



# GAMMA MU FOUNDATION

Spring 2026

## Spring Momentum

Record Applications Signal Growing Need and Trust

### Message from the President

Greetings!

Our Foundation team has been hard at work since January preparing for the upcoming grant and scholarship application cycle. This year we received a **record number of applications**, reflecting both growing community needs and confidence in our programs.



We're carefully reviewing guidelines to align with our mission and evolving priorities while honoring our original intent. We're also updating our process to make it more accessible for applicants, more streamlined for reviewers, and to promote scholarship availability to students attending community colleges and trade schools.

From our early focus on gay organizations in rural areas responding to the HIV crisis, our grants and scholarship programs now reach LGBTQ+ communities across the United States, supporting community services, public education and research, HIV care, and broader health initiatives that impact gay men.

We're proud to expand this work while staying true to our Foundation's values. None of this would be possible without our donors' extraordinary generosity and commitment.

Throughout the year, our newsletters share stories of the organizations and students transformed by these awards, while recognizing the donors whose compassion makes it all possible.

Wishing you a happy, healthy spring and summer and thank you for being part of this vital work.

Best regards,

John Ellis  
President  
Gamma Mu Foundation

[Donate Here](#)



You're invited to take part in the sweetest fundraiser of the year.

By ordering a dozen (or two) original glazed doughnuts, **50% of the order will be donated back to Gamma Mu Foundation!**

From now until September 4, 2026, you can get your dozens using our fundraising sales page below.

[Get Your Dozens](#)

## Grants Spotlight



### Charlotte Gaymers Network

Project Paperclip, based in Charlotte, NC, is a digital equity initiative that provides LGBTQ+ individuals experiencing financial hardship with access to laptops, mobile hotspots, and digital literacy training. Designed to support workforce development, the program helped participants use the equipment for career advancement, job searching, and community connection.

Key outcomes included:

- 50 laptops and mobile hotspots distributed.



- 81% of participants completed digital literacy training.
- 77% of participants self-identified as gay men, including 32% who were rural-based.
- 100% of participants said they would use the equipment for career advancement or job searches.

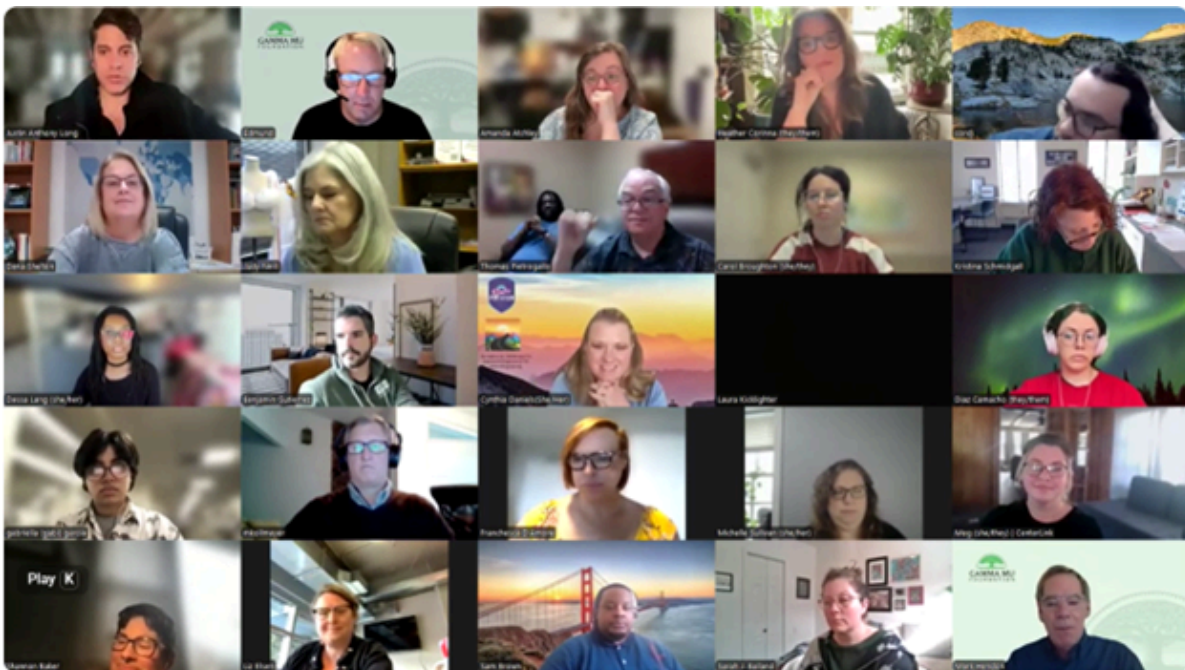
Our Board Directors, **Bill Hayden** (Secretary) and **Jordan Montano**, met with Jonny Saldana, co-founder of the **Charlotte Gaymers Network**, while in Chicago, where he is helping expand the Project Paperclip model to the Chicago area through Second City Gaming.

The training covered computer setup, email, Wi-Fi access, password security, Microsoft Office basics, LinkedIn profile development, and an optional AI-focused job search module.

Charlotte Gaymers Network received the **Jones & Kahle Award in honor of Martin Culbreth**.

Watch thank-you video>>> [here](#).

## Grants Program Update



The Grants Program continued to grow during the **2026–2027 Grant Cycle** call for proposals, which was open from January 12 through March 31, 2026.

To support the process, all previous grant recipients were emailed and invited to apply, and **two informational webinars** were held on February 17 and March 17. More than 150 people attended, and recordings of both webinars were posted on the website. Read more >>> [here](#).

Grant cycle highlights:

- More than 250 applications were received;
- 56 applications were forwarded for scoring, compared to 77 last year.

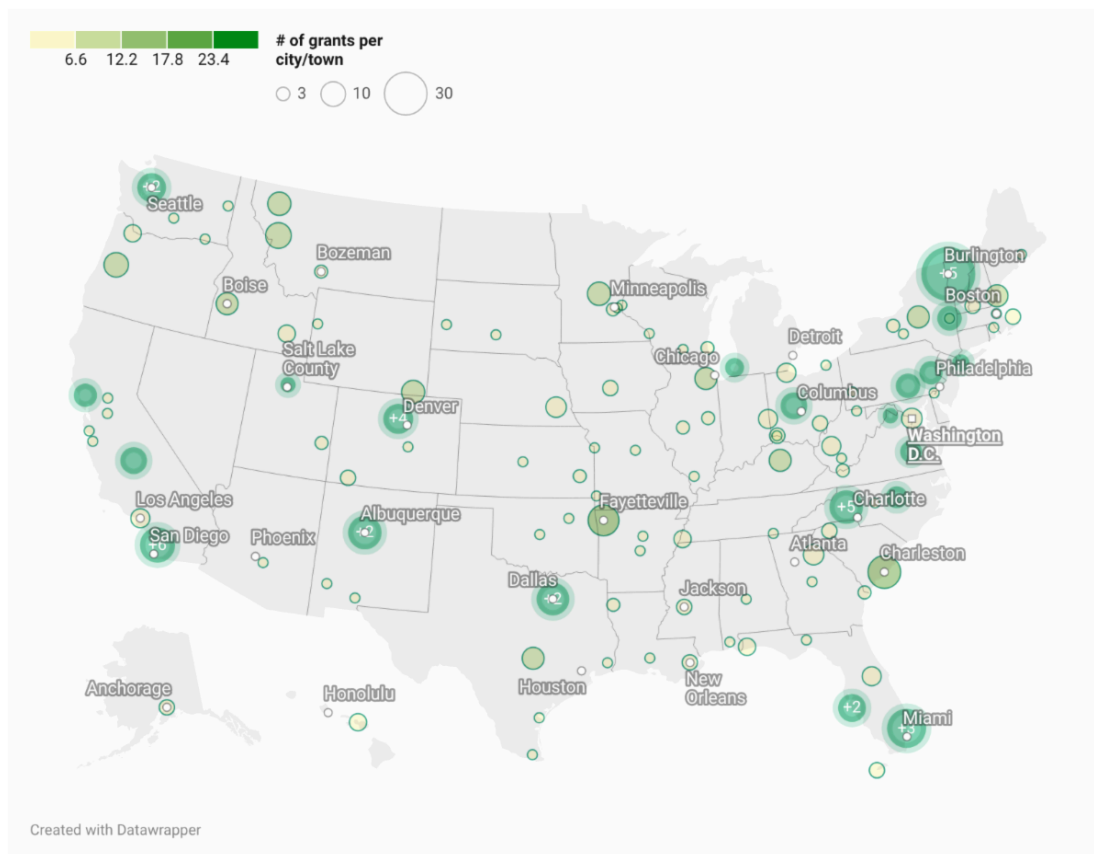
Applications being scored included:

- 27 in HIV and Health
- 25 in Community Support
- 4 in Research and Education

Twelve reviewers are currently scoring the applications, with the deadline set for Friday, May 29, 2026.

## Gamma Mu Grants Distribution Map 1988-2025

The map below illustrates the geographic distribution of grants awarded between 1988 and 2025. Each marker represents a zip code that has received at least one grant. The visualization reflects decades of sustained investment and shows how support has expanded over time to serve organizations nationwide. [Click on map to zoom in.](#)



## Scholarship Program Update

This year, **2026**, delivered a **record-breaking scholarship cycle** with over 300 highly qualified applications, a *first*, including a surge from community college and vocational students.

We received **312 total applications** (up 81 from last year), spanning five scholarship categories:

- 51 high school seniors entering freshman year;
- 53 gay undergraduates

- 86 gay graduates
- 58 LGBT undergraduates
- 64 LGBT graduates

### Targeted Outreach Success

These gains stemmed from deliberate efforts to reach community college and trade students through:

- Website enhancements and SEO optimization;
- Listings on scholarship search platforms like Fastweb;
- Direct emails to financial aid offices at 40 of Niche's "Best Trade Schools";
- Outreach to all local PFLAG chapters by email.

### Perfect Timing with National Trends

This effort aligns seamlessly with 2024-25 data\* showing high school graduates favoring community colleges over four-year paths:

- 18-20 year-olds claimed 32.6% of first-time associate degrees for the first time;
- Associate degrees **rose 2.6%** to 865,400;
- Certificates hit a decade-high **3.2% increase** to 579,400;
- While bachelor's **grew 2.8%** to 2 million.

These shifts reflect vocational and trade programs gaining momentum amid rising costs and workforce demands, positioning the Foundation's scholarships precisely where need meets opportunity.

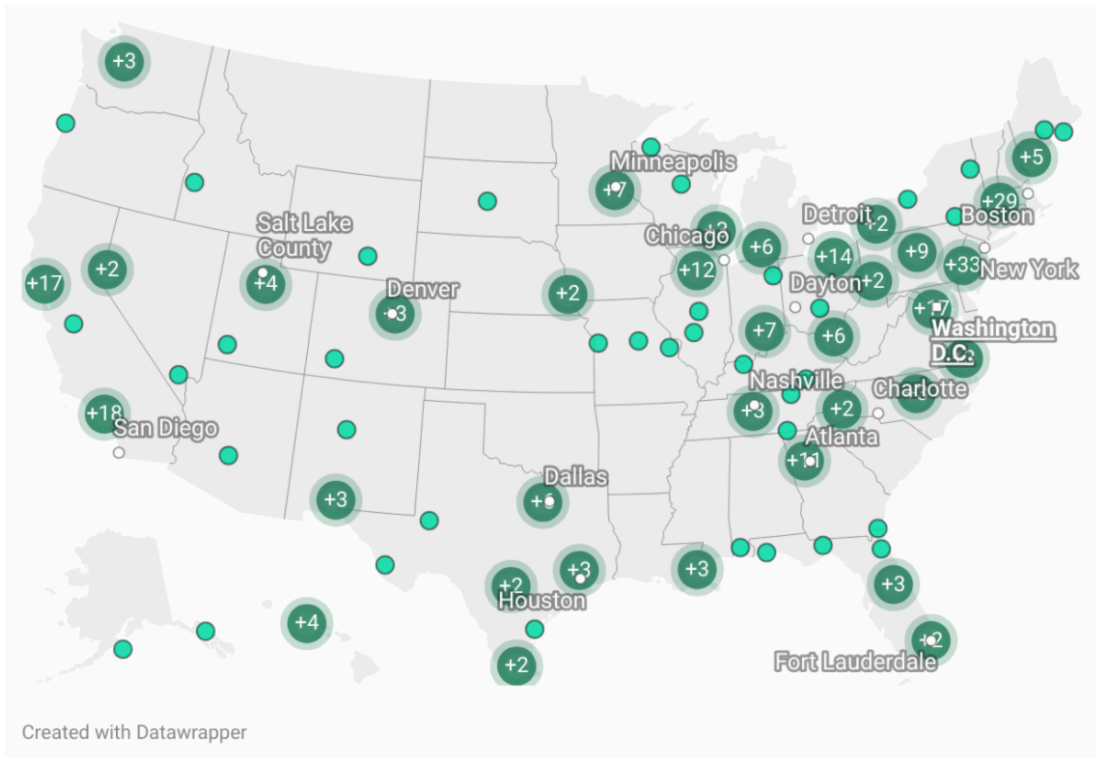
Twenty reviewers are currently scoring the applications, with the deadline set for Monday, June 1, 2026.

\*CNBC & National Student Clearinghouse Research Center

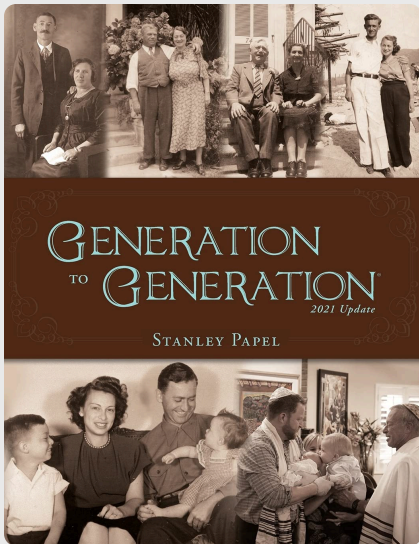
### Gamma Mu Scholarship Distribution Map 2014-2026

This map showcases the hometowns of Gamma Mu Foundation scholarship recipients, illustrating the nationwide reach of our support. Each point represents a scholar whose education has been made possible by your generosity. Together, these locations reflect the Foundation's commitment to expanding opportunity and uplifting gay and other LGBTQ+ students from diverse backgrounds and regions.

[Click on map to zoom in.](#)



## Donor Spotlight: Stanley Papel



Stanley Papel, an Oak Tree Society member and generous supporter of the Phil Papel Memorial Scholarship, has released the third edition of his memoir, [\*Generation to Generation\*](#) (Luminar Press, January 2026).

Spanning six generations, the book traces a Jewish-American family's journey from Hungary and Lithuania to the United States, South Africa, and Mexico. It explores themes of immigration, identity, family legacy, and the evolution of gay life within a traditional family context.

Reviewers consistently highlight Stanley's storytelling as engaging and insightful noting his charm and candid humor. His vivid recollections of growing up in mid-century Los Angeles and his reflections on family, career, and personal identity add depth and warmth to the narrative.

Stanley will host the **Celebration West 2026** signature event at the Level 20 Sky Club in San Diego, where copies of *Generation to Generation* will be available.

We congratulate Stanley on this meaningful accomplishment and thank him for his



continued support of the Gamma Mu Foundation.

## Recognizing Generosity in Action

### Giving Milestones

A big thank you to the supporters who recently reached a new [Cumulative Giving Level](#) with the Gamma Mu Foundation!

This generosity reflects a deep commitment to our community and belief in our mission.

#### BENEFACTOR

- Ron Lushing

### Our New Cliff Pettit Fellow

The Cliff Pettit Fellows reflect the spirit of Gamma Mu through their extraordinary generosity and commitment to our community.

We're proud to welcome our newest Fellow.

- Edmund Settle

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

## Tributes to Those We Remember

*Recent Contributions Made In Memory Of*



## Donor

- Doug Morton
- Bryan Koeppel

## In Memory Of

- Alan Colvin
- Alan Colvin

## Sponsor Spotlight



We are proud to spotlight **Impact Encounters**, a premier luxury tour operator for gay men and a valued supporter of the Gamma Mu Foundation over the past several years.



Throughout this partnership, **Duni Bauta**, Founder of Impact Encounters, has provided generous support and hands-on expertise in planning our recent Celebration events, working closely with **Frank Maguire** and **David Andrews**. His insights and partnership have been instrumental to their success, and his passion for community continues to make a lasting impact.

*“For me, Gamma Mu is equivalent to camaraderie and safe space to be who you are, no matter what,” shared Duni Bauta, Founder Impact Encounters.*

Impact Encounters curates exceptional, high-end travel experiences across the globe, designed not only to explore the beauty, culture, and uniqueness of each destination, but also to foster meaningful connections among like-minded travelers and the local gay communities. Their journeys are defined by camaraderie, sophistication, and unforgettable moments.

We are honored to count Impact Encounters as a partner and invite you to explore their offerings to learn more.

Explore their upcoming trips >>> [here](#).

## Upcoming Events

## Gamma Mu Foundation Summer Meeting

July 17-19, 2026

Hilton Boston Back Bay Hotel



Join us at the **Gamma Mu Foundation Summer Meeting** on July 17-19, 2026, where our donor community comes together to review our grant and scholarship programs, reflect on the past year's successes, and plan an exciting year ahead.

The Summer Meeting provides a unique opportunity to lend your voice to our shared mission and actively shape the Foundation's future.

[Register Here](#)



## Early Bird Registration is now Open

Join the Gamma Mu Foundation in San Diego on October 16-18, 2026 for **Celebration West 2026 – SUN Diego**, a 3-day weekend of fun, sun, and generosity.

This Southern California experience kicks off with a Friday night meet & greet at **Baja Betty's**, heats up with a lively Saturday main event at **Level 20 Sky Club**, and wraps with Sunday's scenic **champagne brunch-on-the-bay cruise**.

☀️ **Early Bird: \$280** | 🌴 **Full Price: \$335**

Grab your early bird spot and let's celebrate!


[Register Here](#)




# Big Gay Movie Trivia

Stories have the power to connect, inspire, and build community.

We've put together a fun "Match the Photo to the Movie" quiz featuring iconic LGBTQ+ films that have helped shape gay culture, visibility, and representation over the years.

 Test your movie knowledge and see how many you can match correctly!

 Take the quiz and see how you do! Click >>> [here](#).

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