

# 2024

# it takes a collective



**QUEER  
SPACE  
collective**  
Annual Report



**Dear QUEERSPACE Community,**

In 2024, we took a bold and beautiful step forward, together. On November 12, just days after the U.S. presidential election, we opened the doors to the QUEERSPACE Youth Center – Minnesota's newest home for 2SLGBTQIA+ youth. At a time when the current administration is targeting Queer and Trans youth with harmful rhetoric and policies, we stood united to create a space that affirms, protects, and celebrates them.

This center is more than a building. It's a promise: that here, Queer youth will find community, mentors, and resources to help them grow into their authentic selves with pride and purpose. It's a place where laughter echoes, friendships are born over shared meals and creative workshops, and every young person who walks through our doors knows: you belong here.

We know the challenges are real. Across the country, Queer and Trans youth are facing an unprecedented wave of hostility. But we know the power of community. The power of showing up for each other. The power of the collective. This past year, our volunteers, donors, partners, and advocates showed up in extraordinary ways. You gave your time, your resources, and your hearts to make the Youth Center a reality. You reminded our youth that they are never alone.

As we reflect on the journey from dream to grand opening, I am filled with gratitude. The vision of a permanent, affirming space for Queer and Trans youth in the Twin Cities has been years in the making, and it happened because you believed in it. Together, we built a space where generations of Queer youth will find joy, safety, and the freedom to imagine their future.

Looking ahead, we know the work continues. There will be challenges to meet and voices to amplify. And there will also be moments of joy, resilience, and hope. As long as we do this work together, I believe we can create a world where every 2SLGBTQIA+ young person feels safe, celebrated, and empowered to thrive.

Thank you for being part of this movement, for being part of this collective, and for helping us create a beautiful space where Queer and Trans youth can dream without limits.

In gratitude,



**NICKI  
HANGSLEBEN**

(they/she)  
Executive Director



**CASEY  
NICHOLS**

(he/him)  
Board Chair

## 2024 BOARD OF DIRECTORS

ALEX CHRISTIAN (she/her)  
ANGIE TUFTS (she/her)  
AUSTIN CROSSMAN (he/they)  
BENJAMIN RUE (he/him)  
CASEY NICHOLS (he/him), Board Chair  
DEE SENARATNA (she/her), Board Vice Chair

JULIA O'BRIEN (she/her), Development Chair  
KATIE MILLER (she/her)  
KEISHA POWELL (she/her)  
LAREESA HOOPER (she/her)  
NIK KATOPODIS (he/him)  
SUE KATZENBERGER (she/her), Board Treasurer



# 2024 AT A GLANCE

SUPPORTED

2,300+ YOUTH

SUPPORTED

150+ FAMILIES



## WHAT GUIDES OUR WORK

**Our mission** is to create space for 2SLGBTQIA+ youth to feel safe and empowered to be their true selves.

**Our vision** is for all 2SLGBTQIA+ youth to have a network of support to help them develop a strong sense of pride in who they are, where they come from, and where they want to go.

### Our values:

- QUEERSPACE collective is committed to being authentic in who we are, what we do and how we show up for 2SLGBTQIA+ youth.
- Youth voice and youth choice guide QUEERSPACE hangouts programming.
- We partner collaboratively with people and organizations to optimize our impact and strengthen the broader 2SLGBTQIA+ community.
- We prioritize the reduction of barriers to increase access for our diverse 2SLGBTQIA+ communities.
- We are committed to being innovative and adaptive to best meet the needs of the 2SLGBTQIA+ youth we serve.
- We strive to create inclusive spaces, recognize intersectional identities and celebrate diversity.
- We understand 2SLGBTQIA+ inclusivity is a learning journey.





# CREATING THE QS YOUTH CENTER

Thanks to supporters like you, QUEERSPACE collective **reached our Create The Space Campaign goal of \$650,000** to open Minnesota's newest 2SLGBTQIA+ Youth Center in the heart of Minneapolis! Launched in early 2024, the campaign funded the buildout, furnishing, and first year of operations to lay a sustainable foundation for the future.

A physical space means program expansion, deeper impact, and greater reach. Together, we created a beacon of hope and belonging for generations to come.

## FROM BLUEPRINTS...

From scouting spaces to securing funding to assembling furniture, this journey has been one of transformation, resilience, and joy.



This milestone took so many hands, hearts, and minds to achieve. To everyone who donated, cheered us on, or answered one of our many emails or calls - THANK YOU.

## ...TO BUILD-OUT

What began as an ambitious dream - to create a dedicated space for 2SLGBTQIA+ youth in the Twin Cities - has now become a reality.

---  
**QS Youth Center**  
**702 W Franklin Ave**  
**Minneapolis, MN 55403**





# WHY THIS SPACE MATTERS

Across the country, 2SLGBTQIA+ youth face immense challenges. A staggering 85% of 2SLGBTQIA+ youth experience harassment at school, and The Trevor Project estimates that more than 1.8 million 2SLGBTQIA+ youth ages 13-24 seriously consider suicide each year in the U.S. – and at least one attempts suicide every 45 seconds.

With your help, the QUEERSPACE Youth Center opened on November 12, 2024 for all 2SLGBTQIA+ youth to come and feel safe, seen, and supported. This center has already become a safe,

**10** YOUTH CENTER HANGOUTS

**100+** YOUTH ATTENDED

inclusive space for youth to find community, mentorship, and resources – helping them build pride in who they are, where they come from, and where they want to go!

Watch our grand opening ceremony video here!



76% of participants shared meeting other Queer youth was their motivation for coming to the QUEERSPACE Youth Center.

QUEERSPACE  
youth center





Through affirming hangouts and hands-on workshops, 2SLGBTQIA+ youth build confidence, community, and pride – all while exploring new skills. In collaboration with community partners and volunteers, QUEERSPACE hangouts uses a group mentoring model where Queer youth regularly connect with Queer adults and staff in safe, welcoming spaces. Because we know, it takes a collective to raise a generation of thriving 2SLGBTQIA+ youth.



## 10 ST. CLOUD Q-CONNECTS

In an area where affirming spaces and resources can be scarce Youth QueerConnect has become a steady after-school anchor for 2SLGBTQIA+ youth in the St. Cloud area.

In partnership with St. Cloud Pride and Great River Regional Library, these monthly drop-in hangouts offer a welcoming space for Queer teens to show up as their full selves, make friends, and build community through group activities like crafting, board games, and more.



## CONNECTING QUEER YOUTH IN ST. CLOUD

## FORGING NEW PATHS AND TOOLS WITH IAMA



In partnership with Industrial Arts Mentorship for All, youth in our blacksmithing workshop completed an 8-week course on the fundamentals of blacksmithing, learning traditional techniques from seasoned artisans. These hands-on sessions sparked endless creativity as they transformed raw iron into hooks, bowls, artwork, and even a hiking stick.

8

YOUTH WORKSHOPS

10+

COMMUNITY & PARTNER EVENTS



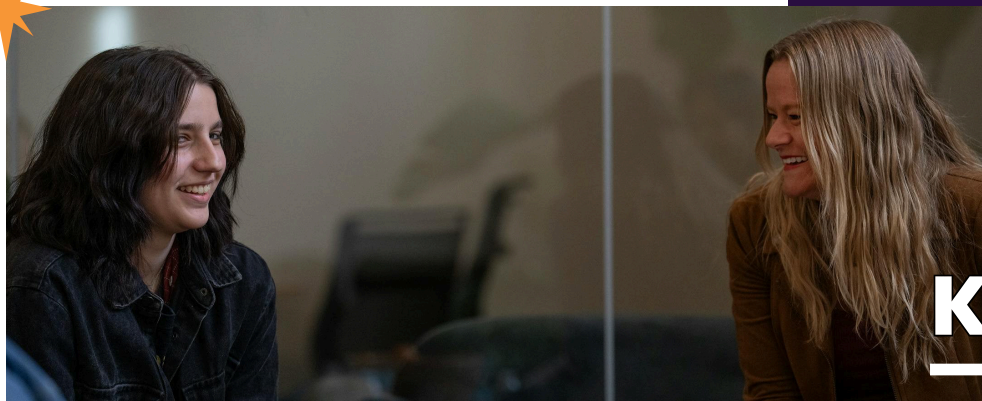
## SPINNING BEATS WITH DJ BLOWTORCH

The coolest collab to drop: we teamed up with local legend Shannon Blowtorch – a DJ with nearly 30 years in the live music scene – to host a 6-week DJ workshop in the Twin Cities.

Youth learned the craft and business of DJing, from reading a crowd to discovering their own style and sound. The grand finale? A community dance party where participants took to the stage and spun an electrifying playlist that was 100% them.







## JOURNEY OF A MATCH: Kate & Luca

QUEERSPACE collective was founded on a simple but radical belief: we all have the right to show up as our authentic selves. While there are more than 5,000 mentorship programs across the U.S., less than ten are specifically dedicated to 2SLGBTQIA+ youth. In 2021, QUEERSPACE launched one of the first of its kind – a mentorship program created by and for Queer youth.

Luca and Kate were one of our very first mentorship matches. When they met three years ago, Luca was still exploring his gender identity and went by a different name. Kate became one of the first people he trusted enough to say aloud that he believed he was Transgender.

He worried about telling his parents, concerned it would burden or upset them. But it was in part due to Kate's steady presence and support that, as an eighth grader, Luca found the courage to come out to his family.

Now older, Luca says he loves being part of QUEERSPACE, a place where he can exist

without judgment. Having someone like Kate, who's not a parent, teacher, therapist, or peer, has been life-changing. It's a relationship rooted in mutual trust and affirmation.

“

We're able to have a lot of fun and joke around, but also have deep conversations, he said. Having advice from someone who's lived longer than me is really important. After our hangouts, I've thought, 'Yeah, that's helpful. I'm going to use that.'

— LUCA

”

Read their full story featured in The Star Tribune here!





Through our Training Institute, QUEERSPACE collective offers expert-led training and consulting rooted in real-world experience working with 2SLGBTQIA+ youth and community. We partner with nonprofits, schools, and corporations to help them align their practices and policies with their values - because creating effective change starts with transforming systems.



**12,500**

**INDIVIDUALS TRAINED**

**25**

**ORGANIZATIONS SUPPORTED**



## TRAINING SPOTLIGHT:

**Creating Inclusive 2SLGBTQIA+ Youth Spaces**



Our most requested training gives participants the tools to create welcoming, affirming environments where Queer and Trans youth can thrive. Tailored to each organization, together we explore key 2SLGBTQIA+ terms, talk about gender diversity and the importance of pronouns, and share age-appropriate ways to talk with young people about gender and sexuality. We offer real-world tips for making physical spaces more inclusive, all while cultivating honest conversations and shared learning.

## THANK YOU TO OUR 2024 CLIENTS:

Alexandra House  
Andersen Corporation  
Banyan Community Youth Development Center  
Beyond Walls Twin Cities  
Big Brothers Big Sisters Twin Cities  
Carlson Family Foundation  
Coloplast US  
Gillette Children's Hospital

Guardian ad Litem Board  
The Human Rights Campaign  
Land O'Lakes  
LifeWorks  
MAVA Leadership Conference  
National Mentoring Summit  
Minnesota Alliance with Youth  
Minnesota Swimming Inc  
MN ToP / Sprockets

Patrol MN  
Planned Parenthood  
Safe Zone  
St. Paul Neighborhood Network  
Teach for America  
The Arc  
YMCA Camp St. Croix  
YIPA

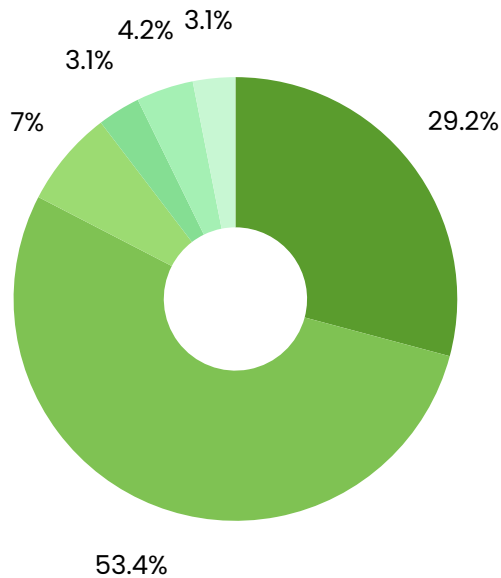
QUEERSPACE  
training institute



# 2024 FINANCIALS

## REVENUE

**\$1,244,141**



■ Individuals ■ Foundations ■ Corporations  
■ Government ■ In-Kind ■ Other

Individuals \$362,684

Foundations/Grants \$664,925

Corporations \$87,439

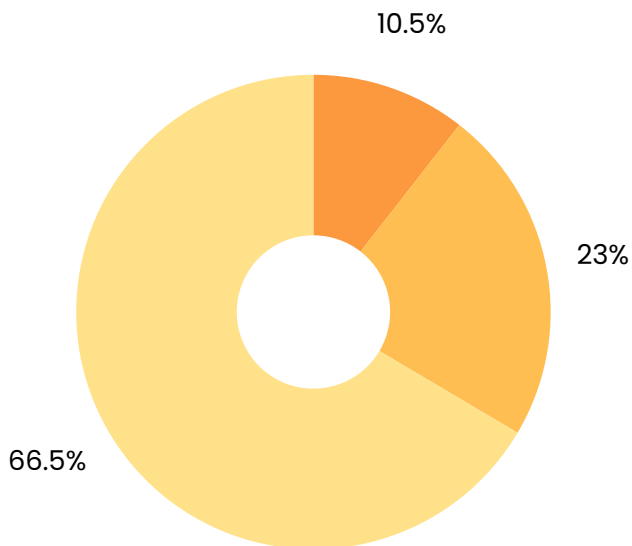
Government \$38,804

In-Kind \$51,862

Other \$38,425

## EXPENSES

**\$1,168,977**



■ Administration ■ Fundraising  
■ Programming

Administration \$123,296

Fundraising \$268,378

Programming \$777,302

**Thank you to our tremendous  
community of supporters!**

**Your generosity makes our  
work possible.**





## 5 WAYS TO BE THAT ALLY FOR QUEER YOUTH



Volunteer



Book a training with us



Donate



Partner with us



Spread the word



## VISIT, CONNECT, AND FOLLOW US TO GET INVOLVED



[queerspacecollective.org](https://queerspacecollective.org)



[info@queerspacecollective.org](mailto:info@queerspacecollective.org)



QUEERSPACE collective  
1936 Lyndale Ave S #110  
Minneapolis, MN 55403



@queerspacecollective

Platinum  
Transparency  
2025

Candid.



Community Leadership Awards  
2022 Nonprofit of the Year