

BUILT FOR **BELONGING**

Queer and Trans youth deserve more than survival. They deserve spaces where they can laugh, connect, explore identity, and imagine a future filled with possibility. At QUEERSPACE collective, we're building more than safety. We're building belonging.



QUEERSPACE
collective

2025 ANNUAL REPORT

Dear QUEERSPACE Community,

Belonging isn't something we find. It's something we build.

Every day, we choose to create spaces where Queer and Trans youth are not simply safe, they are celebrated, connected, and free to discover who they are and who they want to become.

In 2025, that vision came to life as we launched programming at the QUEERSPACE Youth Center. What started as a bold idea has become a vibrant community where young people share meals, make art, celebrate milestones, build friendships, and experience something every young person deserves: the freedom to simply be themselves.

The past year reaffirmed what we have always believed: belonging is created through relationships, shared experiences, and communities that intentionally make room for every person to be seen and valued. At a time when Queer and Trans communities continue to face increasing attacks across our country, we responded by doing what we do best - we gathered, we listened, and we cared for one another. Together, we continued building a community rooted in dignity, belonging, and hope.

Our Youth Center also became a gathering place for families, caregivers, educators, and community members through Queer Dialogues and other events, creating space to navigate uncertainty, learn from one another, and remember that no one has to face these challenges alone.

Across every part of our organization, our impact continued to grow. We celebrated more than 100 mentor-mentee matches, expanded programming and partnerships across the Twin Cities metro and St. Cloud areas, strengthened our Training Institute, and reached more youth and families across Minnesota than ever before. Every milestone represents a young person who found connection, a mentor who chose to show up, a family that felt supported, and a community investing in a more affirming future.

As I reflect on this past year, I am struck by how much QUEERSPACE has grown; not simply as an organization, but as a community. We are becoming the place our community has long imagined and long deserved: a place where youth, families, mentors, educators, volunteers, and partners come together with a shared commitment to ensuring every Queer and Trans young person knows they belong.

As we look toward the future, our vision remains unchanged. We will continue expanding opportunities for connection, investing in the next generation of leaders, and creating communities where Queer and Trans youth can laugh, lead, create, dream, and imagine futures filled with possibility.

Because belonging isn't just what we believe in. It's what we're building together.

In gratitude,



**NICKI
HANGSLEBEN**

(they/she)
Founder & CEO

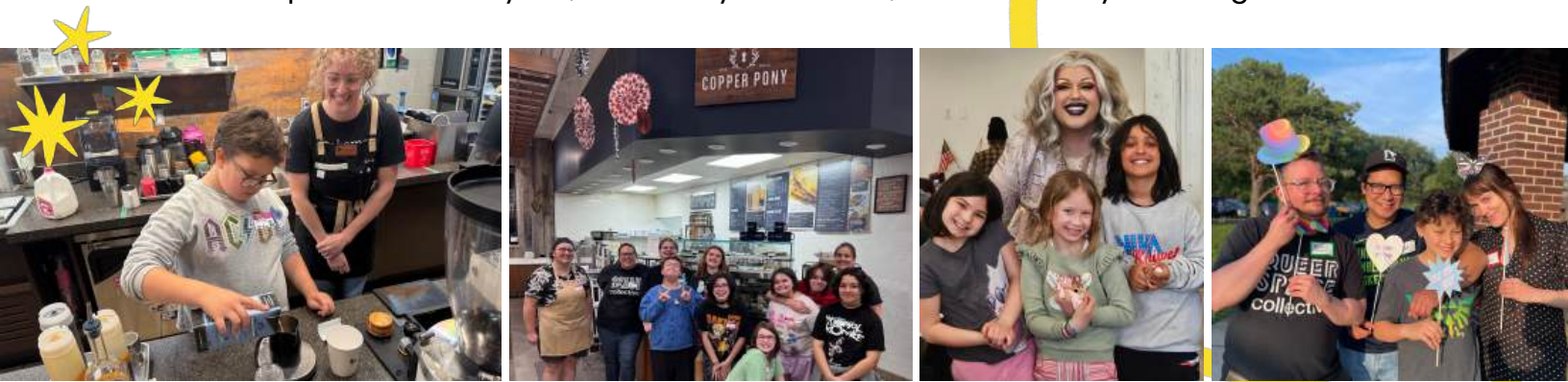


**KEISHA
POWELL**

(she/her)
Board Chair

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 GUIDING PRINCIPLES

OUR COMMITMENT TO ANTI-RACISM

At QUEERSPACE collective, we believe creating space for 2SLGBTQIA+ youth to feel safe, affirmed, and empowered means actively addressing racism and white supremacy culture within ourselves, our organization, and our communities.

We are committed to ongoing learning, reflection, accountability, and action that centers equity, authentic relationship building, and collective care.

WHAT THIS MEANS FOR US

- We reflect on how power and privilege show up in our work.
- We create space for brave and honest conversations.
- We continue learning, growing, and practicing accountability.
- We center transformational relationships, not transactional ones
- We work to interrupt harmful organizational patterns and inequities.
- We build equitable and transparent practices internally.
- We partner with communities and movements working toward justice.
- We remain committed to growth, reflection, and collective action.

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.

2025 AT A GLANCE

SUPPORTED **5,000** YOUTH
SUPPORTED **240** FAMILIES

ONE YEAR AT THE QS YOUTH CENTER

QUEERSPACE youth center

HOSTED **103** HANGOUTS

SUPPORTED **100+** YOUTH

60% OF YOUTH IDENTIFY
AS TRANS OR NON-BINARY

88% FEEL A STRONGER SENSE
OF COMMUNITY & BELONGING

When we opened the QS Youth Center in November 2024, we envisioned more than just a physical space. We imagined a home for 2SLGBTQIA+ youth and community. A place where laughter echoes off the walls, friendships take root, and caregivers, mentors, and allies can gather, find support, and build lasting connections.

We strive for the Youth Center to evolve alongside the needs of our community. Guided by feedback, we launched drop-in hours for youth ages 13–17, expanded to monthly Family Hangouts for youth under 12 and their caregivers, and later introduced drop-in hours for youth ages 18–24. Each new offering reflects our commitment to creating programs that are relevant, responsive, and rooted in community.

While we cannot control the forces shaping Queer and Trans lives beyond our doors, we can ensure that within these walls, young people are free to show up as their authentic selves.

Thanks to your support, the QS Youth Center has become a place of belonging, joy, and possibility — a space where brighter futures are built every day.



Watch this video to see
our QS Youth Center
programming in action!



MEET OUR

YOUTH LEADERSHIP COMMITTEE



2024-2025



2025-2026

When we opened the QS Youth Center, we intended this space to be for and led by youth. Which is why we created The QUEERSPACE Youth Leadership Committee (YLC). This is a paid opportunity for 2SLGBTQIA+ youth ages 13-17 to develop their leadership skills, connect with other Queer youth, and serve as advisors on our youth programming decisions.

Members commit to a school year and meet twice per month at the QS Youth Center. From leading youth center activities to providing feedback on our new QS Virtual Mentorship App, our YLC members have shaped our programming to be more relevant and impactful.

Each cohort also leads their own project initiatives with the goal of fostering belonging and empowerment for 2SLGBTQIA+ youth. Be sure to check out their Blast Off To Pride event below!

2024-2025: Jae, Milo, Phoenix, Reid

2025-2026: Evelyn, Graves, Mikey, Phoenix, Theo, Will

COMMUNITY PROGRAMMING

A physical space means greater reach and ability to respond to our community's needs. Check out some of the awesome events we've hosted at the QS Youth Center.

From annual celebrations to expert panel discussions, each one uplifts belonging, educates on relevant topics, and expands access to vital resources.

This work is collaborative, and we're grateful to partner with values-aligned organizations and strengthen community around 2SLGBTQIA+ young people.

10+

**COMMUNITY & PARTNER EVENTS
HOSTED IN 2025**



QUEER DIALOGUES

Our community conversation series featuring Q&A with guest speakers on critical subjects. Past topics included: Know Your Rights, Gender-Affirming Care, Trans Youth Mental Health.



IMN HISTORY MAKERS: PRIDE MONTH

We were honored to co-host with the State of Minnesota and Transforming Families the inaugural IMN History Makers event for Pride Month, a celebration of 2SLGBTQIA+ Minnesotans and their contributions.



ANNUAL SPIRIT DAY CELEBRATION

Our biggest event of the year! Spirit Day gathers our community and program participants, including youth, mentors, volunteers, and their families and friends for a day of fun and Queer joy.



BLAST OFF TO PRIDE

The YLC hosted a resource fair with 15+ organizations, providing 2SLGBTQIA+ youth and their families with free affirming resources, community, and plenty of Queer joy.

BUILDING COMMUNITY IN ST. CLOUD

In an area where affirming spaces and resources can be scarce, QUEERSPACE is helping build community for 2SLGBTQIA+ youth and families in St. Cloud. Thanks to our partnerships with St. Cloud Pride and local businesses, our Youth QueerConnect hangouts and Youth Workshops have become trusted spaces where young people make friends, explore new interests, and simply be themselves.

The impact extends beyond our youth programs. **Caregivers have found community, too.** What began as waiting to pick up their youth has grown into friendships and regular coffee meetups where caregivers connect, share resources, and support one another.

“ The Queer agenda is Queer kids getting to grow up and become adults.

— Jenna, QUEERSPACE parent ”

Jenna has watched her son, Cam, grow more confident through our programs and the Queer mentors he's met. Today, he can imagine a future for himself, whether that's running a coffee shop like Korppi or supporting the next generation of Queer youth. That's the power of community: when we create spaces where young people belong, we also strengthen the networks of care that help them thrive.



10

ST. CLOUD Q-CONNECTS
HOSTED IN 2025



2SLGBTQIA+ youth ages 13–17 participate in group workshops and connect with affirming peers and adults in safe, welcoming spaces while learning new skills.

ZINE AND BE SEEN!



In collaboration with the Minnesota Center for Book Arts and artist Bethany Rahn, youth and mentors enjoyed a 6-week workshop in the art of zine-making. Through collaging, crafting, and printing, youth turned their stories, identities, and interests into unapologetic art. Talk about a celebration of creative expression and young Queer voice!

“ I liked meeting new friends and being in a space where we can feel comfortable talking about being queer. ”
— Youth participant, age 15

10

YOUTH WORKSHOPS
HOSTED IN 2025

SPINNING CLAY WITH MUDLUK POTTERY

Getting our hands dirty in the best way possible! We teamed up with Mudluk Pottery to host a 4-week workshop in clay arts.

Youth and mentors learned foundational hand-building and wheel-throwing techniques, turning clay into meaningful (and functional!) works of art. Each session was filled with joy and curiosity, resulting in unique pieces that was 100% them.



QUEERSPACE
youth workshops



JOURNEY OF A MATCH:

Dana & Charlie

Every young person deserves someone who sees them, believes in them, and reminds them they're not alone. 2SLGBTQIA+ youth, especially, deserve more than safety and dire statistics. They deserve to be celebrated, empowered, and free to fully be themselves.

QUEERSPACE's 1:1 Mentorship Program pairs a 2SLGBTQIA+ youth (ages 13–17) with a 2SLGBTQIA+ adult (ages 25+) based on shared interests and youth voice. Together, they spend a year bonding, setting goals, and building pride in their identities.

For Dana and Charlie, that connection was immediate. Dana joined QUEERSPACE to give back after her own journey of exploring her Queer identity, while Charlie was simply hoping to meet more Queer people. What started with a few nerves quickly turned into a yearlong friendship built on authenticity, trust, and plenty of matcha runs and thrift store adventures (their favorite activity).

"I have come a long way with my identity, and Dana was a big part of my confidence increasing. Dana has helped make me feel safe and confident in expressing my identity." Charlie shared.

Dana says the impact has been mutual. "I've watched Charlie become more confident in his style and identity, and his authenticity encourages me to express myself as well. Overall, I believe this match has impacted us both for the better."

Mentorship is about showing up, listening, and reminding each other what's possible. Dana and Charlie's story is proof that when young people have affirming adults in their corner, both can grow together.

Inspired by their story? Sign up to become a mentor for a young person today!



QUEERSPACE

training institute

We offer training and consulting services to support schools, nonprofits, and companies better align their practices and policies with their values. Our diverse team of consultants tailor trainings based on each organization's needs and provide tools to create inclusive spaces, help people become better allies, and transform systems.

535

INDIVIDUALS TRAINED
IN 2025

20

ORGANIZATIONS SUPPORTED
IN 2025



TRAINING SPOTLIGHT

Intro to 2SLGBTQIA+ Identities

Our baseline training is designed to meet organizations where they are and make learning accessible. Each session is tailored to the unique needs of participants, covering foundational 2SLGBTQIA+ language and the nuances of identity, attraction, and expression.

More importantly, we create a welcoming, judgment-free space where people feel comfortable asking the "dumb" questions. We don't expect participants to leave knowing every term. Rather, we want them to leave more curious, more confident, and more comfortable engaging in conversations that help create affirming spaces for 2SLGBTQIA+ people.

As administrative staff, it will help me center and keep our clients and their identities in our conversation and process changes to ensure we are being inclusive.

— Client, Washburn Center For Children



THANK YOU TO OUR 2025 CLIENTS!

Alexandra House
Andrew Residence
Avenues for Youth
Centro Tyrone Guzman
Children First
Cook County Higher Education
Gillette Children's Hospital

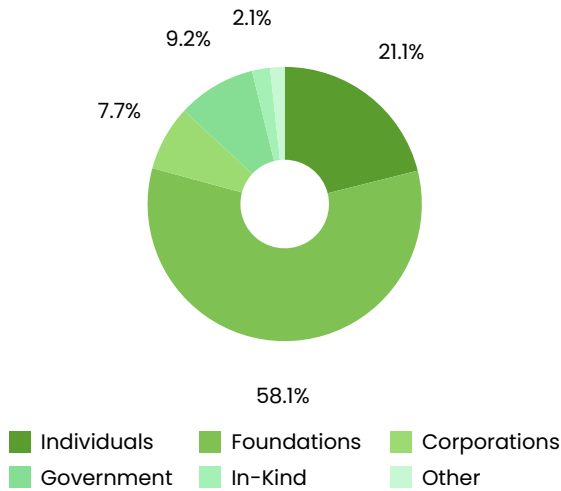
Hennepin County Library
Kitty Anderson Science Center
Change Inc.
LogicMonitor
Lutheran Social Services
Minneapolis College
Minnesota Alliance for Youth

National Association of Social
Workers - Minnesota
National MENTOR Summit
Roosevelt High School
Teach for America
Visit.org
Washburn Center for Children

2025 FINANCIALS

REVENUE

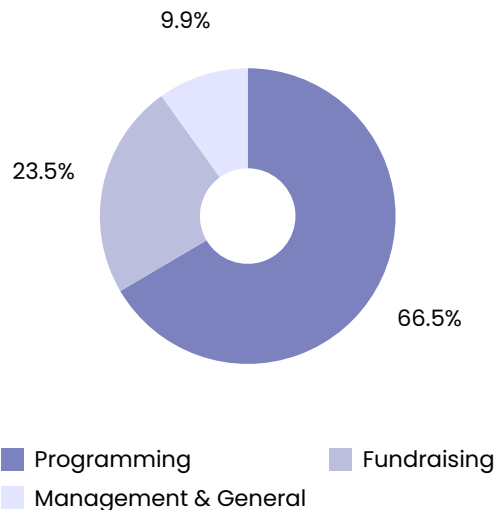
\$1,287,661



Individuals	\$271,495
Foundations/Grants	\$748,515
Corporations	\$99,124
Government	\$119,015
In-Kind	\$27,438
Other	\$22,075

EXPENSES

\$1,269,785



Programming	\$844,851
Fundraising	\$299,034
Management & General	\$125,900

Thank you to our incredible community of supporters!

Your generosity makes our work possible.

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5 WAYS TO BE THAT ALLY FOR QUEER YOUTH



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VISIT, CONNECT, AND FOLLOW US TO GET INVOLVED



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Community Leadership Awards
2022 Nonprofit of the Year



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