



Contact: Tom Nobbe
tnobbe@GG9cle.com; 216.299.6164

Cleveland Foundation awards \$250,000 grant to the 2014 Gay Games

Partnership makes foundation top sponsor, creates legacy fund

CLEVELAND, Ohio (APRIL 10, 2013) – The Cleveland Foundation has awarded a \$250,000 grant to Gay Games 9, forming a partnership that makes the foundation the top sponsor of the Games. This is the first presenting sponsorship in the Games’ 31-year history.

“We are thrilled the Cleveland Foundation has stepped up with such a significant and public show of support for the 2014 Gay Games,” said Gay Games Co-chair Hollie Ksiezyk.

“The Cleveland Foundation is proud to be the presenting sponsor. It provides us the opportunity to express our strong support for social justice and equality for the LGBT community,” said Ronald B. Richard, president and chief executive officer of the Cleveland Foundation. “The foundation was impressed with the broad community support for the Games from the very beginning when Cleveland won over the bigger competing cities of Boston and Washington, D.C.”

Steve Sokany, co-chair of the 2014 Gay Games, said that overwhelming community-wide support that led the Federation of Gay Games to select Cleveland over cities with larger LGBT communities now has another added dimension of support. “This new partnership reinforces to the world that the Cleveland+Akron community is coming together to make the Games a success. It’s a new model for the Gay Games and it’s making history in America’s heartland.”

The \$250,000 top-level sponsorship means the Games’ official name will be the “2014 Gay Games presented by the Cleveland Foundation.” As a result of the partnership between the Cleveland Foundation and Gay Games 9, an LGBT field-of-interest fund is being established at the foundation. The fund will launch at the conclusion of the Games in August 2014.

“We are pleased that this fund will serve as a legacy to the Gay Games,” said Kaye Ridolfi, senior vice president of Advancement at the Cleveland Foundation. “We will be reaching out to the community in the upcoming months to get ideas on shaping the fund so it can best serve our region. “

Kurt Dahl, co-chair of the Federation of Gay Games, the sanctioning body of the Games, said this creation of a legacy component is something the federation had hoped would happen when they chose Cleveland+Akron as host. “The Gay Games is about so much more than a weeklong event every four



years. As Tom Waddell said when he founded the Games in 1982, they exist to be a vehicle of change. The Cleveland Foundation is helping make that vision a reality for Greater Cleveland.”

The Games is the largest international sports and culture festival in the world open to all adult participants. The Aug. 9-16, 2014 event is expected to attract 30,000 visitors, including 11,000 participants exhibiting or competing in more than 35 sports and cultural events. It’s anticipated that the Games will bring in \$58 million to Northeast Ohio.

“The Cleveland Foundation is honored to support an event important to Cleveland on so many levels,” said Robert E. Eckardt, executive vice president of the Cleveland Foundation. “Beyond its economic impact, it’s an event with a significant social impact for the region. The foundation’s hope is that the games will leave a legacy of a region more sensitive and welcoming to the LGBT community.”

To that end, Gay Games 9 is cultivating relationships with businesses and organizations that will strengthen Greater Cleveland’s ability to welcome and support the LGBT community, as well as fostering collaboration between the LGBT and non-LGBT communities through educational and cultural programming, volunteer opportunities, corporate sponsorships, and fundraising events.

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About Cleveland Foundation

Established in 1914, the Cleveland Foundation is the world's first community foundation and one of the largest today, with assets of \$1.86 billion and 2012 grants of \$91 million. Through the generosity of donors, the foundation improves the lives of Greater Clevelanders by building community endowment, addressing needs through grantmaking, and providing leadership on vital issues. The foundation tackles the community’s priority areas – economic transformation, public-school improvement, youth development, neighborhood revitalization, and arts advancement – and responds to the community’s needs. For more information on the Cleveland Foundation, please visit www.ClevelandFoundation.org.

About the Gay Games

The Gay Games are an international sporting and cultural event held every four years. Launched in 1982, the Games invite participation from all competitors regardless of sexual orientation, race, gender, religion, nationality, ethnic origin, political beliefs, athletic or artistic ability, age, physical challenge or health status. It is founded on the principles of Participation, Inclusion and Personal Best™.

The Games offer a safe environment for lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgendered participants. They are open to anyone 18 years or older. About 10 percent of participants are from outside the LGBT community.

Gay Games 9 presented by the Cleveland Foundation will be August 9-16, 2014, in venues around Cleveland and Akron, Ohio, in the United States. More than 35 sports and culture event competitions will be held, with more than 11,000 participants expected to join the medal race. For more information, visit www.gg9cle.com, www.facebook.com/gaygamescleveland or www.twitter.com/gg9cleveland.