



October 8, 2019

## Chinook Fund statement on San Luis Valley Rural Philanthropy Days

Chinook Fund would like to reaffirm our commitment to supporting Colorado's LGBTQ communities given recent events at Gateway Church related to this year's Rural Philanthropy Days in Del Norte. On September 17, 2019, Justin Garoutte, Giving Project alumnus and former grantee staff member, delivered a keynote sharing their story of coming out as an LGBTQ young person in the San Luis Valley. During Justin's address, church staff cut the sound to the mic and conference staff quickly responded. The following Sunday, the pastor at Gateway Church delivered a sermon, which was later posted online, where he espoused hateful, anti-LGBTQ rhetoric in response to the conference's LGBTQ speakers. We are particularly alarmed and saddened that this harm happened at an event centered on inclusion and building community across differences. These actions from Gateway Church are deeply harmful to us all.

In the face of these attacks, we stand strong in our core values of Liberation and Community. We actively challenge practices that dehumanize and isolate people, and cultivate practices that bring people together across our differences to achieve community-led systemic change, justice, and peace. We believe everyone has a role to play in collective liberation. We build caring, respectful relationships with one another. Recognizing our interdependence, we are committed to action that moves us all closer to our vision of liberation, connection, and abundance. In this spirit, Justin Garoutte shared:

*"It is essential that organizations and individuals with power in the Valley speak up in solidarity with and act out their allyship to the LGBTQ+ community. We cannot let homophobia, biphobia, transphobia, and interphobia\* become the norm in the San Luis Valley or elsewhere, but not saying anything risks just that. Let us never forget the teachings of our past from ACT-UP: Silence=Death."*

Chinook Fund stands in solidarity with Justin and Colorado's LGBTQ communities and will continue to engage in dialogue with Community Resource Center and local leaders to support LGBTQ communities. You can view the statement from the San Luis Valley Rural Philanthropy Days Steering Committee Leadership, and partner organizations, Community Resource Center and Anschutz Family Foundation at <https://crcamerica.org/programs/rural-philanthropy-days/2019-conferences/san-luis-valley/>

*\*Interphobia is the irrational fear of, aversion to, or discrimination against people with intersex conditions. Intersex is a general term used for a variety of conditions in which a person is born with a reproductive or sexual anatomy that doesn't fit the typical definitions of female or male.*