



Summer 2026

Reaching a New Milestone Together

Message from the President

Hello JOHN,

Your Foundation is nearing the close of a record year for grants and scholarships, awarding nearly **\$500,000** to 23 highly qualified grantees and 75 scholarship recipients. This represents a 41% increase over 2025 and a 133% increase since 2020.



This remarkable milestone reflects the Foundation's growing impact and the extraordinary commitment of our Grants and Scholarship Chairs and committee members, who volunteer countless hours to make these awards possible. Our greatest asset is you, our donors. Your generosity, experience, and commitment make this work possible.

In July, our Board met in Boston for its annual planning meeting, focusing on continued growth in communications, donor stewardship, and partnership development. Building on feedback from our [2024 Donor Survey](#), we are enhancing donor engagement by increasing interaction with Directors, sending timely automated gift acknowledgments, and providing donor dashboards that track giving history and cumulative membership levels.

As we celebrate this year's accomplishments, we are also looking ahead to our fall fundraising drive, [Celebration West 2026](#) in San Diego this October, Celebration East 2027 in Fort Lauderdale this January, and the launch of the next grants and scholarship cycle in January.

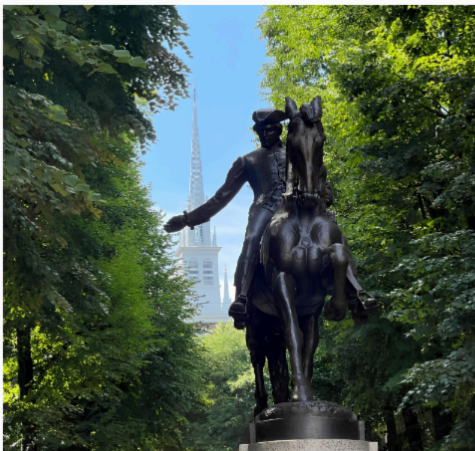
Through your support, the Gamma Mu Foundation continues to invest in vital community infrastructure and the next generation of scholars, improving the lives of LGBTQ+ people across the United States. We are deeply grateful for your ongoing commitment and welcome your ideas as we work together to build the Foundation's future.

Best regards,

John Ellis
President
Gamma Mu Foundation

[Donate Here](#)

Board Update



On July 18, the Gamma Mu Foundation held its **Summer Board of Directors Meeting** in Boston, bringing together 13 Directors and six Cliff Pettit Fellow guests to review progress and priorities.

Key areas of focus included:

- **Grants and scholarships:** Approved the Grants and Scholarship Committees' recommendations to fund 23 grants totaling \$252,607 and 75 scholarships totaling \$227,500.
- **Governance, transparency, and accountability:** Updated the Foundation's By-Laws and Policy and Procedures Manual, including a strengthened Privacy Policy and donor rights language, and the Board of Directors Responsibilities and Expectations agreement.
- **Donor stewardship:** Continued to build on our communications, meaningful contact between Directors and donors, donor dashboards, and Celebration East and Celebration West as opportunities to strengthen personal connections.
- **Emerging results:** For the fiscal year ending June 2026, the Foundation achieved a 78.26% donor recapture rate and a 133.33% new donor acquisition rate, reflecting progress in reconnecting with past donors and welcoming new supporters.
- **Partnership framework:** Discussed ways to broaden the Foundation's reach and strengthen its role through partnerships with:
 - **businesses and local partners** that can help create memorable events, e.g., Celebrations;
 - **organizations and network partners** that can connect the Foundation with new audiences; and,
 - **foundations, trusts, and other philanthropic partners** committed to long-term investment in LGBTQ+ communities.

Beyond the meeting room, the weekend gave everyone time to relax, connect, and enjoy Boston together. Highlights included a tour of Fenway Park, cocktails overlooking the city from the [View Boston](#) at the Prudential Center, visits to the JFK Presidential Library, the Freedom Trail, and local art museums, and, for some, *a first-ever lobster roll*. The weekend wrapped up with a group watch party for the FIFA World Cup Final, a fun ending to a productive few days together.

Grants Program Update



[In the photo above, from left to right: Jennifer Firmin, Director of Development, Legacy Cares; Rick Adams, longtime sponsor of Legacy Cares; Joe Pacetti, Leader Level Gamma Mu Foundation donor and longtime sponsor of Legacy Cares; David Andrews, Director, Gamma Mu Foundation, and past Chair of Legacy Cares; and Brooke Henderson, Executive Director, Legacy Cares. Not pictured: Mark Hendon, Chair, Grants Committee, Gamma Mu Foundation.]

The Gamma Mu Foundation has awarded **23 grants** totaling **\$252,607** for the **2026-2027 grant cycle**, supporting organizations advancing LGBTQ+ communities across the country.

Highlights from this year's grant portfolio include:

- 12 HIV & Health programs, 8 Community Support programs, and 3 Public Education & Research initiatives.
- 15 returning grantees and **8 first-time grantees**.
- More than \$252,000 awarded, representing a **31% increase** over last year and a **63% increase since 2020**.
- The average grant is nearly \$11,000, which is **up approximately 70%** from \$6,452 in 2020, even though the number of grants awarded each year has remained relatively consistent.
- **7 Named Grant Awards** recognizing the generosity and legacy of Foundation donors.



Youth Voices in Action

A student supported by Gamma Mu Foundation grantee Safe Schools South Florida speaks before a Florida legislative committee in Tallahassee about HB 173 and its potential impact on LGBTQ+ youth and their access to healthcare.

The results of the **2025-2026 grant cycle** demonstrate the breadth and depth of the Foundation's community reach.

- **7,200+ people reached** nationwide through Foundation-supported programs.
 - This includes 3,700 people reached through Community Support, 3,300 through HIV & Health, and 240+ through Public Education & Research.
- **20,000+ service interactions**, program visits, health screenings and referrals, educational contacts, and community engagements, reflecting the ongoing support many participants received throughout the year.
- Foundation grants **act as a catalyst**, helping grantees combine Foundation funding with other grants, organizational resources, and community partnerships to expand the scale and reach of their programs.
 - As an example, \$7,000 in Gamma Mu Foundation funding helped **leverage more than \$63,000** in free or discounted care and 1,586 HIV tests and referrals through Bridgercare, expanding access to healthcare for LGBTQ+ people across Montana.

Scholarship Program Update



Jackson Shepler

Clark Trust Scholarship, 2026

Oberlin College, Ohio

Hometown: Tonawanda, NY

Reflecting on receiving his scholarship this year, Jackson, an entering freshman, shared:

"This is absolutely a tremendous honor, and I cannot thank you enough! My mom is sobbing.

Gramps had to hide his identity. He went to Tonawanda High School too... If he had let his truth be known, he would have been in danger, and that meant he only got a few years of happiness with Grandpa Denny before he passed away.

Here I am, his grandson, being celebrated and supported. Knowing there are people out there, rooting for me not "despite" the fact that I'm gay, but BECAUSE I am doing my best to represent the gay community. I cannot put into words how powerful that is."

This year, 2026, delivered a record-breaking scholarship cycle, with the Gamma Mu Foundation **awarding 75 scholarships totaling \$227,500** to undergraduate, graduate, and professional students across the country.

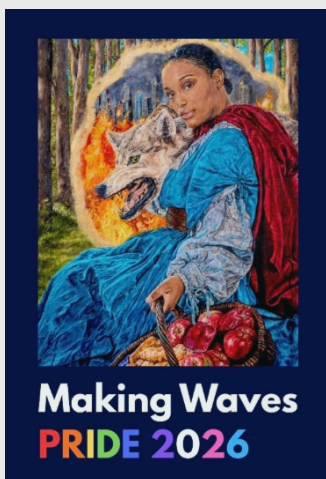
- 44 undergraduates and 31 graduate and professional students received scholarships.
- Scholarship funding grew from \$60,000 for 24 students in 2020 to \$227,500 for 75 students in 2026. This represents **a 48% increase over 2025 and a 296% increase since 2020**, with more than three times as many scholarships awarded as in 2020.
- **Undergraduate recipients** attend a wide range of institutions, including state and public universities such as San José State University, Michigan State University, UMass Amherst, and the University of Wisconsin–Madison, as well as nationally recognized universities including Stanford, Cornell, Northwestern, Harvard, UCLA, and the University of Pennsylvania.
- **Graduate and professional recipients** are pursuing advanced degrees across medicine, law, public policy, public health, and other fields, including at Harvard Law School, Howard University School of Law, Arizona State University's Sandra Day O'Connor College of Law, UConn School of Medicine, and the David Geffen School of Medicine at UCLA.

- Nearly half of undergraduate recipients were **first-generation college students**, compared with about 18% reported in a Williams Institute national study¹ of LGBTQ+ college students, suggesting the Foundation is reaching students who may face greater barriers to accessing and financing higher education.
- 58% of undergraduate recipients **qualified for a Pell Grant or subsidized Stafford Loan**, reflecting significant financial need and aligning with Williams Institute research² showing LGBTQ+ students rely more heavily on financial support for higher education.
- Roughly **75% of recipients were new** to the Foundation, while about 25% were returning recipients.
- **16 Named Scholarships of \$5,000** each were awarded, alongside 59 scholarships of \$2,500.

1. Williams Institute, 2022. <https://williamsinstitute.law.ucla.edu/publications/fafsa-public-comment>

2. Williams Institute & Point Foundation, 2021. <https://williamsinstitute.law.ucla.edu/wp-content/uploads/LGBTQ-College-Student-COVID-May-2021.pdf>

Celebrating Our Supporters



Larry Chrysler Honored with Non-Fiction Editor Award

Larry Chrysler's short story, "Marines Don't Cry," was selected for the Non-Fiction Editor Award in the PRIDE 2026 issue of *Making Waves: A West Michigan Review*.

[Read here](#)

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.

- **Oak Tree Society:** John Piane

- **Patron:** Larry Kam

Tributes to Those We Remember

Recent Contributions Made In Memory Of



Martin Culbreth Named Memorial Award

In recognition of the generous gifts made in memory of Martin Culbreth, the Gamma Mu Foundation will establish a named memorial award in his honor. This new award will complement the existing Jones & Kahle Grant in Honor of Martin Culbreth, adding another lasting tribute to his memory.

All future donations made in memory of Martin will be directed to this award, creating a lasting tribute to his life and connection to the Gamma Mu community—[Donate Here](#).

Our sincere thanks to the following donors for their gifts made in memory of Martin:

- | | | |
|-------------------|--------------------|---------------------|
| • Allan Rexinger | • Mitchell Crosby | • Scott Kahle |
| • Bryan Koeppl | • Kenneth Thompson | • Jim Jones |
| • Cliff Pettit | • Bill Hayden | • Eric Baker |
| • John Ellis | • Doug Morton | • William Kapfer |
| • James Stork | • Mark Hendon | • John Piane |
| • David Andrews | • Douglas Cheatham | • Samuel Profeta |
| • John Block | • Frank Maguire | • William Jaume |
| • Chuck Kulgen | • Bruno Lopes | • Jeffrey Gearheart |
| • Stephen Crocker | • Paul Opheim | • Jeff Diebley |
| • Donald Jolly | • Mary Wreyford | • Michael Brown |
| • Fred Zrinscak | • Larry Kam | • Patrick Burke |

Donor

- Larry Kam
- Peter Harvey
- John Ellis
- Mark Hendon
- Douglas Cheatham
- David Prindable

In Memory Of

- Guido Casari, Jr.
- Alan Colvin
- Alan Colvin
- Alan Colvin
- Alan Colvin
- Elizabeth Kittle

Upcoming Events



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

This Southern California experience kicks off with a Friday night meet-and-greet at Baja Betty's, continues Saturday with a cocktail lunch at Alfred Mansion and the signature evening event at Level 20 Sky Club, and wraps up Sunday with a scenic champagne brunch cruise on San Diego Bay.

[Register Here](#)

Gamma Mu Foundation
Celebration East 2027
Save the Date



January 15-17, 2027

FORT LAUDERDALE
FLORIDA

Explore the Gamma Mu Foundation

Gamma Mu Foundation | P. O. Box 23520 | Fort Lauderdale, FL 33307-3520 US



[Unsubscribe](#) | [Update Profile](#) | [Our Privacy Policy](#) | [Constant Contact Data Notice](#)



Try email & social marketing for free!