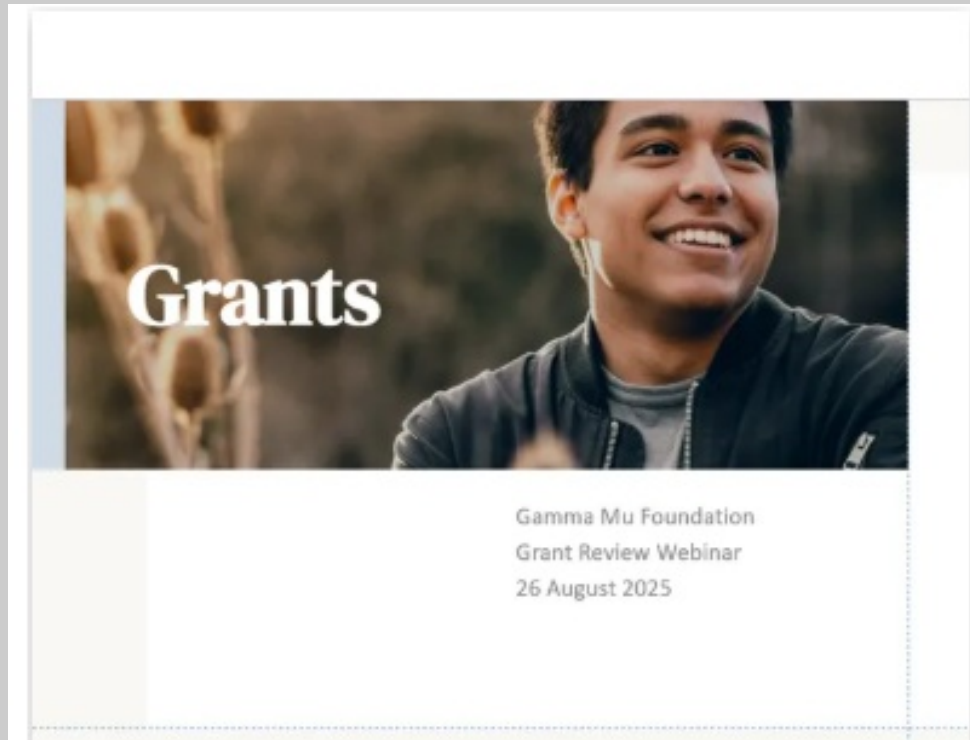
- 47 scholarships awarded, totaling **\$160,000**; the highest number in our history.
- 41% increase in scholarship funding since 2023.
- Nearly two-thirds grew up in communities under 50,000 people.
- Several Named Scholarship winners shared moving [thank-you notes and stories](#).

Connecting Beyond the Meeting

- Friday night: Dinner hosted by Board Secretary Bill Hayden at his home.
- Sunday morning: A Chicago Architecture Center River Cruise aboard the First Lady, with Bill himself as tour lead, a highlight for many participants.

- Others visited the Art Institute of Chicago and Millennium Park's Bean.

The 2025 Summer Meeting showed how much we can accomplish together. **Most importantly, it underscored that Gamma Mu's story is powered by its donors.** You're not just seeing the results of your giving, you're part of the work itself, helping to build a future defined by equity, opportunity, and lasting impact in our community.



Full-Cycle Support for Grant Applicants

On August 26, 2025, the Gamma Mu Foundation hosted a 90-minute post-application webinar for more than 30 organizations whose proposals were not selected. Participants received constructive feedback, insights into how the Grants Committee evaluates proposals, and strategies to strengthen future submissions, not only to the Foundation but to other small grant funders as well.

Mark Hendon, Grants Committee Chair, emphasized, *"While some proposals were not selected for funding in this cycle, we value the vital work these organizations are doing to support the LGBTQ+ community, and our goal is to help every applicant grow stronger for future opportunities."*

[Read More Here >>>](#)

Lets Welcome the New Cliff Pettit Fellows!

"I first learned of the Gamma Mu Foundation in Palm Springs, and I am delighted to support a community that creates opportunities for future leaders," said Bruno Lopez, our newest Cliff Pettit Fellow.

- Mitchell Crosby, Charleston, SC
- Michael Brown, Delray Beach, FL
- Bruno Lopes, Atlanta, GA



See the complete list of the 700+ past and present Cliff Pettit Fellows [here >>>](#)

Scholarship Spotlight



Rafael Bitanga: Uplifting Rural LGBTQ+ Voices

Bridging isolation and innovation through education and storytelling

"As a Filipino raised in rural Alaska, receiving a scholarship from the Gamma Mu Foundation represents far more than financial support. It validates my experience as a gay man raised in rural America."

Now at Stanford, Rafael is focused on building innovative educational technology for rural schools and creating digital storytelling programs for LGBTQ+ youth.

[Read More >>>](#)

Grant Spotlight

Wyoming Equality's Healthcare Access Project brings affirming care to LGBTQ communities statewide with Gamma Mu Foundation support



Accessing affirming healthcare is still a major challenge for LGBTQ+ people in Wyoming, especially in rural communities. That's why the Gamma Mu Foundation is proud to support Wyoming Equality's Healthcare Access Project (WEHAP).

Since 2017, we've awarded eight grants totaling \$41,400, including a \$15,000 grant in 2025. With this support, WEHAP has:

- Trained nearly 120 providers in LGBTQ-inclusive care
- Reached thousands of LGBTQ individuals with HIV/STD testing, PrEP navigation, and community outreach

- Launched the Affirming Care ECHO, a statewide education series for healthcare professionals

[Read More >>>](#)



From left to right, Sara Burlingame, Executive Director, Andrew Schneider, fund raiser for the group, Susan Scarlata, Board Member, John Block, Vice President of the Gamma Mu Foundation, and Chuck Kuglen.

John Block, Vice President, and Chuck Kuglen met with [Wyoming Equality](#) to learn more about the organization's statewide impact. They expressed the Foundation's gratitude for many years of partnership and heard firsthand about the financial challenges Wyoming Equality faces following the loss of government funding.

Upcoming Events



Annual Meeting [Zoom]

Join us for a behind-the-scenes look at the impact of your support! The Annual Meeting is a great opportunity to learn how grants and scholarships are awarded, hear updates on the Foundation's progress, and see what's ahead.

Thinking about joining the Board or serving on a committee? This is the perfect way to learn more and get involved and be one of the cool kids.

When: September 25, 2025 @ 6:00 PM EST

Where: via Zoom

Register [HERE](#).



Celebration East 2026

Join us for a 3-day weekend of celebration and shared values.

When: January 16-18, 2026

Where: [Richardson House](#) in Wilton Manors for the Main Event: Saturday, January 17th.

Saturday evening's entertainment will feature the incredible talent of [Zak Azoury](#). Zak's mission is to blend modern styles with classic jazz and bossa music to bring joy into the world.

Early-Bird Special: Register by October 1, 2025 and pay only \$160 (20% off)! After October 1, the full registration price will be \$200.

Register for weekend [HERE](#).

What's in store:

- Engaging social events with fellow supporters

- Special recognitions and awards
- Inspiring connections with Foundation leadership and visionaries shaping the future of LGBTQ+ philanthropy

Save the date, invite your friends, and join us for a fun-filled weekend. More details coming soon!

[Visit our Website](#)



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