



2464

One Year of Belonging at
**The Young Caring for Our Young
Encircle Ogden Home**

2025 - 2026

A Personal Note From Alex

Dear Friend,

One year ago, we opened the doors of Encircle Ogden with a mission: that no young person in this community would have to face the hardest parts of growing up alone.

Today, more than 4,000 visits later, that promise has become something living. It is heard in the laughter around the dinner table, felt in the relief of a parent who finally knows where to turn, and seen in a young person discovering that there is a place in this world where they are wanted exactly as they are.

This report tells the story of what becomes possible when a community decides to show up. Donors, volunteers, therapists, staff, families, and local partners came together to create more than a beautiful home. They created a place where belonging is practiced, healing is possible, and hope can take root before despair does.

As you read these pages, I hope you see beyond the numbers to the thousands of quiet, life-changing moments they represent. A first friend. A shared meal. A difficult truth finally spoken. A young person realizing that their life is precious and their future is worth fighting for.

Encircle Ogden's first year belongs to everyone who believed this community deserved such a place. Thank you for helping us build a home where lives are welcomed, families are strengthened, and, in the moments that matter most, young people are saved.

With all my gratitude,

Alex Cutini

Chief Executive Officer





4041 Visits

Since opening its doors on September 6, 2025, Encircle Ogden has welcomed more than 4,000 guests in its first year, connecting young people and families with life-saving programs, therapy services, and a community where they can belong.

Belonging in Action

Belonging is more than a feeling, it can be a powerful protective factor for mental health. Encircle's programs are intentionally designed to create meaningful opportunities for connection, identity affirmation, creativity, and supportive relationships. Grounded in research on Leisure Education and Experiential Learning, these everyday experiences help strengthen resilience, reduce isolation, and support the long-term well-being of LGBTQ+ young people and their families

Learn more about the science behind Encircle's programs



338

unique guests

found connection, support, and belonging

18

guests each day

On average, 18 people walked through our doors every day.

64%

of guests come back

2 in 3 guests are returning and are highly engaged.

Meet Luna

Before I found Encircle, life felt lonely. I first heard about the Ogden home through a post on Instagram. I was nervous the first time I came in because I didn't know what to expect, but everyone was super awesome. Encircle has helped me find people I relate to and feel safe around. I've made several friends here, including some of my favorite people, and it's given me a place to go when I need a distraction from life. Encircle has become one of my very favorite places and somewhere I know I can feel safe. If another LGBTQ+ young person was nervous about walking through the doors for the first time, I'd tell them: just try it out!

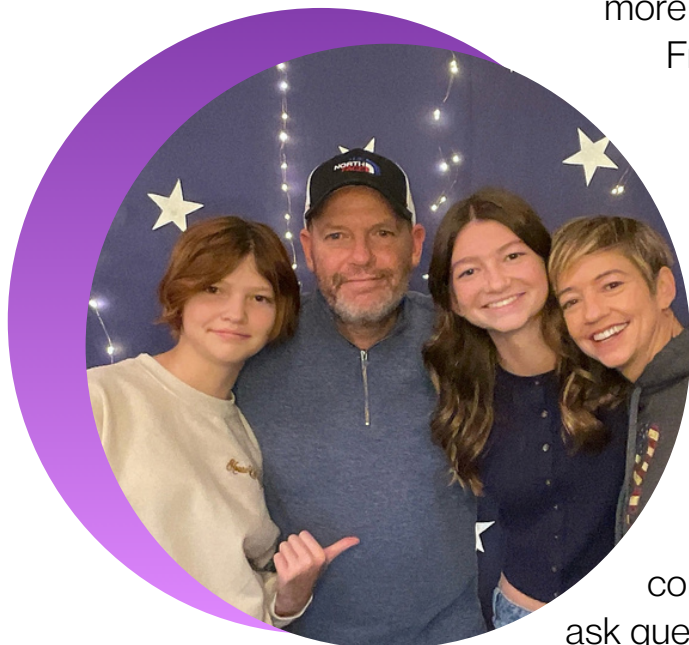


Meet Brian & Danielle Gobar

We live in a small town with a lot of like-minded people, and our child often felt very different from everybody else. Their therapist recommended Encircle, so we scheduled a tour. Everyone was friendly, and it immediately felt like such a nice place. Bringing our child to Encircle helped them feel less alone and less different. They got to meet other kids who are like them, and we've watched them become more confident and happy. Now, we volunteer every

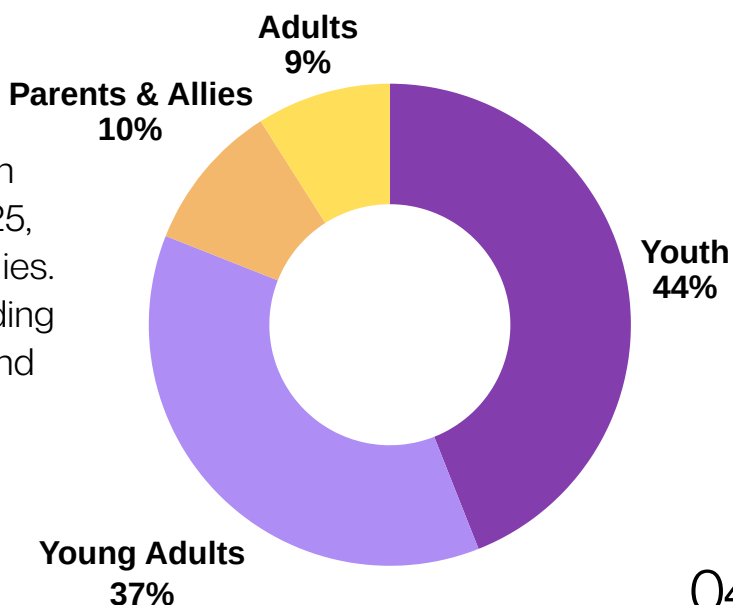
Friday night. It's become almost like a date night for us. We get to spend time together while also seeing our child in an environment where they feel comfortable. It can be hard to get that kind of time with a teenager, and being able to share it in an inclusive space where they can express themselves has been fantastic for our family. For any parent whose child has recently come out, Encircle is a great place to find support. If you have questions or aren't sure about the community, it's an easy place to feel comfortable, ask questions, and find additional resources when you

need them. There are also opportunities for family therapy and get-togethers that give families space to talk about what both parents and children are feeling, understand one another, and make the best decisions for their family.



Who We Serve

Our guests span generations: youth ages 12–17, young adults ages 18–25, adults age 26+, and parents and allies. Each visit represents someone finding connection, support, community, and a place where they belong.



More Than Just A Building



The Dan & Anna Neumann Music Room

7 MUSICAL MOMENTS • 65 ATTENDEES

“Music participation reduces stress, anxiety, and depressive symptoms while strengthening emotional expression, resilience, and interpersonal connection.”

(Daykin et al., 2018; Schäfer et al., 2023)

The Jed and Heather Nilson Kitchen

with cabinetry & appliances generously provided by IKEA.

30 FAMILY DINNERS • 360 MEALS SERVED

“LGBTQ+ youth who experience family acceptance have significantly lower rates of depression, substance misuse, and suicide attempts compared to youth who experience rejection.”

(Ryan et al., 2010).





The George S. & Dolores Doré Eccles Foundation Friendship Circle Room

52 FRIENDSHIP CIRCLES • 189 ATTENDEES

“Identity-affirming peer support is associated with stronger self-esteem, less isolation, and improved coping skills among LGBTQ+ young people.”

(McConnell et al., 2016; Russell & Fish, 2016; Craig et al., 2014).

The Larry Hall & Denise Carver Art Room

32 ART NIGHTS • 201 ATTENDEES

Creative engagement can support self-esteem, emotional awareness, positive self-image, and healthy coping, while helping reduce distress and anxiety.”

(UNSW, 2024).



encircle

The Young Caring for Our Young
Encircle Home

ESTABLISHED 2025

Built with love by Nilson Homes

The Marquardt Peace & Possibility Therapy Room

Encircle Therapy provides accessible, affirming mental health services for LGBTQ+ youth, young adults, adults, and their families in the Ogden community. Through individual, family, and relationship therapy, clients receive compassionate, evidence-informed care from clinicians who understand the unique experiences LGBTQ+ people and their loved ones may navigate. By offering therapy alongside Encircle's broader community programs, the Ogden home creates a place where individuals and families can find support, strengthen relationships, and build greater connection and resilience.

Learn more about Encircle Therapy and sign up here



44%

"44% of LGBTQ+ young people who wanted mental health care in the past year were not able to get it."
(Nath et al, 2026).

49%

"49% of LGBTQ+ young people in Utah who could not access the mental health care they wanted said they could not afford it."
(Nath et al, 2025).



761

Therapy Sessions

provided to LGBTQ+ youth, adults, and families in Weber County

81

Unique Clients

received affirming, evidence-informed mental health care

1

Full-Time Therapist

dedicated to serving Ogden, with a second full-time therapist planned for late 2026

Measuring Client Outcomes

Encircle Therapy uses validated assessments to understand client needs, track progress over time, and continually strengthen the care we provide. Measures including the PHQ-9 for depression, GAD-7 for anxiety, and Self-Compassion Scale are completed throughout treatment, giving therapists clear data to inform care. Across Encircle Therapy, hundreds of clients are reporting measurable improvements in anxiety, depression, and self-compassion.



Kristina Kaleel, MBA, MSW, CSW

Associate Therapist at Encircle's Ogden home, serving clients ages 12 and older. Her approach is trauma-informed, strengths-based, and affirming, drawing from CBT, Motivational Interviewing, and a biopsychosocial perspective. Kristina supports clients navigating anxiety, depression, grief, identity development, life transitions, neurodivergence, and trauma.



Better Together

Our first year in Ogden was strengthened by 24 community partnerships that connected 1,268 people across Weber and Davis Counties with affirming resources, support, and community. By opening doors, sharing resources, and building on trusted local relationships, these organizations helped create more opportunities for LGBTQ+ youth, families, and community members to find connection, belonging, and support where they already live, gather, and seek help.



PFLAG Weber-Davis

48 PARTICIPANTS • RAINBOW BRUNCH COLLABORATION

PFLAG's strong connections with LGBTQ+ individuals and families paired naturally with Encircle's space and programming. Together, we brought LGBTQ+ people, families, and supportive adults into the same room, creating a shared experience where people could connect, find support, and know that they, and the people they love, have a place to belong.



Ogden Pride

161 PARTICIPANTS • 5 EVENTS

Ogden Pride and Encircle created recurring opportunities for LGBTQ+ community members to come together while connecting with Encircle's programs and resources. By pairing Ogden Pride's established community relationships with Encircle's welcoming space, we brought community together and gave more people a way to find connection and belonging.



NUHOPE

2 EVENTS • 121 PARTICIPANTS

NUHOPE helped connect Encircle with the broader suicide-prevention community so we could bring an LGBTQ+-affirming resource into those conversations. Together, we strengthened the connection between community-wide prevention efforts and affirming resources for LGBTQ+ young people and their families—making sure LGBTQ+ support has a place in the larger conversation about prevention and hope.

Meet the Team

Our Ogden team is trained to respond with care, confidence, and consistency. Program staff complete suicide-prevention and mental health trainings including QPR, Mental Health First Aid, and Creating Safety, with training renewed on an ongoing basis. Encircle's broader safety framework also includes CPR/First Aid/AED, overdose prevention and response, and Youth Mental Health First Aid, helping ensure staff are prepared to support young people, families, and community members with both compassion and practical skills.



Elise Villaroman, Program Director

One of the things I've loved about my first year in Ogden is seeing how quickly the Ogden community has come together and made this home their own. This community has shown up for each other, made space for each other, and helped create a home where everyone knows they belong. Watching those connections grow between our guests, volunteers, staff, and the broader community is what makes the Ogden home so special to me.



Ryan Sanders, Assistant Program Director

Encircle changed my life when I was a teenager, so I knew firsthand what a community like this could mean to people. I've gotten to watch our little community grow here, from the occasional brave soul walking through the door to a vibrant and exciting network of people looking for more people to love. I never know what each day is going to bring, but I'm so here for all of it.



Holly Sagers, Engagement & Marketing Coordinator

My favorite part of Encircle is the belonging that grows here. The home and the people in it create a space where young people can feel safe, supported, and accepted for who they are. Everyone deserves to have safe people in their lives, and I am proud to be a safe person for young people searching for acceptance and belonging.

A Community That Shows Up

Volunteers were essential to making Encircle Ogden's first year possible. Volunteers receive training to help them create safe, welcoming, and affirming spaces for every guest who walks through the door. They support daily programs, greet and connect with guests, help with activities and events, and provide the consistent, caring presence that helps Encircle feel like a place where people can belong.

59

Unique Volunteers

showed up to create welcoming, affirming spaces for guests in Ogden

2003

Hours Donated

supported programs, events, activities, and everyday connection throughout the year

\$71,000

In Donated Time

estimated value of volunteer service contributed to the Ogden community

Meet Cristy

Growing up as a young lesbian, having a space like Encircle would have meant the world to me. So when I learned Encircle was opening a home right here in Ogden, I jumped at the chance to volunteer. I want to be part of the generation that lifts up LGBTQ+ youth and reminds them that they belong in this world and will always have a community behind them. My favorite part of volunteering is the connection. There's genuine laughter and joy in the home, and none of it feels forced. It happens naturally because people feel free to be their authentic selves. One evening, a new visitor sat down at the piano. They were clearly a practiced musician, but what we heard went beyond technical skill. They played with such ease and comfort, and I truly believe the environment helped make that possible. It was one of those moments when the negative noise seemed to drift away and someone simply had the confidence to be their best self. I've felt that same thing in countless conversations with "the kiddos," whether they're navigating something at school or at home and just need someone to help boost their confidence. This community has reminded me that unconditional love and support don't have to be complicated, it really comes down to being a kind human. Seeing that in action makes me realize even more how much I wish I'd had a space like this at their age. That's also why I keep showing up. If you really want to lead by example, you have to stay consistent. Anyone can talk the talk, but you have to walk the walk too, and that's where so much of the growth and fun happens. Plus, if I didn't keep coming back, who would I trade sweet Pokémon cards with?



Meet Dan

I had been looking forward to volunteering at Encircle since the Ogden home was announced, almost two years before it opened. As a member of the LGBTQ+ community and a doctor who works with many queer youth, I wanted to be involved in supporting young people in my own community. Encircle provides a safe place where teens and young adults can feel supported, make friends, and have fun. Over the past 10 months, my favorite part has been the relationships I've built. I love seeing new faces at family dinners and Friendship Circles, but it's been especially meaningful to get to know the regular guests and staff. I've also watched attendance grow. Lately, our Monday family dinners have brought together more than 30 people at a time. Seeing more people discover Encircle reinforces just how much our community needs a supportive, safe space for LGBTQ+ youth and their families. The young people here have also taught me how resilient they can be. Some have supportive families and others do not, but I've watched them find support in their peers while also helping nurture and support one another. That's why I continue to show up: I believe Encircle is an amazing resource for young people, and I want to be part of helping both them and this organization thrive. To anyone considering volunteering, I'd say if you have a loving, accepting heart and can commit to consistently showing up, definitely do it.



Meet Amy



I'm the proud mom of two queer adult children, and I've been volunteering at Encircle Ogden since it opened one year ago. As my children grew up, I watched them struggle to understand themselves and saw their friends struggle with family acceptance. I know how important it is for young people to have adults in their lives who accept and love them for who they are. I was often the "substitute mom" for my kids' friends who didn't feel accepted at home, and I hope I can be that same kind of person for guests at Encircle. My favorite part of volunteering is watching young people grow, change, and develop friendships. I cook family dinner on Monday nights, and I love spending time in the kitchen listening to their conversations. Sometimes guests tell me they haven't had a hot meal in a long time. I know there are challenges outside Encircle that people don't always want to talk about, so being able to create an environment where someone feels cared for and loved means a lot to me. Cooking for others is my love language. Encircle has taught me that creating community is a process, and that it's critically important. I continue to show up every week because volunteering here feeds my soul. It may sound selfish, but I feel like the time I spend here helps me as much as it helps others. To anyone considering volunteering, I'd say sign up. The days may be unpredictable, but the guests are amazing.

*To every volunteer who has given their time, energy, and heart to help make Encircle Ogden a place of belonging—**thank you!***

Abigail Maughan

Adam Tak

Alyssa Foutz

Amy Beal

Angela Mitchell

Angela Wilson

Annalise Donavan

Ashley Bowman

Ayla Chase

Birka Brinkerhoff

Bri Butterfield

Brian Gobar

C Kai Medina

Martinez

Caren Werner

Circe Dopp

Cristy Carpenter

Dan Neumann

Dani Neumann

Danielle Gobar

Ela Jensen

Ella Holland

Em Stephenson

Emily Wardell

Eve Connelly

Gabrielle Strebel

Hanna Partridge

Isaiah Youngbrown

Jeff Poor

Jenny Hipwell

Jon Boren

Jon Young

Josh Hopkin

Josh Lilley

Juno Lee

Kinley Daybell

Lauren Decker

Leslie Boren

Liz Ohling

Liz Quirk

Lori Davis

Manuel Saine

Marisa Jones

Mary Waddell

Perrin Schaafsma

Rayven Bonella

Renee Johnson

Ross Mitchell-Goulette

Sharlynn Jones

Yssa Archibald



Encircletogether.org