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## MEDIA ALERT

### FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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## ACLU SCHOLARSHIP OFFERS FINANCIAL AID FOR COLLEGE TO UTAH YOUTH ACTIVISTS

SALT LAKE CITY, UTAH – The ACLU of Utah’s Youth Activist Scholarship Program, now in its sixth year, recognizes Utah high school seniors who are passionate about civil liberties, and have taken a stand to show it. Three winners, selected by a committee of educators and community leaders, are each awarded a \$1000 scholarship to be used toward their first year of college.

Past scholarship recipients have come from many parts of Utah including Logan, Ogden, Provo, St. George, Orem, Moab, and Salt Lake City. They have positively impacted their communities by advocating for: racial justice; immigrants’ rights; equal treatment for lesbian, gay, bi-sexual, transgender, and queer (LGBTQ) students; increased reproductive health education; women’s rights; and free speech and expression.

“Every year we look forward to reviewing the scholarship applications from graduating senior high school students,” says Anna Brower, Development Director at the ACLU of Utah. “It is an inspiring experience to learn more about the outstanding Utah high school youth who advocate for civil liberties in their schools and communities.”

The winners of the 2011-2012 ACLU of Utah Youth Activist Scholarship awards certainly exemplify this commitment to and passion for civil liberties.

Gabriel Glissmeyer graduated from Hillcrest High School in Midvale. As a student of color and member of the LGBTQ community, Gabe faced and overcame many obstacles in his life. Rather than letting these challenges discourage him, Gabe used his experiences to empower himself, as well as to help others who face similar challenges by starting “Advocates for Equality”, an inclusive club that has advocated for policies to promote equal treatment of students in public schools, and worked to end the unjust targeting of the LGBTQ community by tobacco companies. “It has taken a long time to accept who I am without the acceptance of others, but I’ve made it this far and I want to always be able to help others see their potential,” said Gabe. He is attending the University of Utah.

Patricio Panuncio graduated from the Academy for Math, Engineering and Science, a charter school in Salt Lake City. As the child of immigrants Patricio felt the effects of discrimination toward the Latino community. Rather than sitting back and enduring the discrimination silently, Patricio decided to take action in pursuit of equal treatment and protection for all people. He helped to organize an action group “Still We Rise” which demonstrated against HJR 24, a

proposal put forth during the 2010 Legislative Session, to ban Equal Opportunity programs in state employment and higher education. When “Still We Rise” triumphed and the proposal was unsuccessful, Patricio realized that he could be an advocate for positive change. “Just like Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., I believe in economic equality and educational equality,” Patricio said. “I believe a man should not be judged by the color of his skin, but by the content of his character. But it takes more than just belief, it takes action. I’m determined to do all I possibly can to achieve equality for all.” Patricio is attending the University of Utah and plans to pursue a career in Civil Rights Law.

Lincoln Parkin graduated from Weber High School in Ogden. As president of his school’s Gay-Straight Alliance club, Lincoln worked to promote fair treatment for all students at Weber High, no matter their sexual orientation. Lincoln was also an active member of the Ogden OUTreach Center, a program that focuses on creating a safe and welcoming community for LGBTQ youth and their allies. “In the future, I envision a world where sexual orientation won’t define a person, but refine them. Where differences will be celebrated, not mutilated,” Lincoln said. A self-proclaimed “music activist,” Lincoln uses his passion for singing to work toward the goal of equality for LGBTQ people. Lincoln is attending Westminster College and plans to continue his dedication to musical activism.

“What is so impressive about these young activists,” says Brower, “is the sophistication of their understanding of issues related to inequality and injustice and their determined struggle to overcome their own issues and help others. These youth are important role models of political and civic engagement.”

Interested graduating seniors (Utah schools only) who plan on entering an accredited college or university are encouraged to apply. Winners will be selected, based on specific criteria, by the volunteer Scholarship Selection Committee. The top three applicants receive a scholarship award of \$1000, and are honored at the ACLU of Utah’s Annual Bill of Rights Celebration. For more information about the Scholarship Program and previous scholarship recipients, visit [www.acluutah.org/scholarship.html](http://www.acluutah.org/scholarship.html), or contact the scholarship hotline at (801) 521-9862 x111

*The American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) is a nationwide, nonpartisan, membership organization dedicated to working in the courts, legislatures, and communities to defend and preserve the individual rights and liberties guaranteed to all people in this country by both the Constitution and the laws of the United States. Founded in 1920, the ACLU now has over 550,000 members and supporters (more than 2,500 live in Utah) as well as affiliate or national chapter offices in all fifty states and Puerto Rico.*

*Chartered in 1958 and located in Salt Lake City, the ACLU of Utah is the Utah affiliate of the national ACLU. Through public education, legal advocacy, litigation, and lobbying at both the state and local levels, the ACLU of Utah seeks to protect the constitutional rights of all Utahans.*

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