Arts & Life

How 'Heated Rivalry's' Irina Foundation is bringing sunshine into the real hockey world

By JORDAN FULTON
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On Sept. 29, Accent Aigu Entertainment, the production company behind the hit television show "Heated Rivalry," which premiered November 2025, publicly launched the Irina Foundation. The foundation was co-funded and led by "Heated Rivalry" director Jacob Tierney and co-producer Brendan Brady.

In its first public testimony, the company explained that this private and independent fund was created to champion and advocate for inclusivity as well as mental well-being within sports and art participation. The foundation highlights that its goal is to have a focus on underserved and LGBTQIA2S+ communities.

The creation of this foundation follows the events depicted in author Rachel Reid's renowned "Game Changers" series, specifically in her novels "Heated Rivalry" and "The Long Game." Reid's "Heated Rivalry" was adapted into a television show by Tierney and Brady. In the season finale of "Heated Rivalry," Major League Hockey captain Ilya Rozanov visits rival hockey captain and long-term "situationship" Shane Hollander at his summer cottage. During that trip, Hollander devises a plan for the two to introduce aspects of their relationship to the general public through the cooperation of something meaningful. This is when the idea for the Irina Foundation emerges.



ILLUSTRATION BY HARRY ZELLER

The foundation is named after Rozanov's late mother, Irina, who lost her battle with mental health when Rozanov was a child. Hollander shared that the foundation could be a non-profit hockey school whose proceeds were donated to mental health research as well as LGBTQIA+ groups; it would also work to create a more inclusive atmosphere in the hockey world.

The impact of "Heated Rivalry" was immense. As music group Wolf Parade's 2005 song "I'll Believe in Anything" trended across the internet after being featured in the show, thousands of fans posted about their personal experiences balancing being a part of the LGBTQIA+ community while also participating in sports. Many of these fans shared that they felt they could not completely be themselves while playing the games they loved in fear of not being accepted, but it was this show that gave them the confidence to come out.

These stories led many people to wonder how the stigma surrounding athletics and LGBTQIA+ identities could be changed, and how these sports environments could become safer and more inclusive spaces for current participants as well as the next generation.

The Irina Foundation website states that it "was created from a desire to turn the unexpected power of storytelling into lasting change."

"Heated Rivalry" called attention to the decades of generational homophobia and silence that sports atmospheres have prompted, this subjugation being especially visible in ice hockey settings. For far too long, insensitive insults and locker room culture have fostered an environment that does not hold space for conversations surrounding mental health, identity and sexuality. This show stood as a turning point, showing that sports and self-expression should be for everyone, even athletes.

With the Irina Foundations now established in the real world, all of the change and activism witnessed in the "Game Changers" series finally has a chance to occur beyond the screen, proving that change is possible.

The foundation will fund existing arts and sports programs that align with their mission. The foundation hopes to connect individuals with resources, opportunities and meaningful connections that help to foster an environment where participants can express themselves freely. The organization will work to create inclusive spaces, genuine belonging, confidence, connection and a strong sense of community.

The foundation has already gained support from major companies, including Kate Spade New York, its inaugural donor, and grooming company Harry's, which was one of the foundation's earliest supporters.

At the Kate Spade New York fifth annual Global Summit On Women's Mental Health, Tierney, along with "Heated Rivalry" co-stars actor Connor Storrie (Rozanov) and actor Hudson Williams (Hollander), were invited to a panel to introduce the initiative.

Tierney shared in his statement that "it became clear…that we have the ability suddenly, out of nowhere, to raise a lot of money…so, we thought, let's do something grounded and let's do something thoughtful."

The foundation began as fictional, but nonetheless impactful. It emphasized that power comes from shared human connections and speaking out for individuals who have been silenced. Now, with the Irina Foundation's establishment in the real world, its outreach is unlimited and highlights, above all, that everyone deserves sunshine.

Easy dorm recipes for fall

By K. FAE HULL
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Are you struggling to find good food on and off campus? Are you missing comforting home-cooked meals? In that case, you can make fall dishes in your dorm that don't require much kitchen equipment, ingredients or space. Cook them up for yourself or to brighten a friend's day the next time you drop by their dorm.

Whether you're looking for a drink to bring to a Halloween gathering or something for a cozy night in, mulled apple cider is the way to go.

All you need is a large pot, a stove, a jug of apple cider and a cinnamon stick. Just pour the cider into the pot and simmer it with the cinnamon stick. If you want to get super fancy with your spices, Thyme & Season—a health food store on Whitney Avenue—sells star anise and cloves that can add extra flavor. Just drop them into the pot with the cinnamon and some apple and orange slices. Once the cider is warmed to your liking, serve it with a ladle into a mug of your choice.

Dirt bombs are small spiced muffins covered in cinnamon sugar. Bake these and your dorm will smell like autumn.

There are lots of variations on how to make dirt bombs. Traditionally, they are cake donuts baked in a muffin tin, but there are easier versions with just cake mix or homemade batter. If you love pumpkin spice, other variations include pumpkin puree to moisten the cake up like a banana bread. If you want to go all out, the classic donut-style version is worth the extra effort, and the texture is divine, but the beginner-friendly versions are just as tasty.

In any version, the defining aspect of a dirt bomb is rolling them in melted butter and cinnamon sugar after they are baked. The coating can be a little messy, but you shouldn't deny yourself the pleasure of licking your fingers after a tasty treat.

One-dish bakes and casseroles may sound a bit old-fashioned, but they are a great way to make flavorful meals with fewer ingredients and dishes to clean.

Dumpling-bakes went viral last summer. They are a refreshing way to serve dumplings compared to the tried-and-true methods of pan-searing or microwaving. Many of the dumpling bake recipes only require around five ingredients, and dumplings are fairly easy to get on York Hill or at the Bobcat Den if you don't want to wait for the elusive shopping shuttle. One such recipe only calls for dumplings, soy sauce, peanut butter, chili oil and spinach. You can also replace the spinach with leeks or another vegetable that is more preferable to you.

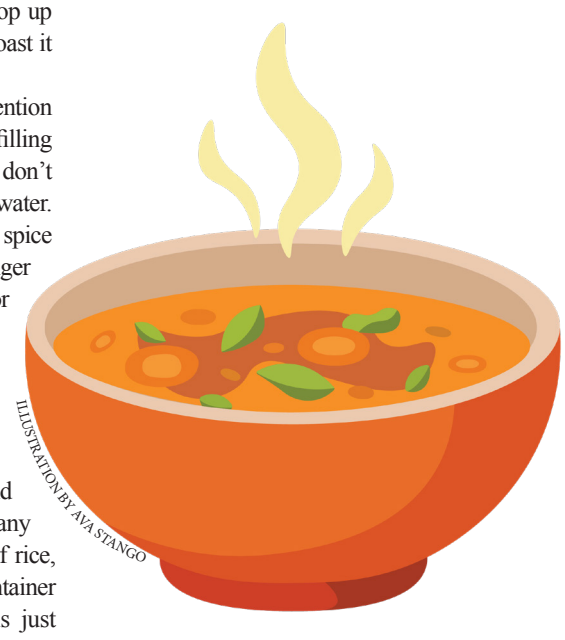
Another easy bake is any chicken and vegetable roast. You do not even need to chop up the chicken thighs before you put them in the oven; just marinate them and sear the skin until crispy before roasting them with the vegetables. Since cranberries are selling for fall, consider marinating the chicken in garlic, rosemary, onion and lemon and sprinkle on cranberries coated in a sugar-vinegar scrub before baking. Dishes like these go great over mashed potatoes or rice, but can stand on their own as well.

If you have a blender and a large pot, butternut squash soup is a cheap, simple dish that makes a lot of servings. A $2 dollar squash can make you three large mason jars worth of soup, lasting you many lunches; you may even need to share. The rest of the soup only needs chicken or vegetable broth, onion and various seasonings of your preference. Popular flavor choices are curry, cheese, cumin or cinnamon. You can upgrade the flavor with coconut milk or cream, garlic, ginger or apple cider. Great garnishes are sour cream, feta cheese, homemade croutons or gnocchi. Croutons are surprisingly easy to make. You can chop up any choice of bread, like a croissant, and roast it in olive oil and oil-bloomed rosemary.

One side dish that does not get enough attention is rice. It is endlessly flexible, comforting, filling and cheap. It is also very easy to make; you don't need a fancy rice maker, just a pot and water. Making ginger rice is a versatile way to spice up your rice and add some fall flavor. Ginger is also very good for an upset stomach or cramps. All you need for this is your regular rice, some ginger and garlic. You can replace some water with a broth of your choice for a deeper flavor and even mix things up with jasmine or basmati rice.

The final dish is a pearl couscous and chicken dish you can cook in one pot. Many people overlook pearl couscous in favor of rice, potatoes and other starches, but a large container can last you a long time and couscous is just as versatile. This dish uses chicken, lemon, garlic, chicken broth and parmesan, all cooked together in one pot. As the couscous absorbs the flavors surrounding it and cooks, you can peel a pomegranate—which is honestly strangely therapeutic— to top the dish with its seeds. The seeds, like the cranberries in the chicken bake, add a pinch of tart surprise that elevates this cheesy, toasty meal.

Give these easy, dorm-friendly meals a try, and don't be afraid to change them up to fit your liking. Part of the fun of cooking is how customizable it is. The other part is sharing what you've made.



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