

THE MAGAZINE OF SERVICES & ADVOCACY FOR GLBT ELDERS

sageSM

Matters

FALL 2016

**STAR TREK'S
GEORGE TAKEI**

*On how to live long
and prosper*

**AGING
REIMAGINED**

*Live fully
with SAGE's
strategic plan*

SILVER FOX

*Jeffrey Erdman on
life as Mr. LA Leather
and sex-positive aging*



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“I don’t understand this thing called ‘retirement.’ I think life is to be lived.”

— GEORGE TAKEI

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Dusti Cunningham

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EVENTS

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Next issue: *Highlights from the 2016 SAGE Awards and Gala.*

► SAGE & Friends in Harlem

On September 22, SAGE supporters and friends gathered at the beautiful home of Al Gervais to raise support for SAGE’s programs and for LGBT elders of color.

Pictured (L-R): Paulette Thomas, Pat Martin and SAGE Board Member Doug Harris.



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A generous bequest to SAGE from Bill Hahn and Charles Magistro.



SAGEMatters is the magazine of Services & Advocacy for GLBT Elders (SAGE), the country's largest and oldest nonprofit agency dedicated to serving LGBT older people. Our mission is to take the lead in addressing issues related to lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) aging. In partnership with its constituents and allies, SAGE works to achieve a high quality of life for LGBT older adults, supports and advocates for their rights, fosters a greater understanding of aging in all communities, and promotes positive images of LGBT life in later years.

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**Services & Advocacy for
GLBT Elders (SAGE)**

305 Seventh Avenue, 15th Floor
New York NY 10001
212-741-2247
sageusa.org
lgbtagingcenter.org

**SAGEMatters
Editor**

Susan Herr

Art Director

Christina DaCosta

Contributors

Christina DaCosta
Chris Delatorre
Pony Knowles
Patricia Lin
Hilary Meyer
Vega Subramaniam
Serena Worthington

Design

Deirdre Reznik, *dpi.nyc*

www.sageusa.org/sagematters

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Lives of Boundless Opportunities

As we share the latest *SAGEMatters* with you, we are living through a period of unprecedented change. Perhaps nothing reminds us of this more sharply than this year's high-stakes elections, which have turned long-standing political and social assumptions on their heads.

This theme of change runs powerfully through the features in this issue of *SAGEMatters*. Inside, you'll find George Takei's take on personal evolution; learn how Jeffrey Erdman has taken the LA leather scene by storm in his 50s; and follow an inspiring conversation with Kate Kendell, Mara Keisling and Carmen Vazquez about the changing landscape of gender identity. You'll also learn how the federal government (after a lot of pushing by SAGE) is moving to transform publicly-funded aging services to make them more LGBT-friendly. Join us in celebrating the realization of a decades-long dream for our communities in New York City, as SAGE announces the construction of the first two LGBT-friendly elder housing communities in the Big Apple. And so much more.

This time of great change and evolution sets the stage for the launch of SAGE's new strategic plan. The overriding goal of the plan is to dramatically expand the impact of SAGE's work so that LGBT people can grow older with boundless opportunities for growth and enrichment. We believe that we can achieve this transformative vision by tapping into our legacy of "taking care of our own," by building ties across generations, by encouraging communities to become LGBT age-friendly and by convincing partners of all kinds to get



CEO Michael Adams greets a SAGE participant at an event announcing the first LGBT-friendly elder housing communities in NYC (see page 9).

involved. This issue of *SAGEMatters* includes a special feature on our new plan—we hope you'll be as excited as we are.

For me, all of this has a special personal significance as I celebrate my 10th anniversary at the helm of this amazing organization. I'm so proud of the great progress that we have made together on behalf of our LGBT elder pioneers. And I'm tremendously passionate about the next chapter of SAGE's work.

I know that as you read through this latest *SAGEMatters* it will be even clearer to you why SAGE's efforts matter more than ever. Let's keep working together so that all LGBT elders have the support they need to live lives of boundless opportunity.



MICHAEL ADAMS
CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER



SAGE Nation

Making an Impact Across the U.S.

SAGE Inquiry Triggers Swift Response from Feds on Credit Discrimination

According to new guidance from the Consumer Finance Protection Board (CFPB), banks and credit card companies cannot deny loans to LGBT people simply for being who they are. CFPB's announcement came in response to SAGE's inquiry earlier this year, which asked the federal agency to clarify where the Equal Credit Opportunity Act stood on LGBT credit discrimination. The answer was clear: it is illegal for financial institutions to discriminate on the bases of gender identity and sexual orientation. This was great news for LGBT elders, who are more likely to face poverty as they age, often as a result of lifelong discrimination. Whether for a home or car loan, or to open a new credit card, LGBT older people deserve equal access to credit. This new guidance from the federal government will help ensure that they do.



“The federal government just accomplished a decades-long goal of LGBTQ advocates with a single letter.”

— MARK JOSEPH STERN
SLATE MAGAZINE

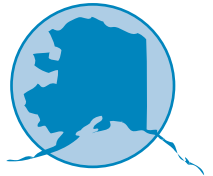
The Next Generation of LGBT Aging

SAGE's Michael Adams penned an article for the summer issue of the American Society on Aging's prestigious journal, *Generations*, which focused on LGBT aging. In it, Adams urges professionals to consider the rich diversity represented by the LGBT experience, and what he calls an “intersectional approach” to LGBT aging. The special issue marks another milestone in the march toward visibility and respect for LGBT elders.



SAGE Affiliates Expand to Anchorage and Miami

This summer, SAGE expanded its national network by adding new affiliates in Anchorage, Alaska and Miami, Florida. Established in partnership with AARP and Identity, Inc., SAGE Alaska brings social engagement, volunteer and learning opportunities to LGBT elders, while providing cultural competency education to service providers in the state. SAGE Miami, established in partnership with Jewish Community Services of South Florida (JCS), provides services and programming to LGBT elders in both English and Spanish. SAGE affiliates can now be found in 30 locations nationwide.



Solidarity in the Wake of Orlando Massacre

On June 12, 2016, members of the LGBT community were targeted in the worst mass shooting in the United States. In the days following the Pulse nightclub massacre, SAGE affiliates across the country came together with their members to mourn, discuss and send sympathy cards to the victims. SAGE CEO Michael Adams joined Dr. Yanira Cruz, President & CEO of the National Hispanic Council on Aging (NHCOA), to issue a joint press release, asking LGBT people and their allies to “condemn not only the violence in Orlando, but also any effort to hijack this tragedy to advance an agenda of bigotry and hatred against immigrants, Muslims or any other community.”



Ed Adams

North Carolina Elders and Allies Say “No!” to HB2

LGBT elders were victorious against North Carolina’s HB2 when the Wilmington City Council unanimously moved to repeal the bill. SAGE Wilmington of the Cape Fear Coast joined hundreds of elders and their allies in peaceful protest, while thousands of concerned citizens signed against HB2. These unified efforts have added Wilmington to a list of cities that have passed resolutions against the state’s infamous “bathroom bill.”



Unsung Black “Legends” Electrify with Powerful Photographs

SAGE joined the Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture, the Leslie Lohman Museum of Gay and Lesbian Art and Magnum Foundation Fellow, Jasper Briggs, to produce “Legend In My Living Room.” The special exhibition honors the struggles and triumphs of Black LGBT history. “Too often the experiences of Black LGBTQ individuals are erased from history. With this project, we aim to create greater visibility for this community by empowering them to take control of their narrative and public representation,” said SAGE’s Peter “Souleo” Wright. Shot by Briggs, oversized portraits of six Harlem constituents (ages 56–84) were prominently displayed in the museum’s window vitrines during this year’s Pride season.



Jasper Briggs, Legend in My Living Room: Nora-Ann, 2016.

First-Ever SAGEWorks Detroit “Boot Camp”

Seventy percent of the older adults who come to SAGE for employment support have been unemployed for more than six months, while 50% have been unemployed for more than a year.



To provide the type of intensive support they need to get them back in the market, this summer SAGE Metro Detroit joined Chicago and NYC in conducting an intensive two-week SAGEWorks job readiness ‘boot camp.’ SAGEWorks is a national employment support program for LGBT people age 40 and older that expands career options and connects employers with diverse candidates. Conducted in partnership with Operation A.B.L.E. of Michigan, the inaugural boot camp brought together job seekers to learn the latest tips in networking, navigating social media, building resumes and more. Special congratulations to recent hire, Mary Sexton!



SAGEWorks Boot Camp grad, Mary Sexton, got a job at the Detroit Area Agency on Aging.



Laura Fontanarosa

Retelling Portland’s Story

SAGE’s national storytelling project, SAGE Story, celebrates the unique experiences of LGBT elders while educating the public on aging and LGBT rights. SAGE Metro Portland has embarked on such a storytelling adventure. Over 13 weeks, participants will capture the essence of their lives through writing, collage and other art forms. Select participants will share their creations at an exhibition at Portland’s Artists Repertory Theater. Also in Portland, the annual Gay & Grey Expo of SAGE Metro Portland brought LGBT elders together for a workshop to explore their ideal living situation. Reinventing the way stories are told will diversify public narratives on LGBT aging, while empowering elders from all walks of life.



SAGE & Friends: Chicago

In June, the national Board of SAGE came together for SAGE’s annual Chicago reception. This year it honored (pictured above, left to right) Phyllis Johnson, U.S. Congressman Mike Quigley, and Torlene “Toi” Williams, for their outstanding service to LGBT elders.

The Hamptons Tea Dance

For the first time, SAGE, The Center and Callen-Lorde Community Health Center came together to co-host the legendary Hamptons Tea Dance on July 16 at Nova’s Ark Project. Honorary Co-Chair and longtime advocate Edie Windsor led the party with fierce tunes by DJ Lady Bunny.



Michael Adams (CEO, SAGE) with Glennda Testone (Executive Director, The Center), Edie Windsor, and Wendy Stark (Executive Director, Callen-Lorde).

No State Left Behind in Fight for Protections

In some of the most conservative states in the nation, SAGE is bringing the voices of older LGBT people to the fight for equal treatment. In Florida—one of 32 states without comprehensive protections from discrimination based on sexual orientation or gender identity in housing, public accommodation and employment—one of those strong voices is spokesperson Flame James (above) of St. Petersburg, Florida. Flame and her wife were systematically harassed by the residents and board of their 55+ condo building until they were forced to sell at a substantial loss. They eventually separated as a couple and Flame, who had worked hard to earn a happy retirement in the Sunshine State, had to return to work at age 60.



To elevate the voices of LGBT elders in the fight for equal treatment across the country, SAGE is working with support from the Gill Foundation and the Evelyn and Walter Haas, Jr. Fund to train LGBT elders as

spokespeople, and to increase awareness about the ways in which LGBT older people like Flame are affected by discrimination in Arizona, Ohio, Florida, Pennsylvania and Texas. Until there is a federal law that prohibits discrimination based on sexual orientation and gender identity, SAGE's job is clear: encourage LGBT elders in unprotected states to speak out.



Save the Dates

31st Annual Toys Party: December 11, 2016

One of NYC's most anticipated holiday events of the year. Sponsorships on sale now. Tickets on sale November 15. Visit sageusa.org/toysparty for details.

SAGE & Friends Miami: February 11, 2017

Join SAGE in February at the Biltmore Hotel in Miami to celebrate the event's fourth year. Stay tuned for details at sageusa.org/miami.

SAGE EVENTS

SAGE Advocacy Goes International at IFA in Australia

In June, SAGE's Michael Adams traveled to Brisbane, Australia, for the 13th International Federation on Ageing (IFA) Conference where he worked to increase global awareness around the issues of LGBT aging. Adams presented "LGBT Older Adults in the United States" to a room of more than 600 international delegates, and moderated a

Michael Adams (CEO, SAGE) with Australian LGBT aging advocates Brian Day (recipient of the Medal of the Order of Australia), Dr. Catherine Barrett (Director, Alice's Garage), Jill Bolen, and Pauline Cramer (Coordinator, Val's Cafe).



storytelling panel with older LGBT Australians. This marks the first time that LGBT aging issues were covered at this conference. As a result, the next international conference of the IFA, slated for Toronto in 2018, will feature an LGBT aging track for the first time.

THOUSANDS URGE FEDS TO MAKE AGING POLICY LGBT-INCLUSIVE

IN 2016 the U.S. Administration for Community Living (ACL) requested feedback on its proposed “program instruction” asking state and local departments for the aging to assess whether they are meeting the needs of LGBT older adults.

ACL IS THE
FEDERAL
AGENCY THAT
ADMINISTERS
AGING POLICY & RESOURCES.



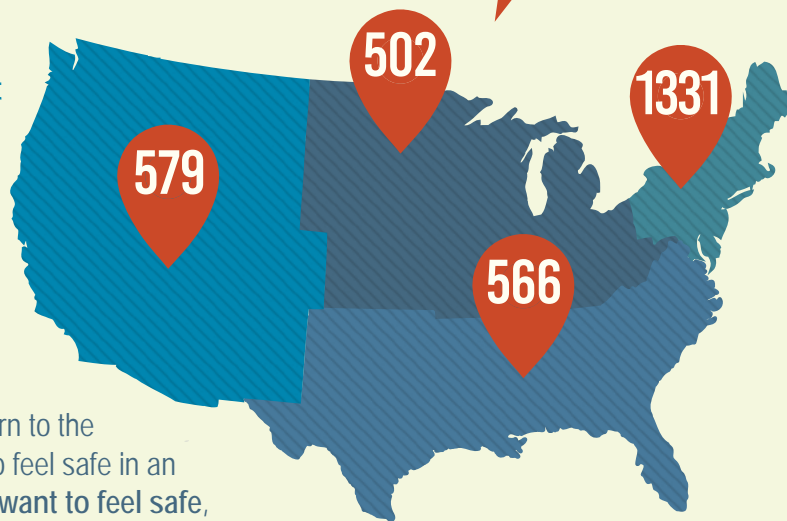
SAGE MOBILIZED COMMENTS FROM NEARLY **3,000** LGBT OLDER PEOPLE & THEIR ALLIES

“After being discriminated against all my life, I want some happy times. Is that too much to ask? I need LGBT-welcoming services and should not have difficulty accessing them.”

—RANDALL, OR

“I don’t wish to return to the proverbial closet to feel safe in an assisted living situation. I want to feel safe, housed in a place where bigotry is denied entrance.”

—MADELINE, IL



“There’s this stereotype that gay people are all affluent. Truth is, most of us have led a hard life because of discrimination and lack of support. It’s sad that many of us who fought so hard for liberation are now alone, forgotten and barely surviving.”

—ARTHUR, NY

“[My husband and I] have no children and are estranged from our families because we are gay. I worry about entering an assisted living facility because I’ve heard about LGBT elders being abused by homophobic staff. I worry that we are totally on our own.”

—PETER, FL

117 ORGANIZATIONS
SIGNED SAGE’S
LETTER OF SUPPORT.



SAGE PARTNERED WITH THE DIVERSE ELDERS COALITION IN THIS EFFORT



The Diverse Elders Coalition represents millions of diverse older people and focuses on advocating for policies and programs that improve aging in our communities as American Indian/Alaska Native elders, Asian American/Pacific Islander elders, Black elders, Hispanic elders and LGBT elders. SAGE is one of five national organizations in the coalition.

Together, we submitted a total of **4,710** comments on the needs of diverse elders.

SAGE has been overwhelmed by forceful and poignant responses from LGBT elders and their allies.

NOW IS THE TIME TO ENSURE THAT THEIR VOICES ARE HEARD

sage™
sageusa.org

Essential Credentials

SAGECare's cultural competence training delivers

When you're sick and vulnerable you need the best possible care. This is why SAGE launched SAGECare, a program that trains aging service providers who are committed to creating safe and welcoming spaces for LGBT older people. Through this program, consumers can identify providers whose SAGECare credentials demonstrate the cultural competence of their staff.

Led by passionate and experienced professionals, SAGECare trainers dig deep into LGBT competency. The result? More providers are better prepared to talk to LGBT clients, family members and residents with true compassion and depth.

With levels of Platinum, Gold, Silver and Bronze, SAGECare credentials signal to LGBT people and allies the percentage of staff who are properly trained. LGBT and allied communities can immediately understand the efforts an agency has made toward becoming more inclusive and welcoming by searching *sageusa.care* or seeing an agency display their SAGECare credential.

SAGE asked two providers why SAGECare matters. Here's what they said:



Vassar Byrd
CEO, Rose Villa
Portland, Oregon

Why is it important for your staff to be trained on LGBT issues?

The training process is an opportunity for staff at all levels of Rose Villa to raise their awareness of the challenges that members of the LGBTQ community face throughout their lives, particularly when it comes to accessing healthcare, and how those experiences may influence how we approach serving members of that community.



Tim Johnston, SAGE's Assistant Director of Social Enterprise & Training addresses a crowd at Lutheran Care Center at Concord Village, Poughkeepsie, New York.

What draws you to SAGECare?

SAGE is a progressive, dynamic organization committed to improving the lives of the people they touch—we have great congruence in our missions. We want to have the best resources available for staff and residents to learn from, and we think SAGECare is one of them. I appreciate that the training is very practical as well as conceptual, detailed as well as big picture, and designed for front line staff as well as the supervisors who support them.

Why do you think providers should consider getting credentialed with SAGECare?

It can be difficult to clearly see your own processes and the way that bias may unintentionally come across to others. Bringing in outside experts like the people at SAGE is an opportunity to shift and refine your lens. There is always something new to learn, ways to improve, and new perspectives to inform the way you approach serving others.

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Victoria Jump,
Director, Ventura County Area
Agency on Aging (VCAAA)
Ventura, California

How did your staff benefit from the training?

VCAAA staff gained a greater understanding of the LGBT population, including relevant historical information and current challenges faced. The training offered the opportunity to expand our skill set in working with individuals from all backgrounds, so that we can provide the best possible services available.

What draws you to SAGECare?

The VCAAA is an all-inclusive agency that continuously strives to reach every resident of Ventura County. The services we provide are crucial to the populations we serve. Earning a SAGECare Platinum credential allows the VCAAA to broaden its reach and to promote tolerance through the services we offer.



SAGECare credentials indicate that a service provider has properly trained staff.

Why do you think providers should consider getting credentialed with SAGECare?

The best way to serve a population is to understand its needs. Teaming with an organization like SAGE, and working toward a SAGECare credential, allows providers to gain that understanding by using informative educational tools. Those tools result in superior service to the individuals we work with on a daily basis, which is the ultimate goal of the VCAAA.

Do you work for a service provider? Join more than 12,000 trained providers. Contact SAGECare today at sageusa.care/join. •



SAGE in the Capitol

In May, SAGE & Friends landed in the nation's capital, on top of the iconic Atlantic Plumbing Company building, to honor Congressman Mark Takano (pictured above with Michael Adams) and Bob Witeck of Witeck Communications. More than 125 supporters came out to learn more about SAGE's advocacy efforts and groundbreaking federal policy work in Washington, D.C.

SAGE & Friends: New Jersey

On September 10, SAGE threw its inaugural SAGE & Friends New Jersey event. Held at the home of Laurie Peter and Betsy Bernard in Morris County, New Jersey, SAGE carried the message of its national advocacy work and impact in the Garden State.



Welcome Home

LGBT age-friendly housing comes to New York City

Cheryl George had to leave her home in Brooklyn and move in with her daughter in Staten Island when she could no longer afford her own apartment. Cheryl struggles with health problems that make it hard for her to get around but still treks to Brooklyn, where she is an active member at the SAGE-GRIOT Innovative Senior Center. She calls it her “community” and “safe space.” Cheryl says that living with her daughter is taking a “toll on their relationship.” She seeks both independence and a sense of community. “Even though I have medical issues, I would like the freedom to do what I can.” Affordable housing in Brooklyn, she says, could “save her life.”

Like many LGBT older people, Cheryl’s search for safe, affordable housing is an urgent but difficult task. In addition to greater health problems, poverty and social isolation, LGBT elders often suffer profound discrimination when seeking housing. A 2014 report by the Equal Rights Center, with support from SAGE, found that 48% of LGBT older people applying for senior housing were subjected to discrimination. Affordability is also an issue for 42% of LGBT older people who fear they will outlive the money they have saved for retirement.

In response to these challenges, SAGE launched its National LGBT

The Ingersoll-Rand in Ft. Greene, Brooklyn, will be the largest LGBT-welcoming elder housing development in the nation.



SAGE participants learn more at SAGE’s NYC Housing Press Conference.

Elder Housing Initiative in 2014. With generous support from The Calamus Foundation, SAGE will build LGBT-welcoming senior housing, train housing providers on LGBT issues, and advocate for laws that outlaw discrimination. In addition, SAGE is committed to ensuring that consumers are educated about LGBT-welcoming housing options.

“I think this is a blessing. Having a place to feel safe in this homophobic world is very important.”

— ROBERT WALDRON

The Initiative took an important leap forward in June, when SAGE, along with public and private partners, announced plans to build two new LGBT-welcoming senior apartment buildings in New York City—the first in both New York City and New York State. “LGBT older people face a housing crisis. These groundbreaking developments are an important step toward combatting that crisis in New York City by providing not only affordable and welcoming housing, but also on-site services pioneered through

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SAGE's network of LGBT senior centers," said Michael Adams, Chief Executive Officer of SAGE.

Ingersoll Senior Residences, a collaboration between BFC Partners and SAGE, will be located on the northwest corner of Fort Greene Park in Brooklyn. Other partners include the New York City Housing Authority (NYCHA), NYC Housing and Preservation (HPD), and the New York City Housing Development Corporation (HDC). Ingersoll Senior Residence will be the largest LGBT-welcoming elder housing development in the nation.

Crotona Senior Residences will be located next to the lush 127-acre Crotona Park in the Bronx and will be developed by HELP USA and SAGE. HPD and NY State Homes and Community Renewal (HCR) will provide support. The 82-unit Crotona Senior Residences is financed in part by HCR's Low Income Housing Tax Credit Program, Housing Trust Fund Corporation and the Community Investment Fund. Bronx Borough President Ruben Diaz, Jr. and New York City Council Member Ritchie Torres also provided key funding for the project.

The Ingersoll and Crotona Senior Residences will be entirely comprised of affordable housing units. Tenants will also enjoy a range of supportive services, hot meals and high-quality cultural programming. On-site SAGE Centers at both locations will be modeled after SAGE's highly successful innovative Senior Centers across New York City.



SAGE HOUSING VIDEOS

SAGE worked with Citi Community Development to create a series of videos illustrating the many ways LGBT elders are discriminated against when it comes to housing.

Watch them here: sageusa.org/housingvids.

These developments are part of a growing nationwide trend toward LGBT age-friendly housing. New York City builds on precedents of LGBT-inclusive senior housing in Los Angeles, Philadelphia, Chicago and Minneapolis.

"I think this is a blessing," says Robert Waldron, another LGBT elder looking for housing. A previously vocal community member and tenants' rights activist, Robert has slowed down due to severe health problems and is also looking forward to SAGE housing. "Having a place to feel safe in this homophobic world is very important. Having a community as you age is very important." •



Photo courtesy of NYCHA

Michael Adams (CEO, SAGE) with NYC Council Member Ritchie Torres and SAGE participants.



The 82-unit Crotona Senior Residences will be located next to Crotona Park in the Bronx.



Did you know? SAGE's newly launched website, *Welcome Home*, is specifically designed to provide LGBT age-friendly housing resources from across the country. Learn more at sageusa.org/welcomehome.



FRIENDS



GARDENER



ACTIVIST



ARTIST

sageSM

**LGBT AGING
REIMAGINED**

SAGE 2016-2021
Strategic Plan



FASHION PLATES



DONORS



LIFETIME LEARNER



ATHLETE



VOLUNTEER



GRANDPARENT



SINGER

PRIORITY FOCUS:

TAKING CARE OF OUR OWN



No one should age alone. But for LGBT people, it happens all the time. That's because older lesbians, gay men, bisexuals, and transgender adults are far less likely to have children to help them as they get older. Their friends and loved ones pass away or also need help.

For nearly forty years, SAGE has prioritized the needs of our most vulnerable LGBT elders and we continue to do so. **In the coming years, SAGE will help many more by getting the LGBT community involved, working with key partners, and taking advantage of the possibilities offered by new technologies.**

NEW



SAGE NATIONAL LGBT ELDER HOTLINE

In November 2016, SAGE launched the SAGE National LGBT Elder Hotline. Offered in partnership with the GLBT National Help Center, the Hotline is staffed by trained volunteers who are there to listen and help.

Need support? Call 1-888-234-SAGE. Want to volunteer?
Visit sageusa.org/hotline.

Catalyze 500 LGBT and age-friendly communities.

PRIORITY FOCUS:

CREATING TIES ACROSS GENERATIONS



Older LGBT people have so much to offer to younger generations of LGBT folks, whether providing a career connection, relationship advice or filling in for a parent or grandparent. And younger LGBT people can provide new perspectives and support to LGBT elders.

That is why SAGE will help LGBT people from all generations to connect, creating bonds that make our community stronger.

NEW



SAGE TABLE

On one special day each year, SAGE and its partners will invite LGBT people to gather across generations as they break bread in homes, workplaces, community organizations and places of worship.

SAGE Table, produced in partnership with AARP, will launch in Los Angeles and New York State in 2017. Sign up to learn more at sageusa.org/sagetable.

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PRIORITY FOCUS:
LIVING FULLY



Aging offers its challenges but it can also provide new sources of growth and joy. From intellectual engagement to spiritual connection to recreation, to just kicking back with friends, the interests of LGBT older people are as diverse as the people themselves.

That's why **SAGE** will expand opportunities for older LGBT people to make the most of their lives through travel, volunteering, social gatherings and much more.



**LGBT-FRIENDLY GLOBAL
VOLUNTEERING OPPORTUNITIES**

NEW

Through a new partnership with Global Volunteers, SAGE will offer trips specially organized for LGBT older people who want to work on community-led projects. Our 2017 calendar includes adventures to Cuba and Thailand.

Teams will include LGBT people of all ages—yet another way that SAGE is promoting ties across generations.

Make a difference for 500,000 LGBT older people.

PRIORITY FOCUS:
**PROMOTING LGBT AND
AGE-FRIENDLY COMMUNITIES**



It wouldn't take much to ensure that older adults felt more welcome in LGBT events and spaces. They might, for instance, be more likely to attend LGBT events if they had places to sit, if the music wasn't so loud and the print wasn't so small.

Over the next five years, **SAGE** will advocate for practices and partnerships that ensure that those who pioneered LGBT communities are always welcome in them.



**CAMPAIGN FOR AGE-FRIENDLY
PRIDE CELEBRATIONS**

COMING SOON

Pride celebrations are a time for LGBT people to come together to celebrate our bonds, our diversity and our history—not to mention to have fun! In order to ensure that LGBT elders are welcome, **SAGE** will partner with CenterLink and the Center for Black Equity—the umbrella organizations for Black Prides nationwide—to create a “how to” guide for Pride celebrations to welcome and honor our elders.

REIMAGINE AGING...MOVE FORWARD WITH SAGE

THEN

- Struggles with sense of purpose since her wife passed
- Lacks opportunities to continue learning
- Rarely connects with LGBT community
- Wishes she had more friends of all ages



NOW



Heals through her regular support group



Travels to Cuba to volunteer with LGBT folks



Celebrates age-friendly Pride events



Mentors an LGBT youth

NOTHING ABOUT US WITHOUT US

In order to achieve this ambitious vision, SAGE will need to greatly expand the number of LGBT people and our allies who support this work. Here are some of the ways that you can join SAGE in making this vision a reality.



DONATE

Do you want to invest in your future? Consider making a donation to SAGE. We offer many ways to contribute. From becoming a monthly donor to naming SAGE as a beneficiary in your estate planning, you can make a difference today for tomorrow's elders. Learn more at sageusa.org/give.



VOLUNTEER

Are you known for throwing great dinner parties? Are you a great listener? Do you love traveling and volunteering?

Find out how your talents can make SAGE's vision a reality. Sign up to learn more at engagement@sageusa.org.



TALK BACK

SAGE will only be as successful as you make it. What are you excited about? What needs improvement?

We are stronger when we listen to each other, so talk back! Engage with us on Facebook or Twitter, or email us at engagement@sageusa.org. We can't wait to hear from you.

Learn more at sageusa.org/stratplan

 facebook.com/sageusa

 twitter.com/sageusa

One LGBT family.
Many generations.
Thousands of
undiscovered
connections.



SAGE is launching a nationwide movement to build intergenerational connections in the LGBT community. Sign up with SAGE Table to break bread with your LGBT family in Los Angeles and New York State this spring 2017.

Learn more at www.sageusa.org/sagetable.

sage™


sagetable

AARP®
Real Possibilities



Nareth Chuon

Live Long and Prosper with George Takei

The LGBT activist and social media superstar talks about diversity, career revivals, aging and optimism with SAGE CEO Michael Adams

Q SAGE believes that we have a responsibility to make diversity and inclusion a centerpiece of our purpose, our people and our work. You once said “diversity is one of the strengths of our society.” What does that mean to you?

George Takei: In addition to strength, with diversity we become a more vibrant, engaging and humane society. The community we live in gains strength by the power of the endowments of its members, be they muscular, intellectual or innovative. We also become richer for the performing, creative and artistic talents of the people. We become more vibrant by the inclusion of people of different cultures, histories, faiths and experiences. And we become a more humane society by embracing all people in

need. As we say on *Star Trek*, “infinite diversity in infinite combinations.”

Q How has playing a starship helmsman on television and steering public opinion in real life contributed to your career revival? Any tips for older workers out there?

Takei: In show business, there is the term “to be between engagements.” I don’t like not being engaged. All my life, I have not only pursued an acting career but have also created my own ‘engagements’ when not gainfully employed as an actor, whether it be political activism, public service, writing or, having discovered a fascinating advance in technology, social media. I don’t understand this thing called “retirement.” I think life is to be lived.

Above: George Takei speaks at SAGE & Friends LA Reception. For more, see page 23.



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Q This summer marked the one-year anniversary of the *Obergefell v. Hodges* ruling—what you called a “landmark day for all Americans.” What do you think the next frontier is for the LGBT community?

Takei: It is the backlash to nationwide marriage equality. Just as the Voting Rights Bill, which was signed by President Lyndon Johnson back in 1965, is still being resisted by those who are trying to place obstacles to access to the ballot box for minorities, the same kind of backlash is happening with nationwide marriage equality. The totally transparent cloak for this bigotry is the cry of “freedom of religion.” And the battleground now is the bathroom, of all places! But, as in Indiana and Arkansas in 2015 and North Carolina and Mississippi now, ultimately we will have to rescind their hateful laws. The struggle continues.

“To those of you who have been in the trenches since ’69 when Stonewall happened, we have a great profound gratitude to you. But also I feel that we have a debt... I’m grateful to all of you for what you’ve done.”

—GEORGE TAKEI AT SAGE & FRIENDS LA, APRIL 2016

Q You came to Twitter and Facebook when you were 74 and you now have millions of followers. These platforms have allowed you to push for LGBT rights across the country. You were the public face of #BoycottIndiana after the state enacted a religious freedom law that allowed people to deny services to LGBT people based on their religious beliefs. You also

led another social media charge against a similar law considered in Arkansas. Do you think we are going to be fighting bills like this for the next few years?

Takei: As I said above, the struggle for access to the ballot box is still being fought more than a half century after the Voting Rights Act was signed. But I also keep in mind that *Loving v. Virginia*, which granted interracial marriage, was ruled in 1967. When Brad and I were married in 2008, we were barely conscious of the fact that our marriage was interracial as well as same-sex. Our marriage was less than a half-century after *Loving v. Virginia*. I remain an optimist.

Q SAGE’s mission is to advance successful aging for our LGBT elders so that they can live a vibrant life. Physical health and humor are both important to you. What principles of successful aging would you say make the most difference?

Takei: There is no one magic formula. It is a combination of many qualities. Physical health and good humor are important parts. Keeping the mind and body engaged, which means exercising both regularly—ideally daily—is also essential. Eating well and in moderation is also key. An optimistic view of life is vital. I rejoice in each and every birthday. It was my grandmother’s favorite hobby. She amassed a handsome collection—104 of them. She was a cockeyed optimist.

My number one tip is to find joy in each and every day. Every morning, sunny or cloudy or rainy or torrid, is a wonderful gift. Enjoy it. ●

Transition Anxiety

Lesbian and transgender rights leaders talk with SAGE's Michael Adams about identity, inclusion and a movement in transition



MARA KEISLING
founded the National Center for Transgender Equality in 2003 and serves as its Executive Director.



KATE KENDELL
has served as Executive Director of the National Center for Lesbian Rights since 1996.



CARMEN VAZQUEZ
is Coordinator of the LGBT Health & Human Services Unit for the New York State Department of Health's AIDS Institute.



MICHAEL ADAMS
is Chief Executive Officer of SAGE and has led SAGE for 10 years.

Q Kate, in recent months, as more trans older people are getting involved in SAGE, we've had pushback from a small number of constituents who believe that transwomen should not take part in programs SAGE provides specifically for women and lesbians. In essence, they argue that transwomen haven't had the same gender experiences as cisgender women, given their different life histories and relationships with patriarchy, and that including transwomen in this programming denies cisgender women the ability to share their experiences with others like them. As a long-time feminist and the head of the National Center for Lesbian Rights (NCLR), what is your take on these arguments?

Kate Kendell: A dialogue about where there is allyship and commonality versus where there is difference is the place we should come from. All women, transgender or cisgender, approach any conversation in any space based on their own experiences. Rich women, whether cisgender or transgender, do not have the same experience around gender or patriarchy as poor women. Women of color do not have the same experience around misogyny, patriarchy and sexism as white women. It's important that we do not have an oppression test, or some sort of code that you must conform to in order to be in a conversation as a woman. Approaching the conversation where women are open to accepting different perspectives is the way to overcome a sense of difference or alienation from each other. For example, some women of privilege may have blind spots, where they don't understand the nuances of patriarchy. These blind spots exist for both cisgender and transgender women. In order for the space to feel open for all, there should be a cultural competency conversation about understanding how people come from different places.

Q Carmen, do these arguments surprise you? As a longtime activist and community intellectual, what's your perspective?

Carmen Vazquez: It doesn't surprise me at all. As a person who does not identify as transgender but is a gender-nonconforming

i A cisgender person is someone who believes their gender identity matches the one they were assigned at birth.

person, I have been the target of individuals who have used my female masculinity as a counter to my feminism. I understand the places where some of these women come from. But I agree with Kate that a conversation about alliance and where we have commonality in terms of sexism in this society is much more useful than a conversation about differences. It's really important that there be a way of understanding the place where these women live. I don't know who they are or what level of privilege they come from, but there's a conversation about gender that is very different from the conversation about the patriarchy 40 years ago. There is a desire to hang on to a perspective that isn't looking at the reality of what our LGBT conversation and community is about in terms of gender.

We have to remember a time when "lesbian" wasn't even a part of the lexicon. And we should remind our sisters of what it took to get to that place—the struggle with society to whom we were completely invisible. I certainly understand the necessity of bringing some intersectional analysis—also because I am a woman of color. We need to pay attention to what these women fear they will lose if they are in a place with transgender women.

Q Mara, SAGE's organizational philosophy is that anybody who identifies as a woman is welcome in women's programming, anybody who identifies as a lesbian is welcome in lesbian programming, and that we will not exclude trans people from any programming for which they otherwise qualify. NCTE is on the front lines of these kinds of conversations every day. Do we have it right, or is this approach and our thinking overly simplistic?

Mara Keisling: It's easy to fall victim to a kind of transition anxiety—"transition" in the sense that society is changing. There is a new America emerging, and we've all been hesitant to say that because we're afraid to face this transition anxiety. There are people who wouldn't have been welcome in the world before who we want to make room for now. And that makes some people uncomfortable. Just when you think you've found your place in society, society changes again. And we're seeing this now within the trans movement, and the trans communities (plural) where what it means to be trans is shifting constantly.

"Not only is society changing but the rules for how society changes are changing, and that's exciting—when you can actually have a part in changing the rules. That's where we can make some really big societal differences."

— MARA KEISLING

I don't think your approach is too simplistic, unless you think it can be static. Because it feels like, at least for the foreseeable future, that nothing static will survive. Not only is society changing but the rules for how society changes are changing, and that's exciting—when you can actually have a part in changing the rules. That's where we can make some really big societal differences. Sometimes it's hard as a marginalized person to be sensitive to other marginalized people, but we have a lot in common. No matter which group of us you separate out and look at specifically, that group is really not homogeneous at all. I think being as welcoming as possible will always be the right thing.

Q Kate and Carmen both noted this notion of the value of looking for the spaces of alliance and commonality for dialogue and discussion. I'm wondering, have any of you seen examples of similar situations that started in a fierce and oppositional place but ultimately became conversations that focus on alliance and commonality?

Vazquez: Part of the problem we have, and something I think we are moving away from, is that ours has been an identity-based politics forever, not a politics framed by human rights. When things center on identity and people feel that their identity is somehow being trampled on or taken away, they get defensive. That needs to change. To give you an example of where I thought a successful transition was made is what used to be called the Lesbian and Gay Community Services Center. When we were in the process of rebranding in 1994, we focused on our core ideals, vision and values (which included inclusion). It became increasingly clear that we could not say that those were our core values

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unless we changed our name to be inclusive of an emerging community that needed an enormous amount of support and a space to claim as its own. We did eventually become the LGBT Community Services Center. That was an important process to go through.

We cannot underestimate the importance of shifting the conversation away from identity and towards what our vision is of an inclusive SAGE or an inclusive movement, and what role all of us play in creating that space for inclusion of transgender people. Not just a support group here and there but to have transgender people woven into the fabric of SAGE as an organization. Also, when we talk about SAGE, it's an organization about people dealing with oppression on the basis of age. That is something that's common to all older women. A politics of gender and sexual rights is something SAGE should champion and be at the forefront of.

“Transgender issues are now where LGB issues, particularly lesbian and gay issues, were 20 or 30 years ago—access, employment, respect for personhood and autonomy. Those are issues at the forefront of the current fight.”

— KATE KENDELL

Keisling: What Carmen just said is so important. We have so many different kinds of oppression we have to battle right now. We should be trying to eliminate the oppression and not each other. That should always be the goal—to start thinking about the oppressions and not the identities.

Kendell: Also, sexism and misogyny exist so deeply for a queer-identified people. If we can make the world safe for a transgender woman of color in some small rural town, then lesbian, gay and bisexual people will be far better off. Recognizing the enemy of our liberation as the same enemy of transgender individuals puts us in a much better place now than we were when this conversation started.

Q **Kate, you've been the head of the National Center for Lesbian Rights since 1996.**

Currently at NCLR what are the trans projects that are front and center in your mind, and where do you hope to be in the near future?

Kendell: One question we always ask at NCLR is: who is being left behind? The second question is: what kind of country do we want to live in? Neither is particularly driven by identity. Although the first one is connected to identity to some degree, because in a nation that still has white supremacy at its core—and racism obviously still entrenched everywhere, and transphobia and homophobia—I think there is still a place for understanding that there will be individuals whose very identity makes them more of a target for oppression.

On Fire in the Pines!

This summer marked the 24th exciting year of SAGE's annual Fire Island Pines Celebration. Honorees Marc Cote & Jay Henry, Linda Gottlieb and Eric Sawyer joined more than 200 supporters to kick off Pride season at the lovely residence of Dr. Ed Schulhafer and Crayton Robey, raising awareness and donations. Refreshing cocktails by Ketel One Vodka spiced up the party!

Greg Henniger (Fire Island Pines Property Owners' Association Board Member), Doug Harris (SAGE Board Member), Crayton Robey (Pines Celebration Host), and Claibourn Hamilton (SAGE Pines Celebration Designer).



“When things center on identity and people feel that their identity is somehow being trampled on or taken away, they get defensive. That needs to change.”

— CARMEN VAZQUEZ

I agree with Carmen that you will miss some of who is most vulnerable if you make identity the only frame by which you view oppression or your critical work. Transgender Law Project—which started at NCLR and eventually became the Transgender Law Center—helped us understand that you can’t put a box around transgender issues or a transgender project because they’re a through-line in everything that we do. Transgender work at NCLR is now infused into every one of our project areas. Transgender issues are now where LGB issues, particularly lesbian and gay issues, were 20 or 30 years ago—access, employment, respect for personhood and autonomy. Those are issues at the forefront of the current fight.

Q Mara, in 2013 SAGE and NCTE joined forces on the report “Improving the Lives of Transgender Older Adults,” which provided a series of recommendations about how government policies need to change to stop discriminating against transgender elders and

start supporting them. Since then we’ve used the report as something of a roadmap for our policy advocacy on behalf of trans elders, and we’ve made some real progress. As you look ahead, given everything that’s happening in the world, what’s your prognosis on the likelihood that we can continue to make policy progress for trans older people? What makes you optimistic, and what keeps you up at night worrying?

Keisling: We’re absolutely going to keep making progress. We are advancing, and quickly. Now that could change. The question is will we advance as quickly as we have been. Elections have consequences and this election is dramatically significant in terms of what we’re talking about here. We’ve had a real hero in President Obama, who is not just the first president who has really worked on LGBT and trans issues and LGBT elder issues, but he’s been the best at it and almost as good as we could have hoped, and better than we did hope. We need to be bold. Trans people, like everyone else, just want to fit in. They want to feel welcome when they access services. Some people feel comfortable having services in non-queer spaces. Some people really feel like they need queer spaces or spaces that are a subset of the queer spaces. I hope we have learned by now, or we’ll learn soon, that we need to define those kinds of characteristics in as welcoming a way as we can. I’m extremely confident that we’re going to keep winning. •

Women’s Dance!

The women of SAGE showed off their dance moves at SAGE’s regular dances series in January, April and October at The Copacabana, a brand new venue for the dances. Started by volunteers in 1985, these special nights bring together women of all ages to support SAGE’s work with LGBT elders.

Live in NYC? Get tickets to the next dance at sageusa.org/womensdance.



SAGE EVENTS

Silver Fox

Jeffrey Erdman on leather, sex and giving meth the boot

Mr. LA Leather is a bona fide sex bomb, so when Jeffrey Erdman, 52, took the title earlier this year, he became the poster child for sex-positive aging. SAGE caught up with the legal eagle-turned-leather celeb to talk about sex, crystal meth and living with HIV.



Dusti Cunningham

Q You were the second oldest contender in the running for Mr. LA Leather, blowing away your 20-something competition. When it comes to sex, does age matter?

Jeffrey Erdman: I believe in being sex-positive—that older people have sex and should have sex, and should be talking about it. Many older people can still have enjoyable sex lives. For me, I'm going to keep putting myself out there and getting as much sex as I can until I fall over.

Q You made combatting crystal meth your Mr. LA Leather platform.

Erdman: I knew when I was Mr. Christopher Street West Leather that I wanted to do education and outreach on the crystal meth epidemic of men over 50. When I talked to people about it everyone was shocked, thinking only 20-year-olds did that drug. I felt we weren't doing enough to educate our community about drug use, particularly crystal meth use among the aging population, and too ready to accept that it's some young person's problem. People don't understand that drug use among the aging population is different. The reasons are different; the thing they're trying to achieve with it is different. The treatment has to be different. It's harder to diagnose oftentimes.

Q Why is the drug so popular with aging men?

Erdman: Crystal meth is like this fountain of youth for some people. Sometimes gay older adults turn to more illicit ways of trying to find that sense of sexuality and vitality. It makes them feel alive and excited and energetic, and they can attract [younger men]. They can use the drug as a form of currency.

Q So how do we beat it? How can we make older people feel alive, energetic and sexy?

Erdman: It's a complex problem. There's no easy answer, but one solution is to help people come to realize that we are all beautiful and sexy, even if we are older and have pot bellies with hair on our backs and balding. This is why I love my leather family.

“I believe in being sex-positive—that older people have sex and should have sex, and should be talking about it.”

They welcome everyone with open arms, no matter what. When you can find a way to reconnect in a sexual way without needing drugs, you'll be healthier and happier. The leather community is a place where



Robert Green/Motorboot Photography

Jeffrey Erdman was named Mr. Los Angeles Leather 2016.

that education can be done, or at least a means to make that education happen.

Q How is it to be a long-term HIV survivor?

Erdman: One thing that strikes me about being HIV+ at 52 is that half of people living with HIV in the United States are 50 or older. That's because transmission rates and death rates declined. It created this giant bubble of men growing older and being long-term survivors of HIV. This is a population that never thought they would be older. So it's a population that's ill-prepared for aging. Even I, as intelligent and successful as I

am, have no plan for retirement because I can't think of myself as ever being old enough to retire. It's an impossible concept for me to wrap my brain around. So we've got that extra challenge of providing for long-term HIV survivors who have completely different world perspectives.

That's why an organization like SAGE is so important, because we need to educate, we need to do policy shifting, and there needs to be advocacy among government agencies and funders and grantors. Somebody needs to start laying the foundation before we're too far behind to catch up. SAGE has been doing that work, and that's really important. •



SAGE & Friends: LA

On April 30, SAGE honored LGBT icon George Takei and Union Bank for their service to LGBT older adults. Pictured are Takei and Mr. LA Leather, Jeffrey Erdman. For more on Takei's aging journey, see page 16.

The next LA SAGE & Friends event will be held on March 4, 2017. Visit sageusa.org/events for details.

SAGE EVENTS



This article by SAGE community member Vega Subramaniam is part of a series of first-person stories about caregiving relationships.

A Photo with Vega

I was daughter-in-law and caregiver to a man who erased my marital status and asked my wife to disavow our relationship to others. Surprisingly, I wasn't hurt or angry. Maybe it's because I get the cultural differences. I've certainly had enough arguments with my mother to understand why someone would act that way.

Maybe it's because I get how homophobia makes people oblivious to the disrespect in saying, "For my comfort, lie and say your wife is your 'friend.'" The reality is that his daughter Mala and I are married, and Mala acts like we are, which is the only thing that matters.

Mala ended a relationship just before we got together in 1998. Raj, Mala's father, disapproved of her being a lesbian and banned her old girlfriend from his home. At some point he asked Mala directly if I was her partner. She refused to answer because it would change his behavior toward me—in other words, the answer was "yes." As long as our relationship was unconfirmed, Raj would allow me into his home. It didn't hurt that I spoke Tamil and came from the same South Indian community as he; I 'looked' like a daughter to him. Yet, we rarely engaged.

Time passed and Raj invested his energy and resources in me and our relationship. Since he was an accountant, Raj started doing our taxes. When we bought our home in Seattle, Raj and Picha, Mala's mom, lent us money. All of this, and still he barely acknowledged my existence.

In 2009, Mala and I moved back to the East Coast to be nearer to our parents. Picha's severe arthritis and diabetes caused her to be relatively immobile and unable to cook or otherwise care for herself or the household. Given her deafness, inability to sign and low English fluency, Picha was profoundly isolated. Raj invited us to move into their home; Mala's rent expenditures trumped his disapproval of our relationship. But we couldn't take that step.

In late 2012, Raj was in excruciating pain for reasons the doctors could not understand. Since he had been caregiver for Picha, his decline put a great strain on Mala, who was picking up the slack.

In 2013, Raj was diagnosed simultaneously with cancer and chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD). His need for care skyrocketed. When Raj was in treatment, Picha stayed with us in our one-bedroom apartment two miles away. Raj pleaded with Mala to move in. This time, we had to accept.

Even under one roof, Raj and I led largely separate lives. I was mostly upstairs in our office or away for business. That year Mala and I were able to get legally married in Maryland. Raj neither acknowledged nor attended the marriage. Still, I was an integral member of the caregiving crew. Raj saw how I left work instantly to deal with emergencies, made drugstore runs, cleaned, sent email updates, took care of Picha, kept spreadsheets updated and much more. Reluctantly, he saw the emotional support and depth of my devotion to his daughter, but the tension between us remained palpable. We went to great lengths to avoid being alone with each other. Our conversations were on an as-needed basis.

Raj and I remained aloof, even as he relied on me for his life, and I went about doing what needed to be done for the household. Raj introduced me as Mala's "friend" until the end of his life, urging her to do the same, despite the fact that we were legally married.

Then, five days before he died, the whole family gathered. Raj could barely breathe, move or speak. The family wanted photos to commemorate this final gathering. As designated photographer, I went through every configuration: dad with mom, dad with eldest daughter, dad with mom and all three daughters, and so on.

When I thought we had all the pictures, I started to put the camera away. It was then that Raj, barely audible, said, "I would also like a photo with Vega." •



Mala, Vega and Raj.

A Lasting Legacy

By Jerry Chasen

Over the course of 50 years spent together, Bill Hahn and Charles Magistro were unified by their desire to build a strong, beautiful community together. As a fierce minimalist, Bill considered even walls to be superfluous, while Charles loved to jam-pack the apartment with his treasures. Both shared a love of beautiful things. In the 1980s, their flair for aesthetics led them to SoHo, and inspired them to purchase an old manufacturing building with beautiful detailing at a time when few were investing in the real estate that neighborhood had to offer.

Thus was born the Ohio Theatre, described as a “converted factory space [with] hardwood floors, enormous ceilings, and double row of weight-bearing pillars that [proved] both a challenge and an inspiration to hundreds of downtown stage directors.” A director whose company had often used the space said, “It was one of the most flexible spaces imaginable.... We found ourselves not just writing for specific actors, but writing for the space itself.”

The couple witnessed many milestones for our movement in the years that followed, including their own legal marriage. Bill and Charles lived long and happy lives, passing away within one year of each other. Today, Bill and Charles’s impact remains transformative. When Bill and Charles decided to leave part of their legacy to SAGE—the largest bequest in SAGE’s history—they would in fact be helping to fuel SAGE’s ambitious new five-year strategic plan.

Our enormous gratitude to Bill and Charles is matched by our profound regret that we did not have the chance



to know Bill and Charles personally. SAGE was unable to acknowledge them when it mattered most: while they were still alive. Little did they know how fortuitous their gift would be for SAGE and for SAGE’s constituents.

Much like the building that housed the Ohio Theatre, plans like these require strong “weight-bearing pillars.” Charles Magistro and his husband Bill Hahn have helped to build a strong foundation through SAGE; one that will generate a lasting impact on behalf of LGBT elders for many years to come.





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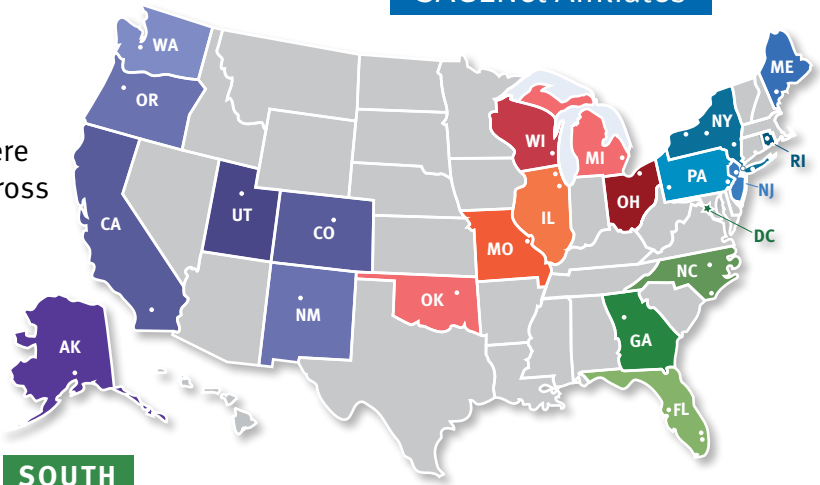
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