



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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The GLO Center Launches Regional Initiative to Strengthen LGBTQ+ Community Connection Across Southwest Missouri

For 30 years, The GLO Center has worked to create a more welcoming and inclusive community for LGBTQ+ people in Springfield and the Ozarks. As we close out another Pride Month, we're taking a huge step toward realizing that vision.

We are incredibly honored to announce that The GLO Center has been awarded \$483,238 over three years from Missouri Foundation for Health to strengthen LGBTQ+ community connection, develop local leadership, and support grassroots efforts across southwest Missouri.

Across southwest Missouri, LGBTQ+ people are building community every day. They're organizing Pride events, starting support groups, creating safe spaces, and making sure their neighbors know they belong. Too often, they're doing this work with little support, few resources, and in communities where isolation remains one of the greatest barriers to wellbeing.

This initiative is built on a simple belief: communities are stronger when the people already doing the work have the support they need to succeed.

"For too long, LGBTQ+ people in many rural communities have been expected to leave home to find support, community, or opportunity," said Aaron Kitchens, Executive Director of The GLO Center. "We believe every person deserves to feel like they belong where they live, and this investment allows us to strengthen the incredible work already happening across southwest Missouri."

Over the next three years, The GLO Center will build a regional network of care and connection across 20 counties in southwest Missouri. We'll invest in local leaders,



strengthen grassroots organizations, support new and existing Pride efforts, provide capacity building support, and help create more opportunities for LGBTQ+ people to connect, belong, and thrive in their own hometowns.

"Every community is different, which is why this work starts with listening," said Emilia Stauffer, Program Director of The GLO Center. "By partnering with local leaders and organizations, we can build on the strengths that already exist and help ensure LGBTQ+ people have meaningful support wherever they live."

We are deeply grateful to the Foundation for believing in this vision and investing in the health of LGBTQ+ Missourians. We are equally grateful to the volunteers, advocates, community partners, and local leaders whose work inspired this initiative and demonstrated what is possible when communities come together.

Over the coming months, we'll share more about what this initiative means, introduce new opportunities to get involved, and begin building this next chapter together.

The future is bright, and we're excited to build it alongside all of you. To sign up to get involved or learn more about this initiative, go to glocenter.org/community-connections.

ABOUT THE GLO CENTER

The GLO Center is a nonprofit organization serving the LGBTQIA+ community in Springfield and the Ozarks through support, resources, education, and advocacy. Founded in 1996, The GLO Center works to create a more inclusive and welcoming community where all can thrive. Through community programs, connection opportunities, volunteer engagement, and partnerships across the region, GLO provides affirming spaces and resources for LGBTQIA+ people, families, allies, and community members throughout the Ozarks.

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