



## Encircle To Host Only Love Gala To Benefit Mental Health And Therapy Programs For LGBTQ+ Youth

*Gathering of community leaders and allies will feature star-studded VIP red carpet, speakers, performances and an awards ceremony honoring LGBTQ+ icons Angelica Ross and RK Russell and community ally Ashley Smith*

**SALT LAKE CITY (Jan. 5, 2024)** — Encircle, Utah's largest LGBTQ+ youth organization, will host its first Only Love gala to support the nonprofit's mission of providing life-affirming therapy, programming, and services to LGBTQ+ youth, young adults and families. Presented by AT&T Turn up the Love and Adobe, the event will take place at Adobe's Lehi, Utah campus on Saturday, Jan. 13, 2024.

Hosted by award-winning actor, television personality and singer Kalen Allen, the gala will feature a performance by GENTRI, an award-winning trio of dynamic tenors including Brad Robins, Casey Elliot and Bradley Quinn Lever. An additional performance will be given by Foreign Figures lead singer EJ Michels, who was recently featured on NBC's The Voice.

In addition to the array of incredible performances, the gala will also include an awards ceremony honoring icons of the LGBTQ+ community and an outstanding ally, including:

### **LGBTQ+ Icon Awards**

- Angelica Ross
  - Actress, writer, producer, human rights advocate and founder of Trans Tech
  - Star of POSE, American Horror Story on FX and Broadway's Chicago
- RK Russell
  - Former NFL football player, social justice advocate, published poet, author, essayist, artist and Sports Emmy winner
  - First out, active NFL player to identify as bisexual

### **LGBTQ+ Ally Award**

- Ashley Smith
  - Owner of the Utah Jazz, co-founder of Smith Entertainment Group, founder and CEO of SMASH Dance Academy and community leader

"We're so excited for our first Only Love gala to kick off 2024 with a bang," said Jordan Sgro, CEO of Encircle. "This event is truly made possible through the generosity of our donors and supporters, many whom I'm looking forward to seeing in attendance. From these donors, our celebrity hosts and performers to the distinguished recipients of our LGBTQ+ Icon and Ally Awards, I'm humbled to see so many people come together to further enable Encircle to provide



hundreds of essential mental health services to our most at-risk LGBTQ+ youth and their families.”

“As a partner in supporting Encircle's engagement of youth, families and the community, we're honored to host the Only Love gala at our Lehi campus,” said Archana Thiagarajan, Lehi site leader at Adobe. “We believe that when people feel respected and included, they can be more creative, innovative, and successful. Our partnership with Encircle echoes this belief and Adobe's commitment to the LGBTQIA+ community.”

“We're proud to help Encircle Together continue expanding its mission to serve the LGBTQ community,” said Ken McNeely, AT&T's president of state external and legislative affairs.

For more information about Encircle, its services, or to make a donation, please visit: [www.encircletogether.org](http://www.encircletogether.org).

#### **About Encircle**

Serving LGBTQ+ youth since February 2017, Encircle: LGBTQ+ Family and Youth Center, has functioned as a welcoming presence to LGBTQ+ youth and their families. With the purpose of providing mental health services that allow LGBTQ+ youth to thrive, and addressing the loneliness and high rates of suicide frequently experienced amongst these youth and young adults, the nonprofit offers love and support with a motto of “No Sides, Only Love.” This is accomplished through providing individual and family therapy, support groups, and a safe space to young LGBTQ+ people throughout Utah. Learn more about Encircle at [www.encircletogether.org](http://www.encircletogether.org).

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