

Grant Supports Summer Camp for LGBTQ+ Youth

The Women's Fund
520 Columbia Drive, Suite 100
Johnson City, NY 13790
Phone (607) 772-6773
donorswhocare.org
 

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Youth in our region who identify as LGBTQ+ enjoyed a week of summer recreation and connection this August, courtesy of the Girl Scouts of NYPENN Pathways with help from an \$8,000 Women's Fund grant. The award helped to cover staff salaries, scholarships, activities, speakers and other expenses during the session, held at Camp Amahami in Deposit.

Camp Beyond Binary let young people of any gender who identify as LGBTQ+ spend time with peers and adults who identify as they do. It also offered some specific curriculum to help them develop as leaders, said Julie Dale, CEO of Girl Scouts of NYPENN Pathways. While it was not itself a Girl Scout

camp, the NYPENN Pathways sponsored Beyond Binary because it was a good match for that organization, she said. "The Girl Scouts have always been pioneers in accepting people of all different beliefs."

Other camps are available for LGBTQ+ youth, but they're costly and are located a long way from New York's Southern Tier, Dale said. Some are day camps, and some are designed for parents to attend along with their kids.

Leaders at Girl Scouts of NYPENN Pathways realized they had an opportunity to tailor an experience to the needs of young LGBTQ+ people in our region and make it more accessible than the other options. "We have four camps, and they're not used all the time," Dale said. "Wouldn't it be great to partner with the LGBTQ+ community of professionals to make this opportunity happen?"

Fifty-five kids, ages 14 to 18, took part in Camp Beyond Binary. They were supervised by 20 adult staff. The week featured many of the classic activities you'd find at any summer camp—swimming, boating, archery, camp fires, singalongs and so on. But it also provided activities specific to the concerns of LGBTQ+ youth.

Professionals who work in the LGBTQ+ community offered lessons on LGBTQ+ history and advocacy and talked with the

campers about leadership and self-esteem. The staff, all at least 25 years old, also included therapists and nurses.

Another special feature of the camp was a clothing closet. "A lot of kids who are LGBTQ+ would like to experiment with clothing that is typically worn by a different gender, and they don't have that opportunity," Dale said. "We've had tons of clothes that were donated, and companies have sent wigs and cool things so kids could try on a different persona while they were at camp."

Based on their financial means, families paid anywhere from \$0 to \$1,000 to send a child for the week. The Women's Fund grant made it possible to apply that sliding scale, as did the generosity of some of the families, Dale said. "There were parents who paid \$1,000 for their kid and paid another \$1,000 for another child to come. It was amazing. The outpouring of interest in the camp is unlike anything I've ever seen."

Organizers administered a university-developed survey to measure whether the week's experience improved campers' sense of resilience, Dale said. And plans are already underway to run Camp Beyond Binary again in 2023, with the hope of expanding its reach, she said. "My dream is to have one week at each of all four camps."





HALI LEE



20th Anniversary Breakfast Spotlights Women's Philanthropy

"Kitchen tables are the locus of a lot of powerful organizing," keynote speaker Hali Lee told the 220 attendees at the Women's Fund's annual breakfast on June 1. Founding partner at Radiant Strategies, co-founder of the Donors of Color Network and founder of the Asian Women's Giving Circle, Lee discussed the importance of giving circles, cultures of giving and organizations that put women and donors of color at the center of their work.

Women in philanthropy was an apt focus for the breakfast, which celebrated the Women's Fund's 20th anniversary. To mark that milestone, attendees had a chance to view a new video that chronicles the fund's history, points to our achievements and highlights the voices of some of our enthusiastic supporters.

After the breakfast, held at the Doubletree by Hilton in Binghamton, Lee expanded on

her talk as she led 25 women from nonprofit organizations—primarily women of color—in a workshop on fundraising.

Guests at the breakfast took the opportunity to make more than \$5,000 in donations to the Women's Fund. We send our thanks to them, and to the breakfast sponsors, who provided a total of more than \$28,000.

Thank you also to the Women's Fund's Special Events and Leadership Committees for producing another successful breakfast, giving us a chance to come together, learn from one another and renew our commitment to improving and enriching the lives of women and girls.

Watch the 20th Anniversary video on YouTube: <https://bit.ly/3AwISuj>

2022 Grants from the Women's Fund

CATHOLIC CHARITIES OF TOMPKINS/TIOGA \$2,500 towards an art therapy program at A Place to Call Home

COMMERCE CHENANGO \$5,000 for the Women in the Workforce event for Chenango County professionals

FAMILY PLANNING OF THE SOUTHERN TIER \$8,000 for the Teens Count summer program in Binghamton and Johnson City

GIRL SCOUTS OF NYPENN PATHWAYS \$8,000 for the summer camp program, Beyond Binary, for LGBTQ+ youth

OTSEGO LAND TRUST \$4,800 for a chainsaw skills workshop for women

RICHFIELD SPRINGS COMMUNITY CENTER \$2,200 for programming to address the needs of girls, young adults, and seniors at the center

THE SALVATION ARMY \$5,000 for a basic needs pantry for women and girls

TWIN TIERS HONOR FLIGHT \$8,000 for an Honor Flight to Washington DC for female veterans

Women Vets Get a Flight of Their Own

Woman military veterans in our region will receive a special tribute this fall with help from an \$8,000 Women's Fund grant to the nonprofit Twin Tiers Honor Flight.

Part of the national Honor Flight Network, Twin Tiers Honor Flight brings groups of military veterans to Washington, D.C., free of any charge to the vets, to tour memorials related to their service. Despite the name, due to our area's proximity to Washington, veterans from our area usually travel by bus, each

accompanied by a volunteer escort. They visit sites such as the World War II Memorial and the Vietnam Veterans Memorial, spend a night in a hotel and visit Arlington National Cemetery.

On their return, the vets receive a rousing welcome, with flags and banners and a crowd of families and friends. "As everyone gets off the bus, their names are announced," said Keelin Kistner, a volunteer with Twin Tiers Honor Flight.

The organization runs about

four trips a year, with two buses each, and usually very few woman vets join them, said Kistner. The grant from the Women's Fund will pay about half the cost of an all-women's trip this November, with a single bus, she said.

"We're going to do a couple of things that only apply to women," said Kistner, who is herself a veteran and plans to make the trip as a volunteer. Those special activities will include a stop at the Military Women's Memorial, where woman vets can become

part of history, contributing stories about their service to an interactive database.

"Due to the age of some of the veterans, they might not be technologically savvy. This will be a dedicated time when we can help them put in their information," Kistner said. "I plan to put my information in at that time, too. And I'll be interested to see how it feels with all women on the trip."