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**The 2024 Annual Report is Here!**1 message

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## CHOOSING OUR ROOTS

Safely Housing Queer Youth



### A Letter From The Co-Directors

Happy New Year Friends,

2024 one heck of a roller coaster ride full of getting back to our roots: community. We were given opportunities to build so many amazing community connections, and we were constantly blown away by the way many of you helped uplift our organization and even raised money [on our behalf](#). Through our community meals, gatherings, and learning events, we were able to enrich the lives of LGBTQIA2S+ youth and young adults, creating affirming spaces and healthy connections. We couldn't have made that happen without our many volunteers and dedicated board members, who showed up to table, march, celebrate, learn, flip burgers, help with SafeRoot Anchorage repairs, and gather. All of you have had such an amazing impact on those we serve, but also on the spirit and soul of our small and dedicated team. Your generosity, care, and engagement made 2024 the year of one single word: *community*.

**And through our community, we got to make some great things happen:**

This year, we hosted **three** community meals, **five** learning events, and **four** community gatherings thanks to funding from Alaska Children's Trust and our life-saving donors.

We had the honor of being the nonprofit partner for the 14th season of Arctic Entries.

This summer, Rasmuson awarded us essential starter funding to repair the roof of SafeRoot Anchorage, and our amazing donors helped raise nearly \$3,000.

This fall brought us the joy of sustainable funding to expand our work in the MatSu Valley through our steadfast community partner, Mat-Su Health Foundation. This expansion will allow us to grow our host home program in the central-MatSu Valley, bring on two new full-time staff, and provide crucial support for the youth and hosts we serve. We'll be sharing more information very soon!

And our amazing, inspiring, life-saving, majestic, authentic, affirming, fantastic, and really **rad** donors helped us raise nearly **\$200,000** this year. Money that went into filling the gaps, helping to cover needed repairs and utilities at SafeRoot, basic needs items like food and hygiene supplies, life skill development and community building events, and so much more.

And yes, with all this good news, we are also preparing ourselves for the hateful language and actions of persons who wish to legislate away our queer joy and expression. We are actively working behind the scenes to ensure our community will continue to have safe spaces, supportive environments, and access to life-saving services. We know that we live in an amazingly resilient, bold, and sacred community, and we believe that together, we **will** thrive.

During the past couple of months, so many of you have reached out and asked how you can help through volunteering, donations, or board involvement. You have reached out and shown up, and your love is palpable. We are so honored to be doing this work alongside you.

**You** inspire us.  
Each of you.

The many gifts that you bring in the fight for queer joy are profound and worthy. Thank you for making 2024 so special for us and the LGBTQIA2S+ youth and young adults that we serve.

You are loved and important.

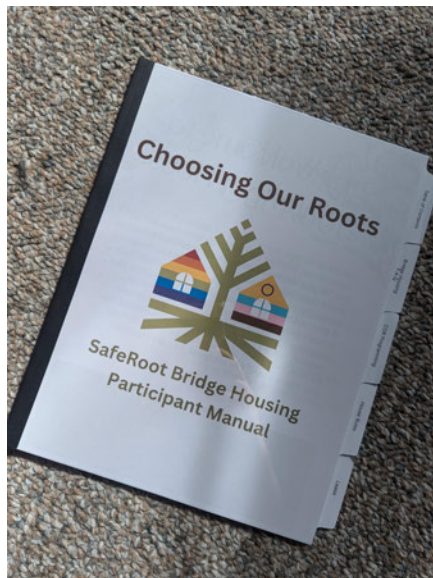
With Hearts Full of Queer Joy,

*Chami Krueger & Laura Reijns*  
Co-Executive Directors

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## Breaking Down Our Impact

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**Anchorage:** 13 youth and young adults received housing support and case management.

- 8 young adults were successfully discharged and moved on to permanent housing.
- 2 youth remain hosted.
- 3 young adults enrolled in SafeRoot Anchorage, with 1 moving on to permanent housing and 2 remaining into 2025.

**MatSu:** 18 youth and young adults received housing support and case management.

- 16 young adults were successfully discharged and move on to permanent housing.
- 2 youth remain hosted.

**Kenai Peninsula (ended June 2024):** 7 youth and young adults received housing support until services ended in June of 2024.

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**Also in 2024:**

- We bought over **\$30,000 worth of groceries** for Participants, Hosts, and our community.
- We led **5** life skills trainings, **4** community events, **3** volunteer work days, and **3** community meals.
- We marched at Anchorage Pride, flipped burgers at Rainbow Run, volunteered at The 6th Annual Writer's Block Block Party, helped hand out cocoa at the Fairview Community Fair, walked in the Anchorage Out of Darkness Walk, danced out elder-queer tails off at the 3rd HallowQueer Carnival, started our community art project with Stand Up Alaska, and so much more.

We'll be sharing more about how YOUR impact, donations, and support made a difference in 2024 on our social media pages (Facebook [here](#) and Instagram [here](#)) over the rest of January. THANK YOU for helping to make 2024 a year full of togetherness, community building, and queer joy.

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## Looking Ahead to 2025

We thrilled and humbled to have been awarded a multi-year grant with Mat-Su Health Foundation that will allow us to expand our Host Home Program in the central-MatSu Valley. We're welcoming two new staff in January and February and looking ahead to what 2025 brings in our new blog post from Chami, Co-Director of Programming...

Looking Ahead to 2025

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## Staff Intro and Celebration of Success

***Community, join us in welcoming Angel (they/them), Choosing Our Roots graduate and our new Host Home Liaison!***

My name is Angel Mendoza-Diaz, and I'm excited to serve as the new Host Home Liaison!

Before joining this incredible team, my partner and I faced a period of home instability that taught me how crucial it is to have a safe, supportive space. I've experienced firsthand the challenges that come with not knowing where you'll lay your head, and I know how important it is to have people who care.

When I became a participant in COR, I saw how transformative the right support system can be and how important stability can be to your life. The support and resources COR provided gave me and my partner the ability to set roots down and feel confident in our future. I am incredibly grateful to COR for helping us become the best versions of ourselves and changing our trajectory towards better and brighter things.

I'm looking forward to paying that help forward working with all of you!!

-Angel Mendoza-Diaz



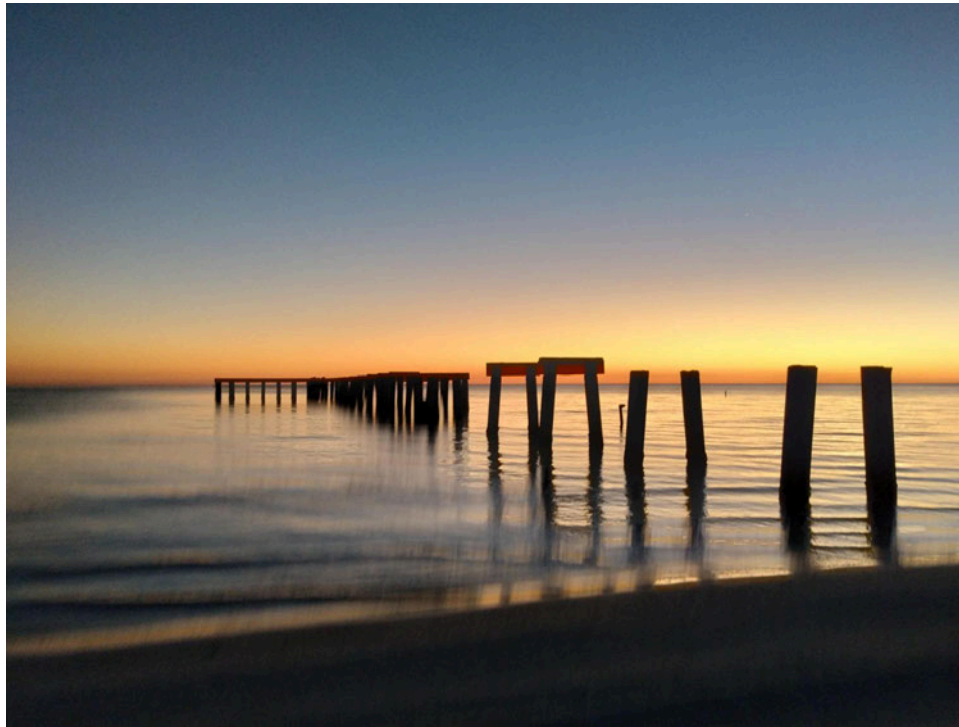


Photo Angel shared from his work with FEMA in Fort Myers Beach "This means a bit to me as it was taken on the last day before I came back home to Alaska for the last time and symbolizes the closing of one chapter and starting of a new one."

## Thank you for donating! We are so honored to be doing this work with you.

Jack Aaron ,Jarin Antill, James Arend, Jeanne Ashcraft, Kristofer Auza, Paula Banks, Sheila Bannigan, Erinn Barnett, Julie Bass, Melody Bechberger, Peterson Berg, Ariel Berg, Tom Bergeron, Julie Bevins, Bonnie Bladow, Melanie Bladow, Johnny Blazes & Brenda Higgins, Colby Bleicher & Jackson McKinney, Connor Bowlus, Aviva Braun, Mary Bristol, David Brown, Ann Bryson, Annmarie Buckley, Annelise Burgess, Jeffrey Burka, Lawrence Buskirk, Stephanie Cabiness, Maria Capezio Crookes, Melissa Capone, Arthur & Marilyn Carpenter, Dauglas Causey, David Cheese, Angela Choi, Bret Clark, David Clark, Amity Condie, June DeSalvio, Veri di Suverio, Rebecca Downey Thomas, Skyler Dupont, Elizabeth Edinger, Peek Ehlinger, Kelly Elder, Elizabeth Ellis-Steinberg, Jenn Eskridge & David Crows, Chelsea Fields, Annette Fields, Sean Fitzpatrick, Dawn Fitzpatrick, Donna Flannigan, Catherine Flint, Pride Foundation, Janel Gagnon, Alice Bausch, Nora Pecan, Adryan Glasgow, Karen Goodman, Adram Goodstein, Marah Gotsik, Jessica Grahm, William Gray, Lindsey Hajduk & Jedediah Smith, Robert Hancock, Andrew Harnish, Carrie & Bradley Harris, Natalie Harris, Josh Hemsath, Sheri Heritage, Laura Herman, Chris Heuple, Bree Hitchcock, Nicole Horrell, Heather Hoyt, Dan Hull, Karla Huntington, Cheryl Imbriani, Jen Jarvis, Piri Jenkins, Kayse Jensen, Alex Johnson, Molly Johnson, Ellen Johnson-Price, Joseph Josephson, Andrew Josephson, Amanda Kelley, Pat & Kathy Kelly, James Kempner, Laura Killian, Chami Krueger, Cee Jay Levine, Lori Lober, Karen Lonarda, Cristy Lonardo, Robin Lutz, Tim Lyndon, Ray Macfarlane, Leslie MacPherson, Madalene Mandap, Anthony Markusson, Christine Marrese, Hope McGratty & Tyler Jones, Katie McKay Bryson, Rachael McPherson, Mill & Kim McWatters, Donna Mears, Cat Meier, Allison Mendel, Amanda Merchant, Meg Mielke, David Milburn, Eric & Brigitte Miller, Jean Mitchell, Morah Model, Robin Moffett, Tom Monreal, Chrstina Moore, Dustin Morris, Jody Muse, David Musgrave, Julie & Patrick Myles, Serena Nesteby, Barbara Nock, Jim & Kathy Nolan, Charles Norton, Stephanie O'Donnell, Adrienne Oakley, The Alaska Conference of the United Methodist Church, Laura Ojeda, Brian & Laurie Olson, Susan Orlansky & Jim Bouchard, Marissa Palmer, Marilyn Parker, Kaia Pearson, Melissa Pelcynski, Deborah Penyak, Bill Penyak, Jill Perkins, Aria Phillips, Charal Pochapin, Sasha Prewitt, Matthew Putnam, Aimee Rathbun, Tara Rayner, Laura & Nico Reijns, Nicole Riordan-Randall, Al Rostholder-Harris, Phyllis Rude, Daisy Saffir, Sarah Samson, Stacey Saunders, Taylor Schwartz, Wild Scoops, Criss Shannon, Caitlin Shortell, Cherie Shue, Kenna Simmons, Susan Smart, Kylee Smith, Lauren Southerland, Rebecca Stenson, Rhona Stewart, Christin Swearingen, Sarah Switzer, Anne Tavella, Sydney Tarzwell, Ekaterina Terekhova, Chris Terry, Jamez & Julia Terry, Cherry Thomas, Elizabeth & John Ungerleider, Ezra Vandevort, Tatum Waalkes, Paul Wackrow, Emily Weiser, Sarah Welton, Michelle Whaley & Karl Wilhelmi, Davide Wieland, David Willams, Kathleen Williams, Melissa Woford, Laurie Wolf, Sally Wolfe, Wendy Woolf, Sydney Zuyus, That Feeling Co., Turnagain UMC, ACLU of Alaska, Municipality of Anchorage, Fashion Pact, St. John UMC, MAC Federal Credit Union, South Restaurant, Dos Manos, The Kroger Co., The Northstar Empire of Imperial Courts, Grassroots, Rooted by Ria, Davis, Wright, & Tremaine, Organic Oasis, Chugach Mountain Roasters, Blue Market AK, Market Juice, The Wrtiers Block, Spenard Joe's, MatSu Health Foundation, Arctic Entries, Amtgard of Alaska, Altman Rogers and Company, Rainbow Mirrors, Native Movement, Agnew Beck Consulting

The work we do is possible because of you!

## Ongoing Needs

There are many ways to support Choosing Our Roots, including helping us with everyday items. Because our focus is on housing, case management, and creating community, we have ongoing needs that make a huge difference in the lives of our participants. From move-in baskets to gift cards for gas, YOU can have a monumental impact. You can access our wish list [here](#).



Jamie holding some items donated from our wish list!



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## Love the Work we Do?



Love what we're doing and want to support us with a donation?

Your donations go directly into the services we provide across Alaska! Housing support, case management, host home establishment, bridge housing, AND SO MUCH MORE can benefit from your tax-deductable financial contribution!

Support Our Community

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## Our Board

Adam Lees - Board President  
Andrew Harnish - Vice President  
Melody Bechberger - Secretary  
Sheri Heritage - Treasurer  
Syd Tarzwell  
Torrey McClain  
Leah Zettler  
Robin Moffet  
Taylor Feightner  
Carrie Gruhn

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## Want to get Involved in Other Ways?

Do you have a story, creation, idea, or other *thing* that encapsulates Queer and Trans Joy that you want to share? We want to highlight you and share those beautiful moments with our community!

Find your joy. Capture it. Share it.

Submit Your Joy



**You are loved. You are important. You matter.**

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