

THE MAGAZINE OF SERVICES & ADVOCACY FOR GLBT ELDERS

sageSM

Matters

SPRING 2014

SAGE'S
COMMITMENT
TO DIVERSITY
AND INCLUSION

THE LATEST NEWS
FROM D.C.

SAGE ADVICE
START END-OF-LIFE
PLANNING EARLY

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Services & Advocacy
for Gay, Lesbian Bisexual
& Transgender Elders

Because there's no expiration date on a full, active life

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sageMatters

SAGEMatters is the triannual 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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MESSAGE FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



It's hard to believe that we're already more than halfway through the first year in SAGE's new 3-year strategic plan! Our strategic blueprint outlines an exciting and ambitious agenda to continue transforming the aging experience for millions of LGBT older people—from forming new strategic alliances that can rapidly advance an LGBT aging policy agenda, to replicating the best practices in LGBT aging to improve the experiences of LGBT elders nationwide—and much more.

It's truly an exciting time for SAGE to be leading and partnering to produce game-changing progress!

One area of special significance in our new strategic plan is diversity and inclusion. SAGE has long driven the effort to integrate the experiences and needs of LGBT older adults into public policy, the aging and long-term care system, and the broader public conversation on aging in our country. Continually we have hammered away at the notion that leaders in these sectors must focus on the needs of LGBT elders. Through persistent effort, we have had a growing impact on various sectors—the aging network, long term care providers, and the LGBT community itself—reshaping their thinking to increasingly recognize that LGBT elders must be in the mix in meaningful ways.

Having said all that, SAGE also acknowledges—as we describe in our feature story in this issue of *SAGEMatters*—that we must heighten our focus on diversity and inclusion in order to better support the full breadth of LGBT people who are aging nationwide. We know we have much more work to do on this front, not only because it's the right thing to do, but also because it will powerfully increase our effectiveness in delivering on SAGE's mission to dramatically improve the quality of life for LGBT older people. Pioneers in the diversity and inclusion field have long described the many benefits that diversity and inclusion bring: reducing poverty and dangerous health disparities among those most at risk, combating inequality by promoting opportunity, and designing services that meet acute real-world needs. A focus on diversity and inclusion also leads to a more creative, innovative and effective workforce.

These are the reasons why we're so excited about SAGE's new diversity and inclusion campaign. Already, we're making major advances, as described in this issue of *SAGEMatters*. For example, we recently partnered with the National Hispanic Council on Aging to launch a landmark needs assessment on LGBT Hispanic elders—a rapidly growing population with distinct needs. And we launched a high profile social media campaign to connect LGBT people age 40+ to our employment readiness program, SAGE Works; employment insecurity and discrimination disproportionately affects older people, women and people of color, as three notable examples.

These exciting themes are laced throughout this latest issue of *SAGEMatters*. You'll see updates on key LGBT aging policy priorities and numerous educational events and training sessions that SAGE has led around the country. And you'll meet new staff and board members who have joined the SAGE team to help us in improving the lives of LGBT older people nationwide. As always, thank you for your support now and in the months ahead as we work to transform the LGBT aging experience across the country!

Michael Adams, *Executive Director*

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On cover: 2013 NYC Pride Parade—The SAGE contingent marches past our offices.

UPPING SAGE'S COMMITMENT TO DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION

Last Fall, SAGE launched a visionary strategic plan to guide its work over the next three years on behalf of LGBT older people. Among several top priority mandates, such as growing SAGE's national impact and expanding best practices in aging services, we committed ourselves to a new campaign to decisively strengthen SAGE's diversity and inclusion efforts. As aptly described in our strategic blueprint, "SAGE will integrate diversity and inclusion strategies into all of our internal and external functions. We'll also develop culturally competent service models that target more vulnerable elders, and we'll share this learning with our peers in the aging and LGBT field."

This article takes a look at SAGE's history of ensuring that LGBT older people are recognized by government, practitioners and the public at large—as well as our efforts to date to reach diverse older people from across the spectrum. It highlights the rationale and multiple benefits that undergird diversity and inclusion as a priority. And it shines a spotlight on some of SAGE's notable accomplishments in this area, with an eye toward the important progress we can and will make in the years ahead.

A HISTORY OF ADDRESSING EXCLUSION AND CREATING COMMUNITY

In many ways, the spirit of diversity and inclusion has been at the heart of SAGE since its beginning. In 1978, SAGE noted in one of its founding documents that its purpose was "to reach out to the older gay men and women who are living in isolation and without the help and support of a social and friendship network." SAGE's founders understood that LGBT people were living in a time of widespread misinformation and discrimination—a hardship that was compounded by the challenge of aging without family or supports. While attitudes toward LGBT people have evolved over the last few decades, these general challenges continue for too many LGBT older people, in all parts of the country.

In the ensuing decades, SAGE developed more and more programs to address the distinct needs of LGBT older people. Recognizing that many LGBT elders become homebound because of mobility issues related to disability and frailty, SAGE developed the country's first "friendly visiting" program for LGBT older

adults, which paired volunteers with homebound elders to reduce their isolation. Then, as the AIDS epidemic emerged and peaked in the '80s and early '90s, devastating a generation of LGBT people, SAGE developed the nation's first support group for LGBT older adults living with HIV/AIDS. Both of these programs still exist—at The SAGE Center in New York City and across many SAGE affiliates around the country—demonstrating that our innovations have withstood the test of time and that LGBT older people need consistent support as they age.

Just as the numbers of older people started exploding and gaining extensive public attention thanks to the aging of the Baby Boom generation, SAGE and our partners successfully pushed to help LGBT aging issues gain traction in the public conversation. By 2008, it had become clear that visibility alone would not change the reality on the ground for LGBT older people across the country and that SAGE's primarily local scope needed to evolve into a national approach in order to bring about game-changing progress. That change needed to touch public officials at every level of government, aging and long-term care practitioners nationwide, and LGBT communities and organizations of all sorts.

The strategic blueprint that SAGE adopted in 2008 helped the organization build a national presence, including by opening a federal policy office in Washington, DC and growing a network of 26 SAGE affiliates throughout the country. With breakthrough government support, we seeded the country's first technical assistance center for LGBT older people, SAGE's National Resource Center on LGBT Aging, and we launched the country's first full-time innovative senior center for LGBT older people, The SAGE Center in New York City. Both advances speak to the importance of providing services that meet the holistic needs of diverse LGBT older people, as well as helping aging professionals effectively serve their increasingly diverse clients. The guiding principle animating this chapter of SAGE's work has been that LGBT older people should feel affirmed, welcomed and at home, regardless of where they live or where they receive services.

THE BENEFITS OF DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION

While SAGE has made tremendous progress over the decades in reaching marginalized communities, we also acknowledge that we have fallen short in our commitment to effectively serve the full breadth of LGBT older people. SAGE's new strategic plan represents

our firm commitment to close that gap and to show what it means to lead when it comes to crafting and delivering on a truly inclusive LGBT aging agenda. SAGE has made this commitment not only because it's the right thing to do, but also because leaders in the diversity and inclusion field have persuasively demonstrated the concrete benefits that such efforts have on both the well-being of the people an organization serves and the health of the organization itself.

Among its many benefits, emphasizing diversity and inclusion:

- **Reduces social inequality, improves health and wellness, and creates economic opportunity for those most in need.** For example, a diversity and inclusion approach at SAGE can highlight and prioritize the acute needs of especially marginalized LGBT elders, providing them with greater social acceptance while addressing severe challenges like poverty.
- **Better reflects the true face of the community.** Research shows that our country's population is not only aging rapidly but also changing rapidly in its racial and ethnic composition. Today 1 in 5 elders in the U.S. is a person of color; by 2050 it will be 1 in 3.
- **More fairly distributes decision-making authority.** Studies show that people of color and transgender people are especially underrepresented in the places where important decisions get made, including at board and managerial levels; a diversity and inclusion approach can reverse these trends.

From Left to Right: Michael Mallon, Special Assistant & Liaison to the LGBT Community; Office of Council Member Daniel Dromm; Michael Adams, SAGE Executive Director; Dr. Yanira Cruz, President & CEO, NHCOA and NYC Councilmember Rosie Mendez.



■ **Leads to a more innovative and effective workforce.** Diverse workforces have been shown to reduce “group-think” and promote better problem solving. And research shows that diversity in the workplace reduces turnover and enhances employee satisfaction.

DID YOU KNOW?

Most Americans are open to diversity and supportive of steps to reduce inequality and see their benefits. According to an October 2013 poll released by the Center for American Progress and PolicyLink, 7 in 10 people support new steps to reduce racial and ethnic inequality—and only 10 percent believe that these steps would hurt the U.S. economy.

In the first year of our new 3-year strategic blueprint, SAGE has already begun delivering on its enhanced diversity and inclusion commitment. Some recent highlights and developments include:

- SAGE has released a landmark report on the health disparities facing LGBT older people of color—and the policy remedies that would improve their lives. The report has gained significant traction, and builds off the successes of a previous SAGE report on transgender elders, another important population that merits targeted attention and supports.
- SAGE is helping LGBT elders of color increase their visibility by telling their stories. Through an innovative partnership with The Freedom Center in Charlotte, North Carolina, SAGE is training older LGBT African Americans in how to tell their stories online.



Top photo: from left to right: Michael Adams of SAGE; Dr. Yanira Cruz and Jason Coates of the National Hispanic Council on Aging; Dr. Gary Gates of the Williams Institute at UCLA and Roz Lee of the Arcus Foundation. **Bottom photos:** Questions from the audience.

■ In February 2014, SAGE, the National Hispanic Council on Aging (NHCOA) and the Diverse Elders Coalition co-released the first-ever report on LGBT Hispanic older adults, authored by NHCOA. The report describes the numerous challenges faced by many Hispanic LGBT older people and has generated widespread attention among aging, health and LGBT leaders.

■ SAGE recently sponsored a major diversity and inclusion training initiative for its 26 affiliates around the country. This training engaged our local leaders in a mutual conversation about the ways in which diverse programs and services can better reach the full breadth of their communities, while simultaneously enhancing their overall programs and organizations.

■ This spring we're launching an ambitious multi-year effort to sustain and

strengthen SAGE Harlem, one of only two initiatives in the country specifically designed to provide broad-based services to LGBT elders of color. In June, we'll inaugurate SAGE's first-ever dedicated giving circle, designed to encourage community leaders to step up and support SAGE Harlem with major philanthropic gifts.

These important advances are just the beginning! SAGE has additional exciting projects brewing over the next two years that will help us reach more and more diverse LGBT older people. Follow us on Facebook and Twitter to learn more about these initiatives and the difference SAGE is making through its new diversity and inclusion campaign.

🔗 Read the full reports—and learn more about SAGE—at sageusa.org

THE LATEST NEWS FROM D.C.

By Aaron Tax, SAGE Director of Federal Government Relations

SAGE has been busy in our nation's capital advocating for LGBT-inclusive federal aging policies – including policies that recognize the growing population of HIV positive older adults. In this issue, we're highlighting three areas of policy accomplishments over the last few months.

OLDER AMERICANS ACT (OAA) REAUTHORIZATION

On January 6, 2014, the Senate Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions (HELP) Committee passed S 1562—a bi-partisan, OAA reauthorization bill—out of committee. While it included few of the aging network's priorities, many were glad that the bill brought us further down the road towards reauthorization. Meanwhile, work has begun on the reauthorization in the House. On January 10, 2014, several representatives introduced a bi-partisan, straight reauthorization, HR 3850, designed to demonstrate that bi-partisanship is possible. On February 11, 2014, the House held a hearing on the OAA, during which Rep. Suzanne Bonamici (D-OR) drew attention to the unique barriers to successful aging faced by LGBT older adults and spoke about the importance of an LGBT-inclusive reauthorization. And on February 28, 2014, Rep. Bonamici introduced the House Democratic bill, which built upon S 1562, the bi-partisan Senate bill. Echoing earlier bills introduced by Sen. Michael Bennet (D-CO) and

Sen. Bernie Sanders (I-VT), her bill included all of our LGBT-inclusive priorities, including: (1) designating LGBT older adults as a group of greatest social need; (2) data collection; and (3) permanently establishing SAGE's National Resource Center on LGBT Aging. While this is a great start, we look forward to tackling the challenges ahead as the process continues.

HIV & AGING

SAGE and our allies ACRIA (AIDS Community Research Initiative of America) and GMHC continue to advocate for and raise awareness about HIV-positive older adults. Our three top priorities remain: (1) eliminating the upper age limit on "routine" HIV testing for all adults, which would expand routine, or universal, testing to include all adults without regard to age or a provider's assessment of risk; (2) reporting surveillance data in five-year increments across multiple risk categories; and (3) funding for targeted prevention among older adults, most notably among older women of color, and men of color who have sex with men. To that end, on February 5, 2014, Dan Tietz, Executive Director of ACRIA,

and Aaron Tax from SAGE presented to the full meeting of the Leadership Council of Aging Organizations on these issues to help raise awareness across 65 leading national organizations in the aging network.

WINDSOR IMPLEMENTATION

To date, those in civil union unions and domestic partnerships as well as those in non-marriage states still do not have access to Social Security spousal benefits. As a result, SAGE has been working with our aging and LGBT allies to push the Social Security Administration (SSA) to more swiftly and expansively implement the June 26, 2013 *United States v. Windsor* decision, which struck down the Defense of Marriage Act. SAGE has also provided ideas to SSA on how to engage in outreach with LGBT older adults. We recognize that every day there is a delay more same-sex married couples suffer—so we will continue pushing SSA on this front. It's important to note that if you think you might be eligible for new or increased benefits, you should apply. There is no penalty for doing so, and benefits are retroactive to the date of application.

EMPLOYMENT AND WORKFORCE

FROM SAGE'S NATIONAL RESOURCE CENTER ON LGBT AGING

The number of older adults in the U.S. workforce is growing, though many older workers are mistakenly seen as not having the same value as younger employees. LGBT older workers face additional barriers, including bias based on sexual orientation and gender identity. To date, there are no federal laws explicitly protecting people from being fired based on one's sexual orientation or gender identity. Given that so much of this country's financial security comes from current and past employment—including income, Social Security benefits,

pensions and more—SAGE's National Resource Center on LGBT Aging created a website section devoted entirely to resources on these issues.

SAGEWORKS

A National Employment Support Program for LGBT Workers 40+

SAGEWorks lets LGBT people age 40 and older know they are not alone in a competitive edge in employment can be challenging.

Given the need for workforce supports for LGBT older adults age 40 and older, SAGE's National Resource Center on LGBT Aging (NRC) launched the SAGEWorks program.

SAGEWorks is a national employment support program for lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) older adults age 40 and older that expands participants' job hunting skills and connects them to diverse high-caliber candidates. Recognizing the importance of remaining in the competitive job market, SAGEWorks provides hands-on workshops, led at various sites around the country.

Research shows that people have difficulties finding jobs or securing pay raises—employers prefer younger workers who they assume to be more energetic. For LGBT people, this job security is complicated by the legal protections in the workplace.

SAGEWorks offers a place where LGBT older people can find a peer network, gain employment training, as well as a space where they can freely share their experiences. We believe employers and business know the value of diverse talent. We believe that their workforce is inclusive of older people and employers to high-quality candidates that meet these criteria.

SAGEWorks is making a real difference in the lives of LGBT adults, and more than 1,000 individuals affected by job loss have taken advantage of the program. Participants wrote to the SAGEWorks Program Manager to thank her for her help. One participant wrote: "I generate floor plans for buildings and I am a staff at SAGE Works enough for getting me out of my funk and helping me person again. The confidence I acquired at SAGE and the feedback on my resume through the interviewing process."

SAGEWorks is a National Program and exists at the following SAGE sites:

- SAGE at The SAGE Center (New York City)
- SAGE at the Center on Halsted (Chicago)
- SAGE of the Rockies (Denver)
- SAGE at the William Way Center (Philadelphia)
- SAGE at the LGBT Community Center of the Desert (Palm Springs)
- SAGE of South Florida at the Pride Center at Equality Park

For more information, visit us on the web at <http://sageusa.org/sageworks> through the generous support of the Walmart Foundation.

Visit our newly redesigned website www.lgbtagingcenter.org, and go to the **Employment and Workforce** section to see these new resources, including cutting-edge reports from partner organizations, NRC-exclusive articles, and a new video with first-hand testimonials from LGBT older adults navigating the workforce.

From top: Lambda Legal's Employment Discrimination and LGBT Seniors; Information on the SAGEWorks employment program; A Broken Bargain, the Movement Advancement Project's report on employment discrimination.



LEGACY AND SUCCESSFUL AGING



Jerry Chasen, SAGE's new Director of Legacy Planning talks about Legacy and Successful Aging

WHAT DO WE MEAN BY "LEGACY"?

A fair definition is: what we each leave behind when we're gone. That in turn is made up of what we do and what we give. Legacy planning, then, is putting energy into planning each of these areas.

In regards to "what we give," my position includes cultivating and encouraging planned gifts to SAGE (i.e. gifts made in conjunction with estate and financial plans). While SAGE has long benefitted from planned gifts, it has never had a staff member dedicated solely to coordinating that effort. Thanks to a very generous grant from a major donor—itsself a planned gift—we've been able to support and acknowledge those who choose to make SAGE part of their own legacies.

Examining "what we do" is an equally critical aspect of my position. Individually, and as a generation, our legacy of deeds is remarkable, having accomplished a seismic shift in human rights. We're not done, for sure, but we're farther along than I ever thought I would see. The question now is whether that extraordinary legacy will be further burnished by "what we do" as LGBT older adults.

Today's generation of LGBT older people faces greater challenges than the general aging community. We confront higher rates of isolation and depression. We rely on a lateral support system instead of a multi-generational one, which means that support likely thins as we age. And we are often reluctant to seek help from institutions that we perceive as being hostile to who we are as LGBT people.

So there is something of a premium on our ability to "age successfully"—to maintain a relatively low risk of disease and disease-related disability, to keep high mental and physical function, and to enjoy an active engagement with life.

"Today's generation of LGBT older people faces greater challenges than the general aging community."

—JERRY CHASEN

The good news is that a lot of what goes into "successful aging" is a matter of choice, and conversations about those choices make up the rest of my job's duties. SAGE has teased out five themes

for that conversation, which we'll begin unveiling in fall 2014: Preparation, Wellness, Momentum, Reflection, and Legacy. We'll be drawing on those themes through town meetings all over the country and through various online resources that offer lessons to LGBT older people age 45 and older. Stay tuned.

SO WHY ME IN THIS JOB?

I was an estate planner for most of my professional career with a boutique estate planning practice focusing on philanthropic gifts and the LGBT community. I was also a certified life coach, often working on the non-financial issues of retirement. At 62, I was ready for a new challenge. I jumped at the chance to combine passion with career.

Successful aging will be the capstone on the already extraordinary legacy of our current older adult generation. Together with all of SAGE's supporters, part of my legacy will be helping to make that happen.

TRACY WELSH

SAGE's new Deputy Executive Director and Chief Financial Officer

In September 2013, Tracy Welsh began as SAGE's Senior Director for Finance, Operations and Planning. Fast-forward to 2014 and Tracy has become SAGE's new Deputy Executive Director & Chief Financial Officer. Meet Tracy.

HER EXTENSIVE EXPERIENCE:

Tracy Welsh has more than 20 years of experience in providing critical legal and advocacy services for people living with HIV/AIDS and championing positive women's health and empowerment. Before joining SAGE, she was the Executive Director of the HIV Law Project, where her expert business planning led to the successful merger of the HIV Law Project with the larger national organization, Housing Works.

HER FORMIDABLE SKILLS:

"Tracy is that rare non-profit leader who combines a deep commitment to social justice with outstanding financial acumen, business savvy and a powerful entrepreneurial spirit," said Michael Adams, executive director of SAGE. "She is exactly who SAGE needs as its Deputy Executive Director to help ensure that we continue our cutting-edge work on behalf of the rapidly growing population of LGBT older people."

HER EXCITEMENT:

"I am excited to step into this new role, which will involve driving down an ambitious strategic plan, developing new strategic alliances and partnerships, and taking an entrepreneurial approach to long-term sustainability," Welsh said. "I believe SAGE is poised to continue as the leading organization for LGBT older adults and their allies in the nation. I look forward to working closely with our board, supporters, constituents and other organizations in the LGBT and aging fields to make this a reality."

HER IMPRESSIVE TRACK RECORD:

Tracy's history of entrepreneurialism places her in a unique position to create a better system for the delivery of services for LGBT older adults. For example, as the founder for the Center for Women and HIV Advocacy, which was created to meet the needs of women living with HIV/AIDS, Welsh has first-hand knowledge on how to balance successful program implementation with national

policy efforts. Welsh holds a Juris Doctorate from CUNY School of Law and a Masters in Policy and Public Administration from Columbia University's School of International and Public Affairs.



WHO'S WHO ON THE SAGE DEVELOPMENT TEAM

SAGE's development team ensures that SAGE remains sustainable for generations to come—broadening our network of supporters and partnering with leaders in the public and private sectors. We asked them to offer us a glimpse into their work. Here are their thoughts.



KEITH BUTLER

Director of Major Gifts

What is the biggest stereotype about fundraising? For me, the biggest stereotypes about fundraising are that all we do is beg for dollars, and the only reason we're interested in someone is so they'll write a check. I came to development because it was the perfect combination of my different skills and interests; I love to write, I love to learn new things about people and organizations, and I love to share my own experiences and find similarities with others. I stay in development because at the end of the day, it's all about building trusting relationships with people.

What's the best part of your job? The best part of working at SAGE is being

right in the midst of what I'm working to support. When I'm having a stressful day, all I need to do is go upstairs to The SAGE Center and my reason for working at SAGE is there. I'm working to ensure these LGBT older adults—these pioneers—are afforded dignity and self-respect.

JERRY CHASEN

Director of Legacy Planning

What is the biggest stereotype about fundraising? It's not just about the money! Fundraising is about relationship and values, not just how money best expresses all that. I love hearing about the



lives people have led and what impact they want to leave behind. Whether or not that translates into a contribution for

SAGE, I believe that more and more people want to talk about their legacy.

What book would you want with you on a deserted island? A deserted island? I would bring my iPad, assuming there is wifi, of course!



KENNETH COX

Senior Director for Institutional Advancement

What is the biggest stereotype about fundraising? The stereotype I face daily is that fundraising is only about money. While our goal is to raise funds for our work, our real job is to create relationships. Some days we tell stories of courage—like when a constituent comes to SAGE for the first time or comes out later in life. Other days, we just strive to keep the issues that LGBT older

adults face in front of policy leaders by picking up the phone, sharing stories or making appearances. Every time we get the chance to share what we do with a donor, we get the chance to bring another person on-board to support our critical work around the nation.



CHRIS FRANCIS

Database Manager

What is the biggest stereotype about fundraising? Being able to maintain a near perfect database is the best part of my job!

What book would you want with you on a deserted island? If I had to be stranded on a deserted island, I would want lots of DC comics to keep me occupied.

SCOTT FRENCH

Director of Institutional Giving

What is the biggest stereotype about fundraising? A lot of people think that



people who work in fundraising are focused on hitting certain income targets. While targets are important, the best fundraising is built upon a commitment to organizational mission, as this creates relationships with funders deeply rooted in the organization's goals and helps to build long-term funding relationships.

What's the best part of your job? I love seeing the "light bulb" effect happen when talking with a funder. At some point in the conversation, you can physically see that someone fully grasps what a partnership with SAGE can accomplish and how it can impact the lived experiences of LGBT older adults across the country.

What book would you want with you on a deserted island? *To Kill a Mockingbird* by Harper Lee.



ELISE COLOMER GRIMALDI

Assistant Director of Institutional Giving

What is the biggest stereotype about fundraising? I think a common notion is that nonprofits lack the expertise and capacity to create shared-value partnerships with the private sector, which consider both social impact and the bottom line.

What's the best part of your job? Having worked internationally for much of my career, being able to take an elevator nine floors up to interact with constituents is the best part of my job.

What book would you want with you on a deserted island? I would probably bring along Pablo Neruda's *Twenty Love Poems* and a *Song of Despair* to any island, deserted or not!



JUSTIN ROSADO

Development Associate

What is the biggest stereotype about fundraising? One stereotype people have is that only rich people donate money. We have people giving at all levels—from \$1 and up!

What's the best part of your job? The best part about working at SAGE is the dedicated and amazing staff.

What book would you want with you on a deserted island? I would definitely bring *How to Survive on a Deserted Island* by Tim O'Shei with me on a deserted island.

GEORGE ZUBER JOINS SAGE FROM FORT LAUDERDALE, FL



This winter, SAGE welcomes George Zuber to its national board of directors. Zuber is a longtime LGBT advocate and the first SAGE board member from Fort Lauderdale, Florida. Zuber shares some insights on why he became involved with SAGE and what we can achieve together.

What attracted you about joining the SAGE board of directors? I had the opportunity to watch SAGE go through an incredible metamorphosis over the past decade as it has become one of the leading national organizations effectively advocating for the fair and equal treatment of all LGBT older adults. Because of the involvement of friends and colleagues with all aspects of SAGE—particularly as SAGE officers, donors and service providers—I have seen how much SAGE accomplishes with the limited financial resources typical of most national organizations serving the LGBT community. I am thrilled with the vision that Michael Adams and the staff bring to SAGE every day.

Can you define the importance of SAGE's mission in your life? Over the past years, the principle focus of the LGBT community has been on issues of marriage equality, fair treatment in housing, healthcare, the workplace and

safeguarding our youth. Those issues are extraordinarily important, but we cannot afford to ignore the needs of our older adults. Many of our elders, including pioneers who risked everything to make our lives safer and happier, are now among the most vulnerable within the LGBT community. SAGE's advocacy is critical in providing our older adult community with essential government services, meaningful connections with peers, and safe and respectful services in assisted living environments. Supporting SAGE's mission will be an immense benefit to all of us someday.

What do you hope to accomplish as a Board member? I look forward to helping increase awareness of the important work of SAGE throughout the country. I believe that greater national awareness among members of the LGBT community and their allies will foster support for SAGE's advocacy for change in how LGBT older adults are respected and treated by both

public and private institutions throughout the United States. I also wish to encourage creativity with local organizations to team with SAGE in developing new programs responsive to the needs of LGBT older adults in their community.

George Zuber has over 30 years of professional experience as a CPA. He recently retired as a partner in the New York Office of Deloitte where he provided audit services to many valued clients and recently specialized in forensic investigations and dispute services. He also served on the Deloitte Touche Tomatsu Global Executive Committee as the firm's specialist in arbitrations and as the Diversity & Inclusion Partner. He is a former board member of Lambda Legal and has been a trustee of the Actors Fund since 2006.

NEW YORK CITY SERVICES & PROGRAMS

SAGE offers dozens of activities, groups and programs that encourage LGBT older adults to stay connected with each other and the community. With venues in Manhattan and Brooklyn, we provide an array of English and Spanish-speaking programs, including:

SUPPORT GROUPS

Bereavement
Breaking Anxiety & Depression
From Isolation to Socialization
Dating & Intimacy
Multiple Sclerosis
Women Our Evolving Lives
Women's Relationship Group

SAGE POSITIVE

Case Management
Men's HIV Support Group
HIV Prevention/Education
New Beginnings Harlem
Men's HIV Group

THE SAGE CENTER

HOT DINNER

M-F 5:00-6:30 PM

\$2 suggested donation
for 60 yrs and older;
\$4 for others

SOCIAL SERVICE CASE ASSISTANCE

By appointment:
M-F 3:30-6:30 PM
Drop-in: M, W, F
2:00-3:00 PM

HEALTH, WELLNESS AND FITNESS PROGRAMS

Beth Israel Nurse Services
Wellness Groups
Health and Wellness
Presentations
Men's Cancer Survivor Group
Women's Cancer Survivor Group
McBurney YMCA Voucher
Program
SAGE Walking Club
Yoga

Zumba
SAGErcize
Health Fair
Wii Bowling and Boxing
Meditation
Tai Chi and Qi Gong
Ping Pong

ARTS AND CULTURE PROGRAMS

Booklovers Discussion
Foreign Language Classes
Intergenerational Theater
Workshop & Films
Theatre Desk
Morning at the Opera
Walks/Outings to Cultural
Institutions
Knitting Group
Creative Writing Workshops
Art Classes
Musical Theater Writing
Workshop
SAGE Singers
Singing Out!
SAGE Center Library
Musical Performances and
Concerts

SAGECAP—CAREGIVERS

Support Groups
(afternoons and evenings)
Respite Support
Supplementary Help
Friendly Visiting
Home Care
Lend-A-Hand

SAGECAP—CARING AND PREPARING INITIATIVE

DISCUSSION GROUPS

Conscious Creative Aging
Current Events
Life Issues Beyond Retirement
Thursday Men's
Discussion Group
Men's 50+ Discussion Group
75+ Senior Elders Group
Women's Discussion Group
Current Events

SOCIAL

Bridge
Mah Jong
Brunch
Bus Trips
Daily Drop-In at LGBT Center
Genealogy
SAGE Center Cafe
Dating and Relationship
Programs
Gay Pride Celebrations
History and Heritage Programs
Holiday Parties
Intergenerational Programs
SAGE Socials
Women's Dances
Women's Programs

INFORMATION PROGRAMS

Ask the Docs
Ask the Pharmacist
Drop-in Community Meetings
Legal Clinic
Money and Finance Programs
Volunteer Orientation
Outreach and Tabling

SAGEWORKS

Orientations

Skills Building Seminars
Computer Classes
Job Coaching Sessions
Resume Assistance
Cyber Center Walk-in

BROOKLYN


Case Management
Need Listing

HARLEM

Health & Wellness
Presentations
Arts + Craft for Healing
Buddy-2-Buddy
Case Management
Women's Support Group
Cultural & Social Programs
Men's Support Group
New Beginnings Men's HIV
Support Group
Latino Men's Support Group
(Spanish)
HEAT (Harlem Elders Aging
Together) Meetings
Meditation Comes to Harlem
(AA Meeting)

SOCIAL SERVICES

Information and Referrals
Case Management
Benefits and Entitlement
Assistance
Friendly Visiting
Brief one-on-one counseling
Support Groups

 For a full listing of SAGE activities, including a calendar of events, please visit us at sageusa.org.

Over the past several months, SAGE led and participated in a number of activities throughout the country, including our national headquarters, in New York City—home to the country’s first full-time, innovative, LGBT senior center. Here, in words and photos, are the highlights. For more photos, visit flickr.com/sageusa.

VIRTUAL BOWLING BUILDS REAL CONNECTIONS. In late October, a group of LGBT older people got together to play some games. But we're not talking about Canasta or Bridge. Partnering with Microsoft, SAGE is hosting weekly Xbox Bowling tournaments. Participants in “Exergamers NYC,” including blind and low-vision seniors, utilize Kinect for Xbox as a fun way to stay active while keeping up with technology. “The Xbox has created new friendships among our members,” says SAGE program manager Sarah Savino. “People who may not normally sit with each other at dinner now do because they come to play and support each other on the Xbox every week.”

TOYS AND HOLIDAY CHEER. On December 15, SAGE, along with hosts Robbie Brown, David Tufts, and Chris Kann held the 28th Annual Toys Party at Chelsea Piers, Pier 60. Hailed as the best LGBT holiday party of the year, over 2,500 attendees donated toys that were delivered to various local charities for children during the holiday season. Inside, guests mixed and mingled to the sounds of DJ Johnny Dynell while enjoying cocktails and photo booths. Special guest Lorraine Bracco introduced Mayor Bloomberg, who attended his last Toys Party as Mayor of New York City.



Former Mayor Michael Bloomberg at the 2013 Annual Toys Party.

NEW! MONTHLY TEA DANCES AT HENRIETTA HUDSON’S. More than 150 LBT women showed their support for SAGE by getting their groove on at famed lesbian lounge Henrietta Hudson on December 22. The festive night was the start of many, as we are thrilled that Henrietta Hudson—considered one of the best lesbian bars in NYC—will be hosting a series of Tea Dances throughout the year to raise money and support for SAGE.



Hakim Rashad McMillan & former SAGE Board Member, David Tufts, volunteer at The SAGE Center's Christmas lunch.

SAGE FAMILY CHRISTMAS. Christmas Day brought together friends old and new to celebrate the holiday and acknowledge another year of love and support from the SAGE family. Guests enjoyed a delicious lunch complete with a wide assortment of holiday treats. This annual tradition is always a joyous occasion and an opportunity to reflect on how blessed we are to have our SAGE community and each other.

TOASTING TO HEALTH AND HAPPINESS. On December 31, SAGE opened its doors for a special New Year’s lunch. Members and their guests enjoyed a delicious healthy meal and reflected on 2013. It was the perfect way to kick off the New Year and start 2014 off on the right foot.

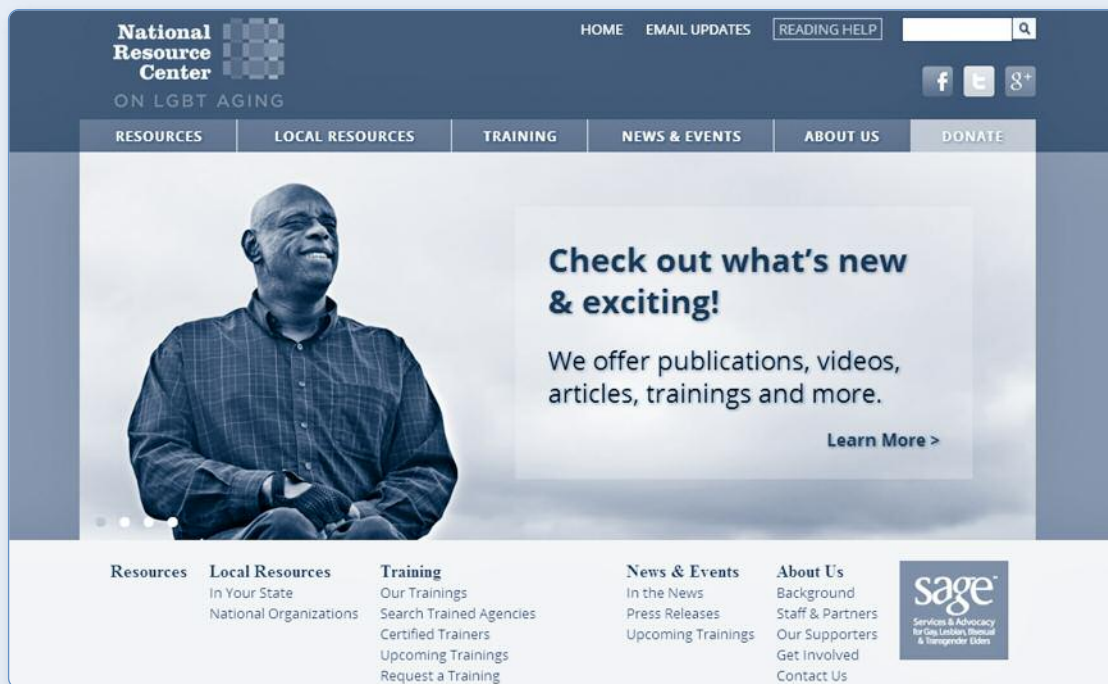
NEW SITE, NEW RESOURCES FOR THE NRC.

On January 15, SAGE unveiled the new-and-improved National Resource Center on LGBT Aging (NRC) website. The NRC is the country's first and only technical assistance resource center aimed at improving the quality of services and supports offered to lesbian, gay, bisexual and/or transgender older adults. Established in 2010 through a federal grant from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, the NRC provides training, technical assistance, and educational resources to aging providers, LGBT organizations and LGBT older adults. SAGE collaborates with 18 leading organizations from around the country to ensure that the site is comprehensive and user-friendly. Some of our new features include a Volunteer Education program, new training opportunities, and more in-depth information on age-related health and wellness concerns. Check out these brand new features and programs at lgbtagingcenter.org and let us know what you think!

HAPPY 2ND BIRTHDAY TO THE SAGE CENTER. January 18 marked the second anniversary for The SAGE Center, the first innovative LGBT senior center in the country. To commemorate and celebrate this exciting milestone, a group of members and volunteers gathered to share stories, snacks, drinks, and a delicious anniversary cake. The festive night included music by the talented SAGE Singers and a high-energy dance party complete with bouncing disco lights. It was an altogether perfect way to celebrate the birth of this important and significant place that is providing support to so many.

BEST WOMEN'S WINTER DANCE BRINGS DOWN THE ROOF.

Now celebrating their 25th year, the Best Women's Dance parties just keep getting better. The Winter Dance, held on January 19, was no exception. More than 300 LBT women gathered at midtown's Club LQ to show off their moves in support of SAGE. It was a memorable night bringing together fabulous women and great music, all with the perfect excuse to stay out late on a school night.



SOCIAL MEDIA CAMPAIGN BRINGS NATIONAL ATTENTION TO SAGEWORKS.

On January 27, SAGE launched a weeklong social media campaign promoting SAGEWorks, the only national employment support program for LGBT people age 40 and older. The campaign included Facebook memes, tweets, an exclusive hashtag (#SAGEWorks), blog posts and bulletins on LinkedIn. The theme "SAGEWorks Works" focused on spreading the word about what SAGEWorks has to offer, as well as educating employers and organizations about the skilled workers who've gone through the program. The campaign was a huge success, introducing people to the SAGEWorks website and new LinkedIn group as well as registering new participants to the program nationwide.

"SAGEWorks ENABLED me to hit the reset button on my LIFE."
-Greg

SAGE WORKS



"I'm very grateful for SAGEWorks. It is a **VALUABLE** and much appreciated resource for many of us to have ready access to. I look forward to its continued expansion and growth."
-Melissa

SAGE WORKS



STU MADDUX AWARDED FOR GROUNDBREAKING DOCUMENTARY ON LGBT AGING.

At the 2014 Creating Change conference, SAGE was thrilled to give the SAGE Advocacy Award for Excellence in Leadership on Aging Issues to Stu Maddux (pictured below), the award-winning producer and director of the massively



influential *Gen Silent*, a beautiful though heart-wrenching film journey that chronicles the lives of six LGBT elders as they navigate aging, care-giving, terminal illness, and loss. “Almost every day in my conversations with LGBT and aging providers, activists, constituents, students, researchers and members of the media, someone cites this remarkable film as an inspiration, cause for action and—very often—for their realization that LGBT elders face unique challenges as they age,” says Serena Worthington, SAGE’s Director of National Field Initiatives. Maddux was honored at Creating Change, the nation’s pre-eminent political, leadership and skills-building conference for the LGBT social justice movement.

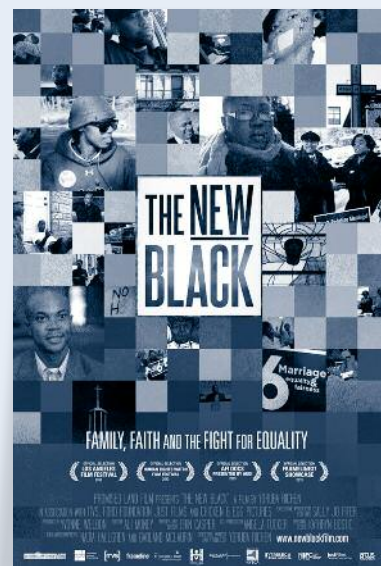


A crowd gathered for SAGE & Friends in Miami

SAGE MEETS NEW FRIENDS IN MIAMI. More than 100 SAGE supporters gathered in Miami on January 31 for SAGE & Friends, SAGE’s first ticketed event outside of New York City. Held in conjunction with our triennial National Board Meeting, the group mixed and mingled with members of the board, including executive director Michael Adams, while enjoying cocktails, hors d’oeuvres, and fabulous music by Miami pianist Sam Garner. SAGE & Friends was a huge success for the organization, spreading our message on LGBT aging to new supporters and friends.

DOCUMENTARY SCREENING OF THE NEW BLACK AT THE FILM FORUM.

In honor of Black History Month, on February 12 SAGE members and friends met at the Film Forum in the West Village for a special afternoon screening of *The New Black*. Written, directed and produced by Yoruba Richen, this critically acclaimed documentary explores how the African-American community is grappling with the gay rights issue in light of the recent marriage equality movement and the fight over civil rights. The film documents activists, families and clergy on both sides of the campaign to legalize gay marriage. It examines homophobia in the black community’s institutional pillar—the black church—and reveals the Christian right wing’s strategy of exploiting this phenomenon in order to pursue an anti-gay political agenda.



LGBT-FRIENDLY SENIOR HOUSING COMPLEX OPENS IN PHILADELPHIA.

On January 14, Philadelphia became the third city—after Minneapolis and Los Angeles—to offer designated LGBT friendly, affordable senior housing. The \$19.5 million Anderson Apartments, named for city councilman John C. Anderson who fought for gay rights in the early 80s, sits in the affectionately nicknamed “Gayborhood.” When the leasing office opened last fall, hopeful tenants sat in a block-long line to drop off applications. At the 56-unit building, monthly rents range from \$192 to \$786 based on income and nearly all the residents identify as LGBT. Two more LGBT-friendly complexes are under construction in Chicago and San Francisco.



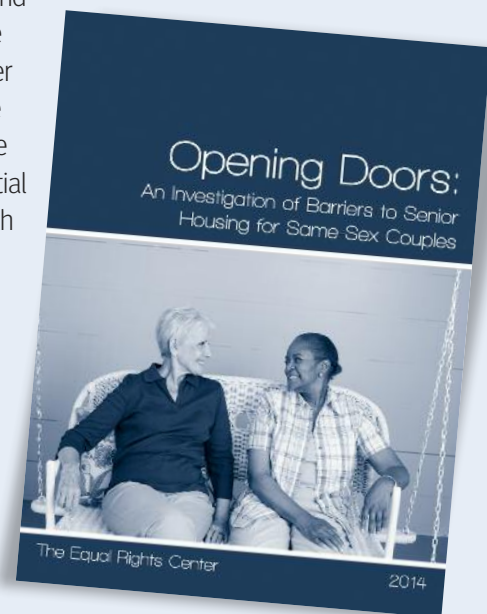
John C. Anderson Apartment Building Photo Credit: Philly.com, David M. Warren, Staff Photographer

SAGE INSPIRES A SONG FOR BROADWAY GIVES BACK. On February 24, Broadway Gives Back held its second annual “Broadway Charity Songs!” concert. The creative charity event, held in Greenwich Village’s Le Poisson Rouge, pairs a group of award-winning musical theater composers with a group of outstanding charities and tasks them with composing an original piece that each prospective charity could use for fundraising purposes. The result is a group of songs gifted to the charities - with the hope that the songs “go viral” while increasing awareness for these outstanding organizations. “I Never Knew Your Rose,” written by Zoe Sarna, was inspired by the work of SAGE. It was performed by Lilli Cooper and Gabe Violet and accompanied by Jonathan Breit (piano/musical director), Edward Krosney (bass), Kaveh Haghtalab (drums), and Hussein Velaides (guitar). To hear the song written and performed for SAGE, please visit sageusa.org/broadway.



NEW STUDY FINDS DISCRIMINATION IN SENIOR HOUSING FOR OLDER SAME-SEX COUPLES.

On February 26, SAGE, in partnership with the civil rights organization Equal Rights Center (ERC), published the results of a 10-state investigation documenting adverse differential treatment against older same-sex couples seeking housing in senior living facilities. *Opening Doors: An Investigation of Barriers to Senior Housing for Same-Sex Couples* found that in 48 percent of the 200 tests, the LGB tester with a same-sex spouse encountered at least one type of adverse differential treatment compared with the heterosexual tester with an opposite-sex spouse. “Existing laws need to be enforced, because there is a lot of this problem even where protections exist,” said the ERC’s Executive Director, Don Kahl. Kahl said the study is “a really good tool to show policymakers and legislators that this is an issue that needs to be addressed.” To read the full report, visit sageusa.org/housingreport.



EDIE WINDSOR CELEBRATED AT “EIGHT OVER EIGHTY” GALA.

When LGBT trailblazer Edie Windsor was honored at Jewish Home Lifecare’s “Eight Over Eighty” gala on March 5, it was a thrilling reminder of Jewish Home’s embrace of the LGBT community. The 165-year-old nonprofit provider of eldercare services has been working hard to become a place where LGBT elders can live openly and proudly, knowing that they will be treated with complete respect at all times. SAGE, which honored Jewish Home with its Aging Services Leadership Award in October, is partnering with the organization on a multi-year, institution-wide training program. The goal is to make sure every staff member understands and is sensitive to the needs and concerns of LGBT residents.

Left photo: Lilli Cooper performing “I Never Knew Your Rose” at Le Poisson Rouge on February 24, 2014. Photo credit: Ryann Lammer.



NRC Director Hilary Meyer (2nd left), poses with other awardees at the 60th American Society on Aging Conference in San Diego, CA, March 2014. Photo: American Society on Aging/Sandy Huffaker

SAGE PARTICIPATES IN PANEL AT SXSW INTERACTIVE. On March 14, Robert Espinoza, SAGE's Senior Director for Public Policy and Communications, represented SAGE at the annual SXSW Interactive Festival. In its 21st year, the Festival is considered the place to preview the latest technology and hear from innovative leaders in digital creativity. Espinoza was part of a panel on "Reducing Social Isolation of LGBT Seniors and Youth Through Technology, Centers, and Libraries." The panel explored the range of issues that the youngest and oldest members of the LGBT communities face and how technology, centers and libraries may serve as the best partners to reduce isolation and homelessness.

NRC RECOGNIZED AS CHAMPION OF SOCIAL PROGRESS.

SAGE's National Resource Center on LGBT Aging (NRC) was chosen as one of the Top Five Nominees in LGBTQ rights for the Annual CLASSY Awards. The CLASSY event is the largest social impact awards ceremony in the country, highlighting the greatest champions of social progress. The nominees represent an elite pool of high-impact organizations driving measurable social change around the world. They are selected through an intensive evaluation process and the winners are announced on May 3. "I am thrilled that the NRC is being recognized as a finalist nominee," said Hilary Meyer, Director of National Programs at SAGE and head of the NRC. "We've always been proud of the strength of our program and being in this class of competition illustrates how far we've come in just four years." Through a combination of in-person and interactive trainings, plus webinars, the NRC teaches organizations and providers how to create an inclusive, safe, and welcoming environment for LGBT older adult populations.

Additionally, on March 11 SAGE was thrilled and honored to receive the 2014 Gloria Cavanaugh Award for Excellence in

Training and Education for our Cultural Competency Training at the American Society on Aging Conference. The program, administered through our National Resource Center, features a curriculum designed by leading organizations: SAGE, the LGBT Aging Project, GRIOT Circle, FORGE Transgender Aging Network, Centerlink, Openhouse, PHI, and Hunter College; and delivered by a network of dedicated trainers across the country.

SAGE AT 60TH AMERICAN SOCIETY ON AGING CONFERENCE.

More than 2,500 professionals attended this year's Aging in America conference hosted by the American Society on Aging. SAGE staff members participated in 14 of the more than 40 workshops including a remarkable panel with SAGE Executive Director Michael Adams on the influence of the Affordable Care Act on elders. The panel also explored training methods for community health professionals to ensure that their work with older adults is culturally relevant and ethnically appropriate to diverse populations.

SAGE HARLEM RESPONDS TO CHURCH'S HOMOPHOBIA, NATIONAL CONTROVERSY.

In March 2014, the ATLAH World Missionary Church in Harlem, New York City posted a sign that reads: "Jesus Would Stone Homos. ... Stoning is Still the Law"—among other disturbing statements. The sign elicited controversy and concerns from members of the Harlem community, as well as from news outlets and advocates throughout New York City and around the country.

SAGE's LGBT elder constituents from Harlem reimagined a more welcoming sign for the community by answering the question: "What alternative message should Pastor Manning have placed on this sign to make it welcoming to all Harlem residents, including its LGBT members?" Below are their responses.



PRIDE EVENTS FOR SAGE

JUNE 7, 2014

SAGE's Annual
Fire Island Pines Celebration
225 Bay Walk, Fire Island Pines,
4-6 pm, Tickets available at
sageusa.org/pines

JUNE 7, 2014

SAGE's Gay Pride Social
The SAGE Center, 1-5 pm
\$10 advance/\$15 at the door

JUNE 13, 2014

SAGE Harlem Pride Party
Union Theological Seminary, 6-10 pm

JUNE 16, 2014

Screening of
"Growing Old Gracefully"
with filmmaker Joe Ippolito
The SAGE Center, 7-8 pm

JUNE 15, 2014

Women's Pride Tea
Henrietta Hudson, 3-9 pm
\$10 tickets at the door –
Fundraiser for SAGE

JUNE 21, 2014

Women's Pride Party
The SAGE Center

PRIDE THROUGHOUT NEW YORK CITY AND THE UNITED STATES

SAGE celebrates Pride throughout the month of June in New York City, celebrating and tabling at all outer borough Pride events. Our SAGENet affiliates also participate in Pride marches and events throughout the country. Here's a list of where you can find SAGE:

QUEENS GAY PRIDE

Sunday, June 1, 2014

BROOKLYN GAY PRIDE

Saturday, June 14, 2014

HARLEM PRIDE

Saturday, June 28, 2014

NYC GAY PRIDE MARCH

Sunday, June 29, 2014

STATEN ISLAND PRIDE FEST

Saturday, July 12, 2014

FIND A SAGENET!

HUDSON VALLEY GAY PRIDE

Sunday, June 1, 2014

CHICAGO PRIDE PARADE

Sunday, June 29, 2014

PRIDEFEST MILWAUKEE

June 6, 2014

WASHINGTON D.C. CAPITAL PRIDE PARADE

Saturday, June 7, 2014

TULSA PRIDE PARADE

Saturday, June 7, 2014

PHILADELPHIA GAY PRIDE PARADE & FESTIVAL

Sunday, June 8, 2014

UTAH GAY PRIDE PARADE

Sunday, June 8, 2014

LONG ISLAND PRIDE

Saturday, June 14, 2014

SOUTHERN MAINE PRIDE PARADE & FESTIVAL

Saturday, June 14, 2014

PORTLAND GAY PRIDE FESTIVAL

Sat. & Sun., June 14–15, 2014

WILMINGTON GAY PRIDE WEEK

June 9–15, 2014

RHODE ISLAND PRIDEFEST

Saturday, June 21, 2014

BELLEVILLE, IL – METRO EAST PRIDE

Saturday, June 21, 2014

DENVER PRIDEFEST

Sat. & Sun., June 21–22, 2014

OLYMPIA GAY PRIDE

**Saturday & Sunday,
June 21–22, 2014**

SEATTLE PRIDEFEST

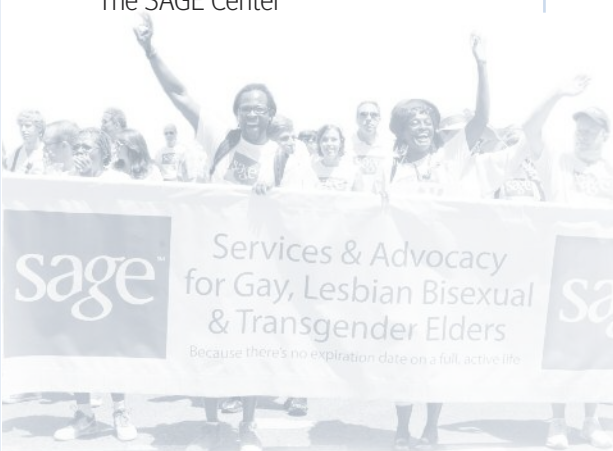
Sat. & Sun., June 28–29, 2014

ST. LOUIS PRIDEFEST

Sat. & Sun., June 28–29, 2014

CHARLOTTE PRIDE

August 16–17, 2014



START END-OF-LIFE PLANNING EARLY TO REDUCE THE CHANCE OF GUARDIANSHIP

By Robert Espinoza

In October 2012, as Hurricane Sandy devastated the Northeast, Rebecca, 72, and her partner of 38 years, Barbara, 85, holed up in their New York City apartment to weather the storm.

Over the course of four days, with no electricity or water, Rebecca began noticing a difference in her partner. “I realized that she was not taking in information and would ask me again and again, ‘Why isn’t the light on?’ ”

Shortly after the hurricane, Barbara was diagnosed with Alzheimer’s disease.

As Barbara’s dementia worsened, her doctor and Rebecca helped her execute a healthcare proxy—a legal document allowing a person to appoint someone to make medical decisions in the event of incapacitation—to complement her existing will and living will. These advance-planning documents provided security for Barbara that her wishes regarding medical care and the distribution of her belongings would be respected.

According to Rebecca, Barbara still lacks a financial power of attorney. They are fortunate to live in a state that recognizes same-sex marriages. As Barbara’s legal spouse, Rebecca will likely be the lead decision-maker on most of her healthcare and financial matters.

Yet their situation would change if Rebecca’s capacity diminished. The challenges would intensify if none of these advance-planning documents were in place because, unlike Barbara, Rebecca has not taken steps to plan should she

become unable to make healthcare and financial decisions for herself. Without the execution of these documents, and with a partner who has Alzheimer’s, if Rebecca became incapacitated, it’s a very real possibility that a court-appointed guardianship may one day be necessary to help with her medical care, financial decisions and property matters.



According to the National Guardianship Association’s standards of practice, a legal guardian is a person or entity appointed by a court with the authority to make some or all personal and-or property decisions on behalf of an incapacitated individual. Common reasons for diminished capacity include dementia, developmental disabilities and traumatic brain injuries, among others.

The court in guardianship proceedings often look to “next of kin”—individuals related by blood or marriage—to determine guardianship appointments, which can leave out family of choice, such as close friends. In a worst-case

scenario for Barbara, unless the proper advance-directive legal documents were filed, the legal guardian may not know her final wishes and might not have her best interests at heart. This is a challenge for many LGBT people with limited, legally unprotected or estranged next of kin, as well as for married same-sex couples in states where same-sex marriage is not legal.

Many LGBT people enter these life moments in crisis, without proper legal arrangements. They encounter a long-term care and legal system that’s fraught with bias—a lifelong experience for many—and they remain unaware of available resources to support these decisions.

In Rebecca’s case, she feels too overwhelmed by daily life to consider the gravity of guardianship and advance directives.

“Everybody has the same problem,” she says. “They want to care for that person. And they don’t want to really think about what’s going to happen tomorrow or the next day, down the road. There’s so much you have to do every day.”

Throughout her 10 years at SAGE, Senior Director for Programs Catherine Thurston has witnessed a variety of reasons preventing LGBT older adults from establishing advanced directives and many LGBT people lack these documents.

Conversations about diminished capacity and aging are charged and many people prefer to avoid them. Also, Thurston says that a person's closest loved ones—a spouse, a best friend—might not be the best, most rational person to designate as a beneficiary or guardian, which is also a difficult discussion to have, especially if these relationships are strained. And many LGBT elders focus exclusively on survival, having lived through the AIDS epidemic or personal life trauma, making conversations or documents about incapacity off-limits.

Yet Thurston knows these discussions become more difficult after a person loses capacity, with tougher consequences. “You don’t want to put people you love in the very difficult place of having to make these decisions for you,” she says.

LGBT people are also at greater risk of needing a guardian should they become incapacitated, because they are more likely to be single and many are estranged from their biological families, which the legal system often privileges in a guardianship proceeding.

And with few supports, an LGBT person dealing with dementia may be unable to manage their personal and-or property needs. Without advance directives, if the court appoints a guardian, this individual will have no documented information on the LGBT person’s final wishes.

Thurston recounts the story of a gay man she knew who passed away and his son couldn’t decide what to do with his father’s body, which remained in the morgue for a month.

“People need to talk about these issues—emotionally, practically and ethically,” says Thurston.

SAGE Case Manager Bill Mendez runs support groups in New York City for gay and bisexual men, including a group for

HIV-positive longtime survivors at SAGE and a cancer support group co-led by SAGE and CancerCare, a national organization that supports people dealing with cancer.

For some members of Mendez’s support groups, the fear discrimination in moments of crisis is a driving force behind not executing advance directives.

Mendez describes the concerns of a gay member in one of his support groups who, with his spouse, had various end-of-life documents in place. “Their fear was that the medical establishment was not going to honor those wishes regarding quality of life. He made it clear, ‘I don’t want to be

“People need to talk about these issues—emotionally, practically and ethically”

—CATHERINE THURSTON, SENIOR DIRECTOR
FOR PROGRAMS, SAGE

hooked up to machines. I just want to go peacefully.’ His concern was whether his doctor would abide by his wishes and his partner’s wishes, or would the doctor just say, ‘No,’ and continue to prolong his life.”

These fears might be overstated and they don’t negate the benefits of proper planning, says Thurston.

To aid in planning, various national organizations offer instruction to ensure one’s final wishes are respected. In addition to living wills, healthcare proxies and financial powers of attorney, other documents include wills, beneficiary designations, real estate ownership, funeral directives and hospital directives.

Lambda Legal, a national LGBT rights group, offers advice on legal and financial planning measures. SAGE’s National Resource Center on LGBT Aging, a federally funded technical assistance

center, maintains an online clearinghouse of educational resources on end-of-life issues, caregiving and more. And the Alzheimer’s Association provides a 6-step “legal plans” resource for people assisting individuals with dementia.

Online resources are abundant, with clear instructions and online submission capabilities. Additionally, the Cardozo School of Law Guardianship Clinic in New York City offers assistance to families and loved ones with questions concerning adult guardianship.

And while an attorney can be helpful in long-term planning, and many nonprofits offer legal support, most of these documents do not require approval by an attorney, says Thurston.

More importantly, she advises that these documents be updated, filed regularly and made readily available—taped on a refrigerator, placed in one’s pocketbook and shared with one’s network of friends, family members and a primary physician.

These days, Rebecca focuses on managing Barbara’s health one day at a time. Rebecca admits she hasn’t completed any advanced directives for herself, though she’s not clear on the rationale. “I don’t know, to tell you the truth. Because I’m younger, maybe. And I feel it’s not necessary, you know. She [Barbara] knows where everything is if something happened to me.”

Rebecca pauses, then adds, “You’re right. I should probably take care of that.”

Robert Espinoza, MPA, is Senior Director, Public Policy and Communications at Services and Advocacy for LGBT Elders (SAGE) in New York, N.Y. Reprinted with permission from *Aging Today* (February 13, 2014). Copyright © 2014, American Society on Aging, San Francisco, California; www.asaging.org.

SAGE STORIES FROM AROUND THE COUNTRY

By Serena Worthington

SAGE Story, our national digital storytelling and anti-isolation program for lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) elders was piloted in New York City (NYC) in April of 2013. The purpose of the program is to strengthen the storytelling skills of LGBT elders to diversify the public narratives on aging, long-term care, and LGBT rights. SAGE Story offers skill-building workshops, maintains an online story booth for digital submissions, and partners with storytelling experts and policy-based organizations to bring these stories into the public conversation.

Through the generous support of the AARP Foundation and The Ford Foundation, SAGE Story was expanded to various sites across the country, including SAGE Metro Portland, SAGE Tulsa, and

“SAGE Story has been a learning experience and one I believe has the potential to really deepen our work within the Elder community.”

—BISHOP TONYIA RAWLS, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR
FREEDOM CENTER FOR SOCIAL JUSTICE

SAGE Utah. Additionally, a second SAGE Story initiative, funded by the Evelyn and Walter Haas Jr. Fund, was launched at three sites in North Carolina: SAGE Raleigh, SAGE Wilmington of the Cape Fear Coast, and the Freedom Center for Social Justice—a leading faith-based organization.

“We hope that these videos will be used to introduce the world to who we are as LGBT people, and to hopefully advocate for our rights as seniors.”

—LES GELLER, BOARD CHAIR, SAGE RALEIGH

The work of the second project, SAGE Story NC, includes not only the skill-building workshops and dissemination activities of the Oregon, Oklahoma, and Utah sites, but also—in partnership with Equality North Carolina—an initiative to positively impact public opinion and further advocacy for policy initiatives and non-discrimination protections in the state.

THE GOALS

SAGE Story aims to reduce isolation among LGBT older adults, while increasing media representation, and furthering social change advocacy, through workshops that teach the fundamentals of storytelling as well as how to tell impactful, personal life stories in a variety of print, electronic, creative and issue-based formats.

In addition to capturing the critical voice of LGBT elders on equality advocacy struggles, SAGE Story NC will use these stories to enhance grassroots efforts to pass state and local nondiscrimination laws and to move policy initiatives including: relationship recognition, funding for LGBT services, and creating pro-equality public opinion.

TRAINING SKILLED STORYTELLERS

Each site coordinated four training sessions—two on the basics of storytelling and two “How To” sessions on a specific medium—the majority of sites elected to use video or photography. Then, each site collected stories from their trained constituent storytellers to be used in local and national campaigns. In SAGE’s experience, the stories and perspectives of LGBT elders vividly demonstrate the importance of equality



From left: Cedric Harmon and Lauren Franklin, Many Voices; Bishop Tonyia Rawls, Freedom Center for Social Justice; and Serena Worthington, SAGE.

to LGBT people of all ages, but especially to those who are vulnerable time. These powerful stories also convey how discrimination has affected their health and well-being over their lifetimes.

NON-DISCRIMINATION ADVOCACY IN NORTH CAROLINA

In addition to these policy goals, our NC sites are educating service professionals in the aging and LGBT fields about the

SAGENet MEMBERS

importance of equitable treatment of LGBT older adults, the need to enact nondiscrimination laws in public accommodations, including long-term care and assisted living settings, as well as the need for LGBT cultural competence among aging providers. Our sites have been provided with a cultural competency module created by our National Resource Center on LGBT Aging that has been further customized for North Carolina with nondiscrimination talking points written especially for our sites by Equality North Carolina.



From left: Bishop Tonyia Rawls, Freedom Center for Social Justice; Serena Worthington, SAGE; Anne Stanback, Equality Federation; and Alex Rupprecht, Freedom Center for Social Justice

“We spent three months researching, filming and editing these fascinating stories. These powerful interviews capture the resilient spirit of eight LGBT seniors who reside on the Wilmington Cape Fear Coast.”

—TAB BALLIS, CHAIR

SAGE WILMINGTON OF THE CAPE FEAR COAST

NORTHEAST REGION

**SAGE of the
Genesee Valley**
gayalliance.org

SAGE Hudson County
hudsonpride.org

SAGE Hudson Valley
lgbtqcenter.org

SAGE Long Island
sageli.org

SAGE Maine
sagemaine.org

SAGE Philadelphia
waygay.org

SAGE Rhode Island
sageriinfo@gmail.com

SAGE Upstate
sageupstate.org

SAGE Western Pennsylvania
persadcenter.org

MIDWEST REGION

SAGE Center on Halsted
centeronhalsted.org

SAGE Metro St. Louis
sagemetrostl.org

SAGE Milwaukee
mkelgbt.org

SOUTH REGION

SAGE Atlanta
sageatl.org

SAGE Central Virginia
gayrichmond.com

SAGE Metro DC
sagemetrodc1@gmail.com

SAGE Raleigh
lgbtcenterofraleigh.com

SAGE South Florida
sagewebsite.org

SAGE Tulsa
okeq.org

**SAGE Wilmington of the
Cape Fear Coast**
thefrankharrfoundation.com/sage

WEST REGION

SAGE Albuquerque
pflagabq.org


SAGE of the Desert
thecenterps.org

SAGE Metro Portland
friendlyhouseinc.org/programs/
gay-and-grey

SAGE Olympia
sageolympia.org

SAGE of the Rockies
glbtcolorado.org

SAGE Utah
utahpridecenter.org

 To learn more about SAGENet, including how to become a SAGE affiliate, visit us at sageusa.org/sagenet.



Services & Advocacy
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