

# Games for Change Unveils Expanded 2026 Festival in NYC July 21-22

## This Year's Theme: "Reimagining Play"

*Expanded program, new interactive formats, and a move to The Glasshouse mark a milestone year for the 23rd annual gathering. Call for Speakers and Award Nominations Now Open.*



**NEW YORK, December 16, 2025** – Today, [Games for Change](#) (G4C) announced its 23rd annual Festival will take place at The Glasshouse in New York City on July 21-22, 2026. As the world rapidly evolves—through new technologies, cultural shifts, and global challenges—so does the way we play. Under this year's theme, "Reimagining Play," the Festival will explore how play has become a powerful form of self-expression and exploration, enabling people to envision better futures and test bold ideas. Once limited to traditional games, play is now an adaptive tool for learning, collaboration, innovation, and meaningful social impact across disciplines.

"Play is transforming faster than ever, and so is the community driving it," said G4C President Susanna Pollack. "We're seeing creators use play to explore complex ideas, spark imagination, and test what a better future could look like. This year's Festival is designed to capture that momentum—giving people the space, tools, and collaborators they need to push the boundaries of what play can do."

The move to The Glasshouse reflects this evolution, giving G4C a flexible, immersive space to integrate play and intentional design throughout the Festival experience. The venue supports expanded programming, including new session formats designed to foster deeper engagement and hands-on learning.

“The Glasshouse was founded just over four years ago with a commitment to redefining event experiences in New York City. When we learned about Games for Change and were presented with the opportunity to be involved, it was immediately clear that this was a mission and community we wanted to support,” said Erika Cristiano, Director of Business Development at The Glasshouse. “Our venue is deeply passionate about innovation and about bringing together the changemakers who are shaping a better future. We look forward to setting the stage as the host for the 2026 Games for Change Festival.”

G4C is now accepting [speaker](#) and [award submissions](#). Developers, educators, researchers, and innovators are encouraged to submit speaker proposals that demonstrate how play drives learning, builds community, and creates pathways for social impact. New this year, submitters can propose their own session format that pushes the boundaries of how people learn, connect, or experience interactive storytelling and social impact. The Festival will also introduce a new, interactive Playtest Lab, giving creators the opportunity to gather feedback on early-stage work. These new formats join established session types, including Talks, Panels, Workshops, and Topic Tables.

Award submissions are open for games and immersive experiences that transcend traditional entertainment, champion social impact, foster learning, and push the boundaries of interactive media. The Games for Change Awards will recognize excellence across 11 categories that showcase the breadth of innovation and impact across the industry. Winners will be celebrated during the live G4C Awards Ceremony on July 21.

**Award categories include:**

- Best in Community Empowerment (formerly Best in Civics)
- Best in XR & Emerging Media (formerly Best in XR)
- Best in Health & Wellbeing
- Best in Environmental Impact
- Best in Learning
- Best Gameplay
- Best Narrative
- Best Platform-based Project

- Best Board or Tabletop Game for Impact
- Best in Impact
- Game/Experience of the Year

The deadline for speaker and award submissions is **February 2, 2026**. For more information about the Festival and to submit, visit [festival.gamesforchange.org](https://festival.gamesforchange.org).

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### **About Games for Change**

Since 2004, Games for Change (G4C) has empowered game creators and innovators to drive real-world change, using games and immersive media that help people learn, improve their communities, and contribute to making the world a better place. G4C partners with technology and gaming companies, nonprofits, foundations, and government agencies to run world-class events, public arcades, design challenges, and youth programs. G4C supports a global community of game developers using games to tackle real-world challenges, from humanitarian conflicts to climate change and education.