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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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**LGBT+ Philanthropists Raise \$45,000,
Founding Member Doubles Annual Gift**

The LGBT+ Giving Circle at Rochester Area Community Foundation raised \$45,450 to invest in organizations advancing equity, belonging, and justice in Greater Rochester.

"I am delighted that the Circle's grantmaking continues to be thoughtful and impactful," says John Williams, one of the LGBT+ Giving Circle's founding members. "In light of funding challenges experienced by our region's LGBT programs and initiatives, this year I am doubling my annual Circle donation. It's an investment in what is important to me and to our community."

As the LGBT+ Giving Circle looks to celebrate its 15th anniversary next year, John encourages anyone looking to benefit the Greater Rochester community to get involved.

One of the Giving Circle's grants was made to ImageOut for its LGBTQ+ Fall Film Festival, which concluded in October.

"At a time when LGBTQ+ rights are increasingly under attack, visibility and allyship couldn't be more crucial," says Michele Thornton, ImageOut board chair. "With support from the Giving Circle, we are able to produce events like our 2025 film festival, which brings LGBTQ+ films, artwork, music, and culture to Rochester to showcase individual stories, celebrate authentically and build community."

Other of the Circle's grantees provide critical support for LGBTQ+ community members at no cost, like free mental health counseling for veterans and survivors of domestic violence.

The Giving Circle's goal is to pool resources to build safer, more affirming communities where all can thrive. The nonprofits receiving grants serve the community through advocacy and programs focused on the arts, youth leadership, healthcare, and community safety.

To learn more, visit racf.org/collectivegiving.

Photos: LGBT+ Giving Circle members gathered at ROAR to celebrate pride and announce the opening of grant applications earlier this year. [Grantmaking Kick-off](#). [Giving Circle message](#). [Grantmaking chair, quest](#).

About the LGBT+ Giving Circle

The LGBT+ Giving Circle at Rochester Area Community Foundation unites donors to support organizations that serve, are inclusive of, or are allied with the lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender community to enhance and strengthen our region. Created in 2011, the circle makes grants from its LGBT+ Fund for Greater Rochester to cultivate a better community.

About Rochester Area Community Foundation

In partnership with generous philanthropists and community partners, Rochester Area Community Foundation works to improve the quality of life for people who live and work in the eight-county region through its leadership and strategic grantmaking. As a leading grantmaker, the Foundation is focused on two broad goals: creating an equitable community and strengthening our region's vitality. Since 1972, the Community Foundation has distributed more than \$740 million in grants and scholarships.

2025 Grantees:

- **Blackfriars Theatre:** To support a production — “In the Next Room (or The Vibrator Play)” — exploring queer desire, gender roles, and inclusion.
- **Coordinated Care Services:** In support of Our Local History's 2025 youth summit empowering LGBTQ+ students.
- **Flower City Arts Center:** To expand Queering Space studios, Pride Party, and Mx. Media showcase.
- **Flower City Pride Band:** For operational support of inclusive community performances.
- **Girls Rock! Rochester:** Pride Rock Camp is a music and leadership camp for LGBTQ+ youth.
- **Out Alliance:** The Rochester Rainbow Union strengthens collaboration and leadership across LGBTQ+ organizations.
- **Spiritus Christi:** Affirming, no-cost counseling for LGBTQ+ community members through the mental health center.
- **The Center for Youth:** To sustain transitional housing at the Arnett House for LGBTQ+ youth at risk of homelessness or exploitation.
- **Rochester Gay Men's Chorus:** The Yuletide Radiance Concert presents music celebrating liberation, equality, and belonging.
- **Veterans Outreach Center:** To launch peer and clinical support for LGBTQ+ veterans.
- **Volunteer Legal Services Project (JustCause):** The pro bono name change program provides free legal aid for LGBTQ+ individuals.
- **Willow Domestic Violence Center:** Affirming care for LGBTQ+ survivors through the LGBTQIA2S+ Safe Space Project.
- **Jewish Community Center (CenterStage Theatre):** To support a trans-authored play — “The First Jew in Canada” — and additional 2025-26 season LGBTQ+ programming.
- **ImageOut:** The Rochester's LGBTQ+ Film Festival showcases LGBTQ+ film, art, and creative storytelling.
- **Rochester Black Pride:** To support their annual festival celebrating Black LGBTQ+ culture and joy.