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Ray Jasinski  
Linear Creative

Todd Lloyd  
Prudential Financial

David Phillips  
COSE

Izzy Schachner  
Cleveland Corporate Caterers

Arthur Spector  
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plexus foundation board of directors

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Rev. Tracey Lind  
Trinity Episcopal Cathedral

Earl Pike

special thanks to Plexus sponsor

for the printing of this annual report
accomplished. 2011 was the first year with true American Greetings ERGs have formed, with support from the Foundation. We are pleased to report that during 2011 three new regional corporations.

We have continued our with the Executive Education Department at the Weatherhead School of Management at Case Western Reserve University on a program to support LGBT professionals to bring their authentic self to the workplace. We have made progress in determining a curriculum and suggested faculty. While there is still considerable work to be done, our goal is to finalize the plan in early 2012.

I would also like to extend my thanks to the ERGs at Progressive Insurance and KeyBank for coming together to develop and sponsor our wildly successful 2011 holiday event, and to the Cleveland Ritz Carlton for the generous support and hosting for the event. More than 150 guests turned out to spread the holiday cheer and to meet ERG members from around the region.

As we enter 2012, the Foundation is developing its funding goals for this new year and beyond. It is at this point I need to remind everyone that as a 501(c)(3) charitable organization, it is only through the generosity of our business partners and supportive individuals that makes it possible for us to provide the programming we have committed to the community.

Thank you all those who provided support and participation in 2011, and we look forward to an even brighter year to come.

Thomas Hawn
Foundation Board President

As I reflect on this past year, I realize we are a part of something larger that is changing the way business is done in northeast Ohio. In the words of Margaret Mead: "Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world; indeed, it's the only thing that ever does." She had in mind all those individuals who give of their free time to advance the mission of a cause they hold dear. You may be one of those individuals who gives your time to see a wrong made right or a dream realized. I can tell you that many of the thoughtful, committed citizens about whom Margaret Mead wrote are serving to help advance the mission of Plexus.

We welcomed several new board members in 2011, who have already made a noticeable impact. With their help, we improved our programming, which resulted in an immediate increase in participation at all Plexus events. Our Supplier Diversity Summit's new leadership increased revenue while maintaining a dynamic agenda to build awareness around LGBT certification. Our Membership Committee created a plan to publicize the value of being a Plexus member, resulting in a significant growth. And our senior board members continued to provide important support that allowed the new board members to take Plexus' work to new levels.

The commitment and engagement of our board has also allowed us to plan for our collective future. This year, we saw Plexus evolve into an organization with more structure, enhanced administrative support through our COSE partnership and a proper succession plan. Today, Plexus is a more focused organization that is accomplishing membership growth and quality program execution.

In addition we retained our core sponsors which helped us to maintain our solid financial position in 2011. We were fortunate to add Skylight Financial to the distinguished list of organizations that stepped forward and put a face on LGBT inclusion. And, we are excited to announce our first Gold level sponsor in early 2012.

The highlight of this year's many accomplishments was the important recognition we received from National Gay and Lesbian Chamber of Commerce, which presented Plexus with its "2011 Rising Star Award." This national recognition highlighted Plexus as an example for other chambers, and a model of innovation and meaningful programming. This award is the culmination of our collective vision and recognition of our programming which has helped change the business environment over the past five years.

Moving forward, I see Plexus focused on membership growth, programming innovation, and increased visibility. Our success is your success, and together we will continue to work toward creating a regional business environment of workplace inclusion and equal access for everyone.

Eric Lutzo
Chamber Board President
chamber: member profile

As a full-cycle/full-service staffing firm in Northeast Ohio, 925Hire is committed to the LGBT community and allied businesses. We contract with companies that are progressive in their diversity and inclusion programs and are diligently seeking to include members of the LGBT community as active contributors/participants in furthering the momentum and growth of their company. We are a true partner ready to meet all permanent, temp-perm and/or temporary recruiting needs.

925Hire joined Plexus, because as an LGBT owned business, I wanted to ensure we were living up to our espoused values of diversity and workplace inclusion. Plexus provides us with the right platform for raise our visibility and to collaborate with other inclusive organizations. As part of the LGBT community and as a small business owner in the recruiting/staffing industry, we have had to overcome unique challenges, but by forging new connections and networking with other supportive business owners and companies has been an important benefit of becoming a Plexus Member.

Our Plexus membership has helped provide 925Hire with the added knowledge and resources to pursue certification as an LGBT-owned business, which will be helpful as we seek contracts with corporations and public agencies that are committed to supporting supplier diversity and minority-owned businesses. Our membership is a proud reminder of our business’ commitment and dedication to helping the LGBT community obtain full workplace equality and representation.

foundation: erg series

Thanks to a grant from the Key Foundation and KeyBank, the Foundation held a series of five events for LGBT-focused Employee Resource Groups (ERGs) in 2011. The series is designed to not only support the existing corporate ERGs in the region, but to also foster the growth of new groups, and to provide them with resources and guidance to be successful. We are pleased to welcome three new corporate ERGs that formed in 2011: American Greetings, PNC Bank, and University Hospitals.

February: Federal Reserve Bank of Cleveland
The Bank’s LGBT ERG was kind enough to host the Foundation’s inaugural session. The event focused on understanding the maturity of both the ERGs and their companies around the issues facing LGBT individuals. The group also developed themes to be addressed in subsequent sessions. Attendees were led on a tour of the beautiful and historic facility, including the money vault deep in the basement.

May: Key Bank
The second session focused on learning more about how to keep ERG members engaged with group and its mission. Members of the various ERGs shared best practices and success stories.

June: American Greetings
The third session was hosted by the new ERG at American Greetings. The event was centered on defining the value proposition for an LGBT ERG, both from the company’s expectation for the group from a member’s point of view.

Moving into the new year, the work of planning the ERG series for 2012 has already begun. The Foundation has enlisted four leaders from existing corporate ERGs to assist in the development of program content and delivery. With their help, we plan to take the series to a new level of support and learning for the LGBT-focused ERGs in Northeast Ohio. Please check the Web site for updates on locations and topics for this year’s series, planned for February, April, June, October, and December.
Plexus facilitates regular networking nights that are free and open to everyone. With the support of our 2011 Network Nights sponsor CharterOne Bank, these events provide an opportunity for members and guests to meet others and network in the LGBT & Allied business community. These events are held at a range of different venues, and often feature a speaker or special activity. Attendees can expand their professional network and gain important information and insight from decision-makers and trend-setters in Northeast Ohio.

**2011 network nights highlights**

**COSE, Downtown Cleveland** - Plexus held its annual meeting in the COSE offices in the Higbee Building to inform members and the public about plans for the coming year. The guest speaker was Cleveland Mayor Frank Jackson, who discussed the importance of embracing LGBT professionals and small business owners, as part of the region's efforts to attract employers and top-quality professionals.

**Pickwick & Frolic, E. 4th Street Cleveland** - Attendees got a sneak peak at some of the entries in the 35th Annual Cleveland International Film Festival. The evening included a conversation with Film Festival leaders, Bill Guentzler and Patrick Shepard.

**Ernst & Young** - Mike McManmon, an Ernst & Young Partner, shared his experience and journey as an out executive. McManmon, helped found E&Y’s “Beyond” program, the professional network that supports and promotes an LGBT-inclusive culture.

**Edgewater Yacht Club, Cleveland** - Attendees enjoyed a tour of the newly renovated Allen Theatre, the new home of the Cleveland Play House. The event provided information the upcoming CPH performance season, as well as an overview of their innovative collaboration with PlayhouseSquare and Cleveland State University, which will create historic renovation in the nation’s largest performing arts center outside of New York.

**Plexus membership offers Consolidated Graphics Group, Inc. the opportunity to network with other businesses that share in the values of equality and prosperity. Together, we can work for the greater good of all and market Northeast Ohio as an open and affirming business climate that retains its youth and attracts world-class talent. Operating a successful business is difficult enough and discrimination based on sexual orientation or gender identity should not be a factor in determining a business transaction. Plexus puts the business community on notice: LGBT owned companies and their straight allies offer an environment that does not tolerate the infringement on an individual's civil rights.**

-Ken Lanci, Chairman & CEO

Consolidated Graphics Group is a national technology-focused marketing company that prides itself on creating solutions to simplify and optimize our clients' multi-channel communications processes. For more than 15 years, its team of experts have assisted clients in developing cost effective communications solutions that are designed to delight their staff, partners and customers. During the last ten years CGG has made it a priority to bring together the brightest minds and the most advanced equipment. Together, these two critical pieces form a strong foundation with a single purpose: to be the preferred choice when selecting a marketing communications partner.

**Plexus Mission:** Plexus promotes and advocates for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgendered and Allied businesses, and is a catalyst for economic vitality in Northeast Ohio.

**Plexus Vision:** Plexus is the leading voice and premier resource that empowers Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgendered, and Allied businesses, to overcome biases and achieve a thriving, inclusive and diverse business community.
In August, the National Gay & Lesbian Chamber of Commerce honored excellence in local affiliate chambers at the 2011 “Out For Business” conference in Las Vegas. In addition to naming the best NGLCC affiliated LGBT business organizations in the nation, the organization recognized chambers for innovative leadership programming, expansive economic impact, and meaningful community services.

Plexus was presented with the 2011 “Rising Star Award,” which is given to a chamber that exhibited vitality and relevance in its community, brought a unified voice to the LGBT business community it serves and has proven its commitment to being part of the broader national movement.

“We are excited to recognize Plexus with the 2011 Rising Star Award,” said NGLCC Co-Founder and CEO Chance Mitchell. “We’re especially proud of their innovative Supplier Diversity Summit in Cleveland; it’s a great model for other chambers. The Plexus leadership continues to be a powerful example of LGBT leadership and entrepreneurship in their community.”

“This award recognizes the hard work of our board, allied businesses, corporate partners, and our dedicated supporters,” said Plexus Co-founder and President Eric Lutzo. “It also acknowledges that Plexus adds to the regional economic capacity while drawing attention to the importance of safe and inclusive workplaces.”

“NGLCC affiliate chambers are having a powerful impact all around the country because they are leveraging every possible opportunity for businesses to grow and become strong engines that will drive their local economies,” said NGLCC Director of Affiliate Relations Sam McClure. “We are so proud to work with them and recognize their accomplishments.”

Plexus was one of 50 affiliated chambers attending the leadership conference, all of which work to expand the visibility and growth of LGBT-owned businesses, and to highlight the impact of LGBT professionals on regional and national economies, with an end goal of increasing workplace equality for every working person.

American Greetings is proud to be a sponsor of Plexus. Our commitment to diversity is based on the basic belief that many points of view come together to make a stronger and more creative organization. This year we launched our LGBT employee resource network to make American Greetings a more productive and comfortable place for all our associates and customers who are or support Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual or Transgendered persons or who have family, friends, or colleagues who are LGBT. We believe it’s important to engage all associates by creating an inclusive culture which enables them to contribute their best work, feeling valued and appreciated.

“I was so pleased to learn a LGBT employee resource network was being chartered at American Greetings, and I instantly agreed to support this important effort from an executive level. All of our employees, regardless of race, gender or sexual orientation deserve equality in a comfortable, safe workplace.”

Sally Schriner, President, American Greetings Interactive, executive sponsor LGBT Resource Network

“Our LGBT Resource Network has greatly contributed to the advancement of our overall Diversity & Inclusion message. American Greetings is proud to support and showcase efforts of all Resource Networks, as we believe that diversity is the soul of creativity and it allows us to authentically represent and reflect our diverse culture and associate base.”

Renita Jefferson, American Greetings, Director of Diversity & Inclusion

Congratulations to Plexus member Linear Creative for being named one of COSE’s 2011 “Ten Under 10,” which celebrate the best of our region's smallest employers. Each year COSE recognizes 10 businesses with 10 or fewer employees for their best practices in innovation, growth/success, value to the community and environment, diversity, promotion, and customer service excellence. Linear also was awarded a “2011 Bright Star” award from the Northeast Ohio Area Chambers of Commerce.

Linear Creative is a full service marketing and advertising agency, and is the only such agency in the state of Ohio that is certified as an LGBT-owned, minority business enterprise.

The National Gay & Lesbian Chamber of Commerce (NGLCC) is the only national not-for-profit advocacy organization dedicated to expanding the economic opportunities and advancements of the LGBT business community. With more than 29,000 members, 130 corporate partners and 62 local, state and international affiliate chambers, NGLCC is the largest LGBT business development and economic advocacy organization in the world.
Our differences energize our culture at Ernst & Young making our sponsorship of Plexus a great fit. We believe that fostering a culture which expects, reinforces, and rewards inclusive leadership empowers our people and helps us achieve better business results.

Providing an inclusive work environment for our people creates opportunities for those with diverse backgrounds to support one another, exchange information and build business relationships. By doing so, we reach our potential as a global organization, as well as individuals.

Our commitment to making sure that all our people’s voices are heard and valued not only helps attract, engage potential as a global organization, as well as individuals.

Fostering a culture which expects, reinforces, and rewards inclusive leadership empowers our people and helps their companies to enter the vendor pipeline at large corporations. In addition, he described how these major corporations can fine-tune their policies and procedures to facilitate the entry of diverse suppliers and strengthen their overall procurement systems.

The Summit continued with a coordinated matchmaking session between business owners and procurement officers from regional and national companies. Business owners described their companies' products and services and learned about the supplier needs and practices of the corporations in the room. As a result, successful pairings emerged that allowed both the business owners and procurement officers to advance their respective goals.

The Summit concluded with a networking reception. Attendees enjoyed opportunities to further develop relationships begun during the day and solidify existing partnerships. All owners and procurement officers to advance their respective goals.

The Summit was sponsored by American Greetings, Cleveland State University, the Cleveland Women's Journal, Consolidated Graphics Group, Linear Creative, the Northeast Ohio Regional Sewer District, Rockwell Automation, Time Warner Cable and United Airlines.
Incoming Plexus board member Todd Lloyd was honored as the recipient of the “2011 Bright Star Awards” from the Northern Ohio Area Chambers of Commerce (NOACC) in October. Each Bright Star is an active chamber member of his or her chamber and is recognized for their efforts as an unsung hero or a dedicated behind-the-scenes volunteer.

Lloyd was nominated for his tireless volunteer work as chair of the 2011 Supplier Diversity Summit, which took more than nine months to plan and organize. During that time he spent nearly 10 hours a week and coordinated a team of eight other volunteers to bring about Plexus’ most successful summit to date.

“We’re all extremely indebted to Todd for his dedication and hard work,” said Plexus board president Eric Lutzo. "This award is merely a token of our appreciation, and it couldn’t have gone to a more deserving individual."

2011 was the fourth year NOACC held its Bright Star Awards, providing an important opportunity to recognize the vital work of these volunteers in front of their peers, fellow chamber representatives, board members and friends.

There are many ways to get connected with Plexus. Whether you’re a member or not, here are five ways to consider getting involved:

1. **Volunteer at a Plexus event.** Many people are surprised to learn that Plexus is completely volunteer-operated, with no paid staff to help with coordination or programming. Its success over the past five years is due to the dedication and hard work of hundreds of people across Northeast Ohio, who have given countless hours to make Plexus’ many successful events appear well organized.

2. **Join a committee.** For individuals who can commit to ongoing participation, Plexus has a number of committees where you can help make an impact on the future of this young and growing organization. From events, to marketing, to membership, and others, Plexus can benefit from the your expertise.

3. **Get certified as an LGBT-owned business.** As an affiliate of the National Gay & Lesbian Chambers of Commerce, Plexus can assist LGBT business owners in obtaining official certification as a minority business enterprise. This can help make your business eligible for contracts with corporations and government agencies that operate under supplier diversity initiatives. Certification can be a catalyst for increasing revenue, but it also helps make a clear statement about the important role LGBT-owned businesses play in the economy of our region and our nation.

4. **Host a Plexus event or program.** From Chamber Network Nights to the Foundation's Leadership Series, Plexus events typically draw upwards of 100 people. By hosting an event at your business or organization, you not only raise awareness about the services you provide, but you also demonstrate that you value LGBT customers and support an inclusive business environment.

5. **Become a Plexus sponsor.** In addition to the countless volunteer hours that go into running its annual programming and events, Plexus relies on the generous support of its sponsors to make it all happen. While our sponsorships start at $2,500, Plexus understands that not every business can make a cash commitment. That’s why Plexus works with a number of organizations for in-kind sponsorships for a wide range of services and products. You can help Plexus succeed and grow by offering to do just a little bit of what your business does best, and gain some recognition in the community for being a supporter and advocate of the LGBT business community.

For more information about getting involved with Plexus, visit us online at www.ThinkPlexus.org, email us at info@thinkplexus.org, or call us at 1-800-PLEXUS-9. We look forward to seeing more of you in 2012 and beyond.
Plexus would also like to acknowledge and extend appreciation to its many individual members: professionals, retirees and students from all over Northeast Ohio.

* plexus sponsor  
† certified lgbt-owned business

chamber: business members

925 Hire
Ambiance, The Store For Lovers*
American Greetings Corp.*
American Limousine Service
Arhaus Furniture
Bank of America Merrill Lynch
Beck Center for the Arts
Bella Capelli Sanctuario †
Buckingham, Doolittle & Burroughs, LLP*
CANAPI
Charter One Bank*
Cleveland Clinic Foundation*
Cleveland Corporate Caterers*
Cleveland International Film Festival
Cleveland Play House
Cleveland Synergy Foundation
Compass Consulting Services
Consolidated Graphics Group, Inc
Continental Airlines*
Crossroads Financial of Northeast Ohio
Doan Brook Company LLC
Dobama Theatre
Dr. Wisniewski & Assoc.
Eliza Jennings Senior Care Network
Enterprise Car Rental
Ernst & Young*
FASTSIGNS
FIT Technologies †
Forest City*
Forward Thought †
Freedom Valley
Future Light
Gay Community Endowment Fund
George Witherspoon & Assoc.
Gray’s Auctioneers†
Great Lakes Science Center
Herb Ascherman Photography*
ICNS
InterContinental Hotels Cleveland
KeyBank*
Law Office of Nicholas Hearing, LLC
Leverage Technologies†
LGBT Community Center of Greater Cleveland
Linear Creative LLC†
MetroHealth System
Mitchell Sotka
Möbius Grey
Morgan Stanley Smith Barney, LLC
North Coast Men’s Chorus
Primerica Financial Services
Quéz Media Marketing
Raymond James Financial Services
Sheraton Cleveland Airport Hotel
Snazzo Productions
Square Night Club
The Legacy Group
Transitional Outreach
Trend Consulting Services
Trinity Cathedral
United Church of Christ National Offices
University Hospitals
Windward Partners

chamber: 2011 sponsors

2011 community supporters

Ambiance
Amercian Greetings
American Limousine Service
Arhaus Furniture
Bank of America Merrill Lynch
Beck Center for the Arts
Bella Capelli Sanctuario
Buckingham, Doolittle & Burroughs, LLP
CANAPI
Charter One Bank
Cleveland Clinic
Cleveland Corporate Caterers
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