

"It is my goal in life to someday be a therapist. My dream is to combine my love of the planet and outdoors with inner healing and trauma work. This fall, I will be going to school in the Pacific Northwest to pursue a degree in psychology and art. Understanding how nature and psychology intersect has always been of interest to me, the space that the outdoors gives for healing is immense and invaluable."

- Adelaide, 18, Hennepin County

Activity: used her grant to go on a 50-day wilderness trip in the Arctic

"My goal is to travel the world. I'd like to travel to see the culture and all ways of life, the poverty, the riches, and the middle class. I'd like to see the nature and what has been created on planet Earth before it is polluted and destroyed. As I travel the world, I hope to come up with a solution or a step in the right direction to save the world against pollution, war, and poverty."

- Addison, 14, St. Louis County

Activity: went on a week-long trip to Iceland

"I have always loved children's picture books! Even after graduating to more advanced reading, my favorite activity is to read picture books to my younger cousins. I love seeing their faces light up at each rhyme or colorful page. My dream is to write children's books with the hope that they will bring together young families just like they did mine!"

- Eve, 16, Koochiching County

Activity: participated in a week-long writing retreat

I am interested in space and science. I am interested in going to Mars even though it hasn't been accomplished yet. I would like to figure out how we could go. I am interested in learning about human health changes, how they survived, and how their health changes when they get to space and after being in space."

- Hazel, 9, Hennepin County

Activity: attended a week-long space camp

the courage ✨ of community

2026 Ann Bancroft Foundation Annual Celebration

April 23, 2026 ✨ 5-9PM

The Depot Minneapolis

Ann Bancroft ✨
FOUNDATION

2026 Annual Celebration Committee Co-Chair Letter

We are so grateful you are here with us tonight!

This year's celebration theme, The Courage of Community, holds special meaning. Across Minnesota, courage shows up in how we care for one another. It is reflected in the small, deliberate choices to listen, to stay present, and to stand together. And it lives in our schools, our neighborhoods, and around our kitchen tables, where families are holding each other a little tighter.

For the girls and gender-expansive youth the Ann Bancroft Foundation serves, courage begins with support: mentors who stay, families who nurture growth, and friends who speak up. When young people feel supported, courage takes shape — not as fearlessness, but as the willingness to try, to speak, to lead, and to imagine what's possible.

Your presence tonight fuels this work. Together, we are building a community that nurtures confidence, expands opportunity, and encourages young people to dream bigger.

Tonight's gathering is about creating more ways for Minnesota's girls and gender-expansive youth to share their gifts with the world. This is the power of community, and it is alive in this room tonight.

On behalf of our event committee, and the staff and Board of Directors of the Ann Bancroft Foundation, thank you for being part of this courageous and beautiful community.

Lee Vue & Sara Kilian,
Co-Chairs, 2026 Annual Celebration Event Committee

2026 Annual Celebration Schedule

5:00 pm RECEPTION

in The Conservatory & Great Northern

- Cocktails & Morsels
- Silent Auction
- Gift Card & Ticket Wall
- Step and Repeat Selfie Station
- Live Illustrations

6:35 pm UMN MARCHING BAND

6:45 pm PROGRAM BEGINS!

in Pavilion

Welcome from Sara Kilian & Micah Ngafua

6:50 pm DINNER BREAK

Silent Auction closes at 7:00 pm

7:15 pm PROGRAM RESUMES!

Grounding and DreamMaker Awardee Presentation
with Ann Bancroft & Dr. Annie Vogel Ciernia

- DreamMaker Fireside Chat
- Remarks from Ethelind B. Kaba

7:45 pm LIVE AUCTION

LaCora Bradford Kesti & Glen Fladeboe

8:05 pm FUND A DREAM

Trailblazer Spotlight - Ileini Hirt
Glen Fladeboe & Minnesota Roller Derby

8:25 pm GRATITUDE

Closing Remarks from Sarah Strehl & Lee Vue



Ann Bancroft, Founder

Ann is one of the world's preeminent polar explorers and an internationally recognized leader who is dedicated to inspiring women and girls around the world to unleash the power of their dreams. At the age of eight, Ann's first expedition was in the backyard orchard during

a subzero degree Minnesota winter. Many adventures later, by sharing her dreams and stories of outdoor adventure through her roles as an explorer, educator, speaker and philanthropist, Ann has helped inspire a global audience to pursue their individual dreams.

Ann's polar exploits created opportunities off the icecaps as well. In 2016, President Obama invited her to address scientists and educators from 25 nations for a unified response to climate change. Ann was one of Glamour Magazine's "Women of the Year" (2001), inducted into the National Women's Hall of Fame (1995), named Ms. Magazine's "Woman of the Year" (1987), and is honored in the Minnesota Historical Society's permanent exhibit, "MN-150" honoring 150 people, places, and things that have shaped Minnesota, along with gear from her historic expeditions.



LaCora Bradford Kesti, Board Secretary

LaCora Bradford Kesti serves as Vice President of Community Impact at the Women's Foundation of Minnesota. Hailing from Minneapolis, LaCora has over two decades of experience living, volunteering, and working in the Twin Cities metro area. She is a Northside Community

Member in the Camden-Lind Bohanon neighborhood. She graduated from the College of St. Scholastica and completed two years of AmeriCorps, fulfilling over 3,400 service hours for the betterment of her community. In June 2023, she accepted a role on the Ann Bancroft Foundation Board of Directors and is the current Secretary. She is also the Board Co-Chair for Hope Community, where she has served for six years.



Dr. Annie Vogel Ciernia, Ph.D.

Growing up in the small town of Ulen, Minnesota, Annie's school had limited resources. Her mother, Therese Vogel, encouraged her to apply for an Ann Bancroft Foundation grant. In 2002, at age 16, Annie attended the Summer Honors College at the University of Minnesota

with students interested in STEM from across Minnesota.

Today, Dr. Ciernia is an Assistant Professor at the University of British Columbia and currently the Tier 2 Canada Research Chair in Understanding Gene Expression in the Brain. Her lab is located at the University of British Columbia in Vancouver, Canada in the Department of Biochemistry and Molecular Biology and the Centre for Brain Health.

Dr. Ciernia's lab focuses on understanding how our genetics and environment influence regulation of gene expression in the brain across the lifespan. In particular, her team studies how early-life experiences shape interactions between the nervous and immune systems, leading to long-term changes in brain function and behavior.



Glen Fladeboe, Auctioneer

Glen Fladeboe, Principal Partner and Auctioneer of Fladeboe Advancement, attended the World Wide College of Auctioneering in Mason City, Iowa immediately after graduating high school and has been part of the Fladeboe family business ever since. With over 25 years

of experience as a professional auctioneer and fundraiser, he has been instrumental in building Fladeboe Advancement into a premier benefit auction and fundraising strategy consulting company. He credits the success of the business to his exceptional staff, time spent consulting with and getting to know clients, and a company philosophy that says, "if you focus on the mission of the organization, people will be inspired and support the cause."

Who's Who



Ethelind B. Kaba, Executive Director

Ethelind wears many hats with one purpose: to spark in others the same curiosity about advancing human equity, potential, and dignity that motivates her work and life. As Executive Director of the Ann Bancroft Foundation, Ethelind champions a world

in which all who identify as a girl have a chance to live their dream and reach their full potential. In 2014, Ethelind was named a Changemaker by MN Women's Press for founding The Stargirl Initiative, a nonprofit dedicated to empowering teen and tween girls. She has also been recognized by Twin Cities Business as one of the "100 Top People of 2024," and by Minneapolis/St. Paul Business Journal as one of "50 Black Leaders To Know." Ethelind serves on the Board of Regents at Augsburg University.



Micah Ngafua, ABF Grantee & Event Committee Member

Micah is passionate about connecting with people, squeezing the joy out of life, and creating lasting impact through intentional action. She recently earned her Marketing degree from the University of Northwestern-

St. Paul, where she was honored to serve as the 2025 commencement speaker. Micah's journey with the Ann Bancroft Foundation began in 2012 as a grant recipient supporting her passion for competitive dance. While competitive dancing for Micah today looks more like playing Just Dance with her girlfriends, she stays connected to the organization by participating in summits and events, bringing her enthusiasm for growth and connection to every opportunity.



Sara Kilian, Event Co-chair

Sara is the Vice President and General Counsel of Perforce Software, Inc. In her role, Sara is responsible for the legal and compliance functions of Perforce, as well as overseeing the corporate expansion and advising the executive team. With experience representing

organizations of all sizes in her prior private practice experience, Sara's background spans a broad spectrum of legal areas, such as mergers and acquisitions, corporate governance, and tax planning and compliance.

In her spare time, Sara is a volunteer with the Children's Law Center as a volunteer attorney advocating for children while they are part of the Minnesota foster care system. She also is an avid hockey player.



Sarah Strehl, Board Chair

Sarah Strehl is the chief human resource officer at ECMC Group, and has over 25 years' experience as a Human Resources professional. She leads with energy and inclusivity—creating an environment that inspires all individuals to thrive. Sarah is

particularly passionate about the development of female leaders, starting the organization's first women mentor program and co-sponsoring the Women Thriving employee resource group.

Married and the mother of four amazing and busy teenagers, Sarah loves travel, adventure, and finding time to advance her cooking skills. A Wisconsin native and graduate of the University of Wisconsin-Madison business school, she can be found on the weekends cheering on her Wisconsin Badgers and Green Bay Packers.



University of Minnesota Marching Band

As one of the most exciting and visible organizations on campus, the Minnesota Marching Band enthusiastically supports the University's athletic programs and represents the University of Minnesota with pride at home and away.

Membership in the marching band is open to all interested students. The current band includes students from over 100 different majors and every college at the University.



Lee Vue, Board Vice Chair, Event Co-chair

Lee Vue is a storyteller, communication strategist, nonprofit leader, and passionate advocate for social impact. Her drive comes from transformative experiences in youth leadership programs and outdoor adventures—whether paddling the entire Mississippi River or wandering the Canadian tundra. Her career spans startups, academic institutions, nonprofits, and consulting, all with a personal mission to transform systems for the better. When she's not crafting strategies for clients, you'll find her teaching BIPOC communities how to paddle and expanding access to the Boundary Waters Canoe Area. Above all, Lee is passionate about helping girls break through the barriers of circumstance and embrace the endless potential they hold.

community

passion

resilience

Live Auction Items



An Unrepeatable Private Dining Experience for 10 Guests

For the first—and only—time, Chef Ann Ahmed of Khâluna and Chef Joe Rolle of Dario come together to create an extraordinary, one-night-only dining experience for **10 guests**.

Hosted in Khâluna's private dining room, this exclusive evening will feature a multi-course tasting menu that blends the bold, vibrant flavors of Laos with the soul and craftsmanship of Italian cuisine. Each dish will be created in collaboration—thoughtfully, intentionally, and never to be repeated.

You and your guests will be the only people to ever experience this menu, this collaboration, and this moment in time.

Donated by:

Chef Ann Ahmed & Chef Joe Rolle

Value:

\$3,500

Bid boldly.
This is the one everyone will wish they had.



A Suite & A Power Lunch

The winner and a guest will be hosted by Chef David Fhima at Maison Margaux for a private lunch with Ann Bancroft Foundation Executive Director Ethelind B. Kaba and Minnesota Lynx Assistant Coach Rebekkah Lamar Brunson. Rebekkah Lamar Brunson is a former Women's National Basketball Association (WNBA) player who made history as the only player to win five WNBA championships. She is currently the assistant coach of the Minnesota Lynx, and a sports analyst at Fan Duel.

Additionally, the winner and friends will enjoy a Minnesota Lynx 12-person suite for an upcoming 2026 regular season game.

Donated by:

Minnesota Timberwolves & Lynx, Rebekkah Lamar Brunson, & David Fhima

Value:

Over \$20,000

Exclusive, once-in-a-lifetime package

Live Auction Items

(continued)

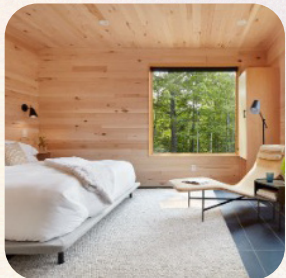


Viking 8-Day European River Cruise for 2 Guests

The winner and their guest will embark on a 2026 or 2027 Viking European 8-day river cruise. Viking is renowned for their elegant, award-winning ships and the opportunity to explore and savor iconic cities, charming villages, ancient vineyards, and local cuisine. The winner will select from one of six spectacular itineraries with choices including the Danube, Paris & the Heart of Normandy, Rhine Getaway, and more! This package includes guest meals, shore excursions and tours, and accommodations in a Viking standard stateroom.

Donated by:
Viking

Value:
\$8,198



Wild Rice Retreat in Bayfield, WI for 8 Guests

Experience a nourishing two-night stay for 8 guests at Wild Rice Retreat, a vibrant resort nestled between growing pines and the shores of Lake Superior, only a mile from downtown Bayfield. Wild Rice Retreat earned a Conde Nast Traveler 2025 Readers' Choice Award for #3 Resort in the Midwest. Enjoy a dining and beverage experience that nourishes the soul and focuses on light, pure flavors with a creative twist. Rejuvenate with exclusive one-on-one wellness sessions. Choose from relaxing massage therapy, insightful professional coaching, transformative intuitive energy balancing, or a private session in a wood-fired sauna. This special opportunity is crafted to help you find balance, clarity, and a renewed sense of well-being.

Donated by:
Wild Rice Retreat

Value:
\$4,850



Olivia Dean, Dinner at 6Smith & a Chauffeur for 6 Guests

The winner will tap into luxury with a chauffeur taking you to dinner at 6Smith in Wayzata on beautiful Lake Minnetonka for an Opulence Dinner of prime steak, seafood and lobster, and more! This is a four-course family style feast for up to 6 guests in one of 6Smith's private rooms. Guests will also have a mixologist pairing cocktails and specially selected luxury wines with their meal. Then, spend the evening with Olivia Dean, Grammy Award winner for Best New Artist 2026. A critically acclaimed British singer-songwriter, Dean has won numerous other awards and is known for her warm, soulful voice and honest, conversational songwriting that blends pop, jazz, and R&B.

All food, labor, tax & gratuity included. **Restrictions:** Olivia Dean's The Art of Loving performance at the Target Center is Wednesday, July 29, 2026 at 8pm

Donated by:
Target Center, 6Smith,
Sears Imported Autos,
& Mo Transportation

Value:
\$5,700



Change Your Mind Original Artwork by Todd Norsten

Original contemporary art created by renowned painter and printmaker Todd Norsten. Todd is an internationally celebrated artist who lives and works in Minnesota. His extensive portfolio includes exhibitions in Federica Schiavo Gallery and Fondazione Giuliani in Rome; Dayton Art Institute in Ohio; Josée Bienvenu Gallery and Leo Koenig in New York; and the Walker Art Center and Minneapolis Institute of Art in Minneapolis.

Original artwork professionally framed by Mitrebox Framing & Gifts, where they specialize in finding ways to best display the "tough stuff" and stock thousands of mouldings and mats to meet any artistic vision (as well as unexpected gifts for everyone on your list).

Donated by:
Todd Norsten with Framing
Provided by Mitrebox

Value:
\$2,400

Thank You, Sponsors

PINNACLE



PIONEER



EXPLORER



ADVENTURER



DREAMER



Table Hosts

Sara Armstrong-Nathan	Mary Grove	Kris Petersen
Ann Bancroft	Sara and Amy Kilian	RSM
Angie Boelter & Kari Henry	Rebekkah Lamar Brunson	Mike & Amy Ruetz
Liz Borer	Jan Malcolm	Andy Steiner-Manning
Dr. Gigi Chawla	Jamie Millard	Sarah Strehl
Jane Cowles	Veda Pai-Panandiker	Minnesota Vikings
Joanne Grobe	Luciano Patiño	Annette Wanchena

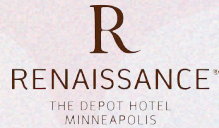
Silent Auction Donors

Ava Krahn	Jackson Family Wines	St. Paul Saints
Bachman's	June	Spyhouse
Barre3 Edina	Susan Krahn	Stephanie Lake
BIG LOVIE	LakePlace Bed & Breakfast	Sweet Martha's Cookies
Black Garnet Books	Larissa Loden	Taylor's Falls Boat Tours
Block Portrait Studios	Lauren Skar	The Depot
Tina Blondell, Artist	Love from USA	The O.G. Coffee & Wine Bar
Droolin' Moose	Miguel Jimenez Martinez	Tiny Chair Kitchen
Elliano Design	Mastel's Health Foods	Toro
Forest Floor Wellness	Meritage	Treasure Island's Tado
Mary Gibney, Artist	Minnesota Opera	Steakhouse
Great Wolf Lodge Minnesota	Nicole Fae	Watershed Spa
Guthrie Theater	Owamni	Christine Weihe, Artist & Arts Instructor
Heather Haynes	Dominic Papatola & Mary Jones	Wilderness Inquiry
Amy Heise, USA Hockey Collection	Park Tavern	Wintergreen Dogsled Lodge
Hennepin Arts	Luciano Patiño	Wurk
Highland Nursery	Queen's View Bed & Breakfast	YogaFit Studios
Isadore Nut Company	Crescent Farm Co.	Zamansky Professional Association

Gift Card & Ticket Wall Donors

Bachman's	MIA (Minneapolis Institute of Arts)	University of Minnesota Landscape Arboretum
Black Garnet Books	Pinstripes	University of Minnesota Marching Band
Brodere's Cucina Italiana	Red Cow	USA Inflatables and Events
Bryant Lake Bowl	SHEELS	Wild Birds Unlimited, Highland Park
Children's Theatre Company	Science Museum of Minnesota	YogaFit
Eggplant Urban Farm Supply	Tangletown Gardens	Youth Performance Company
Emagine Theaters	The Works Museum	Yum! Kitchen
Fired Up Studios	Topgolf Minneapolis-Brooklyn Center	
Kwik Trip	Twin City Model Railroad Museum	
Leitner's Garden Center		

EVENT PARTNERS



Annual Celebration Committee

Co-Chairs: Sara Kilian & Lee Vue
Ann Bancroft
Leila Keita
Nadia Martyn
Jamie Millard
Micah Ngafua

Ethelind B. Kaba
Marquita Butler
Heather Haynes
Grace Schreder
Mónica Nadal, Experience Design
Lucent Blue Events, Planner

Board of Directors

Ann Bancroft, Founder & Director Emerita
Jan Malcom, Director Emerita
Sharon Olson, Director Emerita
Sarah Strehl, Chair
Lee Vue, Vice Chair
LaCorra Bradford Kesti, Secretary
Veda Pai-Panandiker, Treasurer

Liz Borer
Rebekkah Lamar Brunson
Dr. Gigi Chawla
Jade Denson
Kelly McNamara
Andy Steiner-Manning
Annette Wanchena

Our mission & vision set us apart:

We support girls+ so that they can live their dreams and imagine something bigger through grants, mentorship, and ongoing development opportunities. We envision a world in which all who identify as a girl have a chance to live their dream and reach their full potential.

Do our mission & vision resonate with you?

Have you been moved this evening?

Here are some ways to show your support:

Make a gift using this QR code:



Automatic monthly giving is convenient, helps maximize impact, and provides steady support that ABF can count on when making grants and evolving programs. **To get started, go to:** annbancroftfoundation.org & click on "Give Now."

A Legacy Gift

ensures that ABF will be empowering girls and gender-expansive youth to reach for their dreams for years to come. You can create your legacy by including the Ann Bancroft Foundation in your will, trust, or other estate-planning vehicles.

Personal checks

& checks from Donor Advised Funds can be made payable to the Ann Bancroft Foundation and sent to: Ann Bancroft Foundation, 2233 University Ave. W., #450, St. Paul, MN 55114.

Please note "Annual Celebration" in the memo section.

Have questions, comments, or another way you'd like to show your support?

Please contact Heather Haynes, Development Director, at: heatherh@annbancroftfoundation.org or 612-361-8192.

Will your employer match your gifts to nonprofit organizations to double your impact?

You can reach out to your Human Resources department to find out!

Thank you so much for being in community with us this evening. You have brought alive the Courage of Community that is so needed for all who identify as a girl to dream, thrive, and succeed.

We are grateful!