



Association of  
Fundraising Professionals  
Minnesota Chapter



*National Philanthropy Day* 2025

*Thursday, November 13<sup>th</sup>*

[www.afpminnesota.org](http://www.afpminnesota.org)

# Welcome

Thank you for attending the 2025 National Philanthropy Day celebration hosted by the Association of Fundraising Professionals Minnesota Chapter. Through this event, AFP is pleased to support the many professional and volunteer fundraisers across our region, and to honor the individuals and groups whose work and philanthropy has improved our communities and the world.

# Thank You

to our generous sponsors who have made this event possible.



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# National Philanthropy Day Program

**3:30pm - Networking**

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**4:00pm - Welcome**

***Courtney Backen***

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**4:15pm - Awards and Panel Discussion**

***Nausheena Hussain***

***Drop Deadlift Gorgeous, Max Poessnecker (he/they)***

***Pamela Zeller***

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**5:00pm - Networking**

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**5:30pm - NPD Concludes**



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# Nausheena Hussain

*“Through her leadership, organizations have not only raised critical funds but have done so in ways that reflect community values, build long-term sustainability, and foster collective ownership. Her approach goes beyond dollars—it’s about activating Muslim generosity, shifting narratives about who gives, and uplifting a culture of giving that strengthens communities from within.”*



Nausheena Hussain is on a mission to reimagine a world where Muslim women draw from their heritage, history, and intersectional identities in order to make the world a better place. She is the author of *Prosperity with Purpose: A Muslim Woman’s Guide to Generosity and Abundance*, a groundbreaking financial guide that addresses the unique experiences and challenges faced by Muslim women in building wealth and their generosity. Nausheena’s philanthropic journey includes service on grant committees including at

Headwaters Foundation for Justice Community Innovation and Social Change Fund, Blue Cross Blue Shield of Minnesota Foundation, and the Bush Foundation committee. She currently serves on the board of the St. Paul and Minnesota Foundation. She has served on the board of Center on Muslim Philanthropy helping Muslim nonprofit leaders upskill, collaborate and improve their fundraising impact. She received her Certificate in Fund Raising Management (CFRM) from Indiana University Lilly Family School of Philanthropy and holds a M.A. in Philanthropic Studies. Nausheena is now pursuing her doctorate in philanthropic leadership at IU and her research focuses on Muslim women-led nonprofits and their resilience leadership. As a former start-up founder of several nonprofits, Nausheena has a proven track record of taking an idea and creating a movement. Married, with two children and a beautiful cat, she lives in Brooklyn Park, Minnesota and loves to garden, read and travel.

# Drop Deadlift Gorgeous

*“While there is an element of fun competition (at DDG), the event is centered on confidence, community, and joy. Athletes are encouraged to set a personal goal, whether that be a new PR, or simply feeling more confident in deadlift skills and they are encouraged to use their power strength and joy to energize the generosity of their friends, families and neighborhoods to raise money to support the Minnesota trans community.”*



Drop Deadlift Gorgeous – hosted by Solcana Fitness & PFund – is a volunteer-led, community-driven event designed to empower, support, and create visibility regarding the importance of trans+ inclusion in sport. Drop Deadlift Gorgeous brings athletes, organizations, and our community together to envision a more inclusive and joyful world through friendly competition

while raising funds for trans+ and gender-expansive communities in the Upper Midwest.

Drop Deadlift Gorgeous was founded four years ago by Solanca Fitness coach Maxwell Poessnecker (he/they). Over that time, Drop Deadlift Gorgeous has raised over \$450,000 for trans+ communities across the Midwest. At the 2025 event this past September, DDG raised a record-setting \$137,595 and surpassed their goal by over 30%!

To credit his work with DDG, Max found himself as the Director of Development at Exodus Lending this Spring. Outside of work, Max enjoys being outdoors - particularly paddling the BWCA. Max serves as an ambassador for The Venture Out Project, by leading outdoor excursions for queer and trans+ folks across Minnesota. Max resides in St. Paul with his partner, Shelly on their urban farm.

# Pamela Zeller

*"Pamela's philanthropic approach is rooted in creativity, equity, and deep listening. Through initiatives like Her Journey, she amplifies the voices and lived experiences of marginalized women and girls while challenging systems of racism, xenophobia, and gender-based violence. Her ability to build strategic alliances, drive systems change, and mentor future leaders makes her a powerful force for social transformation and a deserving nominee for this honor."*



Pamela Zeller has a long history of nonprofit work starting in her college years at Macalester College. She has worked for social justice issues involving migrant farm workers health, Central Americans seeking political asylum, victims/survivors of domestic violence and sexual assault, bilingual education and charter schools, at-risk youth, elder abuse, and many other intersectional issues of oppression. Pamela is first generation born in the U.S. on her father's side and is proud

of her Mestiza ethnicity and culture. As a single mother she raised two beautiful and talented daughters who have continued to give back to their community and promote arts and culture as an integral part of community and healing.

Pamela has over thirty-eight years of nonprofit management and development experience. She shares this experience with other organizations through her nonprofit management company, Zeller Solutions. Her experience in all facets of nonprofit work, direct service provider, program developer, fundraiser, financial manager, strategic planner, facilitator, informs her work with WISE and other nonprofits.

Pamela came to her position at WISE eight years ago with a focus on leadership development and academic support of the future female leaders from immigrant and refugee communities in MN. She understands that education is the great equalizer and a multilingual and plural society contributes to a richer life experience and community tapestry. Pamela is committed to challenging the educational systems and economic models that result in marginalizing immigrant and refugee girls to change in meaningful ways that support the leadership, higher education, career advancement and entrepreneurship of these amazing girls and young women.



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[spmcf.org/nonprofits](http://spmcf.org/nonprofits).



Art In This Present Moment 2022  
Recipient Sharon Day.

[www.afpminnesota.org](http://www.afpminnesota.org)

 SAINT PAUL & MINNESOTA FOUNDATION

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# National Philanthropy Day Committee

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Courtney Poja, Cornerstone Advocacy Service

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Signe Steiner, Minnesota Center for Environmental Advocacy

Alyssa Whalon, University of Minnesota

# Award Selection Committee

Korinne Dennis

Comfort Dondo

Sarah Hovseth

Rachel Mairose

Michelle Morehouse

Courtney Poja

Zuhur Samriye

Signe Steiner

Laura Vitelli

Alyssa Whalon

Aaron Zimmerman

# Previous Award Winners

## 2024

**Archie and Phebe Mae Givens  
Foundation**

**Rachel Mairose**

**Aaron Zimmerman**

**Staiger | Vitelli and Associates**

**Every Heart MN**

**Rev. Jessica Lynn Jackson, J.D.**

## 2023

**Amherst H. Wilder Foundation**

"Empowering people and communities  
to be agents of change"

**Bush Foundation Community Trust  
Funds**

"Entrusting philanthropy to the  
community"

**Comfort Dondo, Phumulani**

"Providing refuge to African immigrant  
survivors"

**Nicki Hangsleben**

"Building a community of safety and  
support"

**Quentin Moore**

"Cultivating relationships through care,  
respect and generosity"

**Twin Cities Habitat for Humanity**

"Narrowing the homeownership gap  
with community input"

**Wallin Education Partners**

"Addressing systemic barriers for  
students to pursue their dreams"

## 2022

**Allison Johnson Heist**

"A legacy with the next generation of  
philanthropy"

**Chloe Czaplewski**

"Inspiring philanthropic communities"

**Community Aid Network MN**

"See a need. Fill a need. For the  
community."

**Open Arms of Minnesota**

"Nourishing neighbors by building  
community"

**Princess Titus**

"Inviting funders into community"

**WCA Foundation**

"Women changing the lives of women"

# Previous Award Winners

## 2021

### **Matthew “Nur-D” Allen**

“Living out philanthropy on the front lines”

### **Tomme Beevas**

“Convening those on the frontlines of economic, social and political liberation”

### **Ashley Kilcher**

“Looking at philanthropy through a different lens”

### **Mallory Mitchell**

“Advancing racial equity in fundraising and philanthropy”

### **Springboard for the Arts**

“Celebrating artists as essential for vibrant and just local economies”

### **John Sullivan**

“Corporate leader bolstering nonprofits with his skills, experiences, and resources”

## 2020

### **Ain Dah Yung Center**

“Providing a culturally-responsive “good new home” for Native youth”

### **Headwaters Foundation for Justice**

“Amplifying the power of community to advance equity and justice”

### **Bill and Susan Sands**

“Invested leaders with a dedicated approach to advancing charitable impact”

### **Shakopee Mdewakanton Sioux Community**

“Trailblazers empowering and promoting healthy, sustainable Native communities”

### **Bo Thao-Urabe**

“Power builder, community connector, generous giver”

### **Minnesota Central Kitchen**

“Nourishing communities through collaboration”



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## Lend a Hand!

Your gift to AFP-MN will allow us to develop and nurture current and future fundraising professionals who serve non-profits across the state of Minnesota. Your support provides direct access to education events, DEI training, networking opportunities, mentoring, and so much more.

AFP-MN is a volunteer-led organization that relies on the support of our community. Your donation now will help us continue to serve our entire philanthropic community. Thank you!

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**For more info, visit: [afpminnesota.org](http://afpminnesota.org)**