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Media Contact:

Jaime Alvarez (she/her)
Vice President of Marketing & Communications
Girl Scouts of NYPENN Pathways
315.263.5957 mobile
jalvarez@gsnypenn.org

**Beyond Celebrates Inaugural Changemaker Honorees
For Championing LGBTQ+ Youth**



Emery Grant, Beyond Program Director, speaks at a private reception honoring program supporters and inaugural Beyond Changemaker Award honorees

SYRACUSE, N.Y. (June 3, 2025) — [Beyond](#), dedicated to advancing the health, success and well-being of LGBTQ+ youth and their families, recognized four standout supporters with its inaugural Beyond Changemaker Award during a private reception at the Rosamond Gifford Zoo in Syracuse last month. The event coincided with Friends of the Zoo's annual LGBTQ+ Family Day of Visibility, which Beyond proudly sponsored.

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First-ever Beyond Changemaker Award honorees are Friends of the Rosamond Gifford Zoo, Excellus BlueCross BlueShield, Zoe Learner Ponterio (Cornell University) and Anne Montreal (philanthropist).

“Our Beyond Changemakers are helping us build a world where LGBTQ+ youth are celebrated, affirmed and empowered,” says Beyond Program Director Emery Grant. “We profoundly appreciate their support as we reflect on May’s Day of Visibility and further honor and uplift LGBTQ+ voices during Pride Month.”

Beyond, powered by the [Girl Scouts of NYPENN Pathways \(GSNYPENN\) Council](#), provides affirming, community-based programming for LGBTQ+ youth ages 12–17 and their families. Offerings include monthly meetups, mentorship and a signature summer experience—Camp Beyond Binary—a weeklong sleepaway camp to support identity, belonging and well-being.



Friends of the Rosamond Gifford Zoo was recognized for its long-standing commitment to inclusion and education. From hosting Beyond programs at the zoo to traveling to offer conservation education programming for Beyond’s offsite events and providing LGBTQ+ affirming staff as role models, the Friends have been instrumental in helping Beyond create safe, welcoming spaces across Central New York. *(Accepted by (L-R) Kim Arnold, Director of Education and Carrie Large, Executive Director)*



Excellus BlueCross BlueShield received honors for its overall support of Beyond, including a recent \$5,000 Health Equity Innovation Award to directly fund financial aid for LGBTQ+ youth to attend Camp Beyond Binary this summer. Excellus’s funding will help LGBTQ+ teens access a life-changing, affirming summer camp experience and address health disparities within the community while affording all families access to Beyond programming through reduced cost barriers. *(Accepted by Robyn Smith, Senior Community Investments & Partnerships Lead, CNY Region)*



Zoe Learner Ponterio, manager of the Spacecraft Planetary Image Facility at Cornell University and a longtime Beyond advocate, has led science workshops at Camp Beyond Binary since 2022 and continues to open doors to STEM visibility through special programming and outreach, including a recent panel at Cornell focused on LGBTQ+ voices in NASA and space science. She returns to camp this summer to lead workshops in the Solar STEM Lab located at GSNYPENN's Camp Amahami in Deposit, N.Y.

Anne Montreal alongside her wife Michelle Horton has been a philanthropic force for LGBTQ+ youth to access affirming spaces through Camp Beyond Binary. After funding a single campership in 2024, the couple has pledged an annual gift to help support multiple scholarships for LGBTQ+ teens from underserved communities to attend Camp Beyond. Their generosity also inspired Beyond to launch a broader campership campaign to engage additional donors. *(Not pictured, to be presented and accepted at a later date)*

For more information on Beyond, Camp Beyond Binary or to support Beyond programming and its work in the LGBTQ+ youth space, visit BeyondBinary.org. Community members are encouraged to stop by Beyond's table at Syracuse Mets' 10th annual Pride Night at NBT Bank Stadium this Thursday, June 5, to learn more and meet program staff and participants.

(All photos and graphics courtesy of Beyond: Powered by Girl Scouts of NYPENN Pathways)

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About Beyond

Our Mission: Beyond strives to create spaces that support the health, success and overall well-being of LGBTQ+ youth and their families, in which all LGBTQ+ youth may thrive.

Our Vision: We envision a world where every LGBTQ+ youth recognizes their limitless potential, feels celebrated for who they are, and draws strength from a community that understands and supports them.

Beyond Contact:

Emery Grant (he/him), Program Director, egrant@gsnypenn.org