

Creative Ageing a new direction for West of 50

A 2020 Metro Denver EDC report noted that 19.3% of the metro area’s population is 45-59 years of age. Furthermore, individuals who are 60-74 years of age make up 14.5%, and 5.3% of the population are older than 75. While working with Denver Art Museum, I was introduced to a concept that will drive West of 50’s next strategic plan and all programming going forward: Creative Ageing.

What is Creative Ageing?

It’s common knowledge that as we age, we are susceptible to loneliness and social isolation, resulting in a long list of health issues. The concept uses arts, education, skill building, and cultural activities to promote imagination and healthy aging. The term ‘Creative Ageing’ – was coined in the 1990s by prominent US psychiatrist and gerontologist, Dr. Gene Cohen.

Creative Ageing as a practice-

Creative Ageing programming implemented around the world are:

- Evidence & research-based
- Led by a professional (we will continue to host peer-led groups.)
- Utilizing high quality materials
- Focused on social connections
- Sequential sessions based on skill building
- Programming that is hands on and active

Creative Ageing as a practice has been shown to:

- Improve social connections
- Foster health, wellbeing, and creative life for older people
- Challenge stereotypical perceptions of older people & ageing
- Promote effective partnerships and networks between government agencies, the private sector, not-for-profit organizations, older people and other individuals, & communities that support older people to age well.

Creative Ageing will be a framework that drives what the program develops and embraces in practice and in strategic planning for the next four years. Resulting in us focusing in five areas:

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Document a day in your life. Take a camera with you and photograph events or scenes that offer a sense of a typical day in your life. After you get your prints back, put them in a scrap book and write a story about each one. You have the option of creating a drama, a comedy, even an epic. Don’t shy away from candor and good humor.

Creative Ageing a new direction for West of 50 continued from page 1.

1. The Arts:

- Visual arts (e.g., painting, drawing, sculpture, design, photography, crafts)
- Digital media (e.g., film, audio, animation, web, new technologies)
- Performing arts (e.g., theatre, music, dance, drama, comedy, physical theatre)
- Literary arts (e.g., poetry, storytelling, creative & narrative writing)

2. Health & Wellness:

- Healthy eating
- Healthy fitness
- Healthy brain
- Healthy outlook
- Healthy living
- Healthy looks
- Healthy home
- Healthy sexual practices
- Healthy caring
- Healthy living for the years to come

3. Understanding a Changing World:

- Navigating a changing world (e.g., new technology, social

change)

-Addressing fake news, misinformation, and disinformation

-Learning new trends within the LGBTQ+ community

4. Community Engagement:

-Exploring the community

-Road trips

5. Expand Community Partnerships:

-Expand understanding of the LGBTQ+ community


-Cultural competency

-Introduce new cross-cultural knowledge & skills

-Introduce new concepts that encourage social change

-Increase self-awareness of one's own privilege & power

From this practice, community members can expect to see the world through fresh eyes and develop a softer critical voice. Members can also expect to see an improvement in neuroplasticity, developmental intelligence, lower rates of depression, higher morale, improved confidence and improved relationships, improved memory, and better executive functioning skills.—Jason



Got Taxes? Tax-Aide Returns to The Center! Tax-Aide's preparation and electronic filing service operates every Thursday from February 2nd through April 13th. **Appointments are required.**

Every Thursday, taxpayers with the proper documentation will be provided with an appointment. The building will not be open for individuals waiting for their appointment. Clients will have to leave and return at their set appointment time. Looking for Property Tax Credits (PTC)? Those needing monetary assistance with their rent and heat expenses will also need to follow the same appointment process. To learn more visit aarp.org/findtaxhelp

Dates: Starting Thursday, February 2nd - Thursday, April 13th

Hours: 10:00 am to 3:00 pm



Community & Coffee Group

Every Monday morning we will provide coffee and pastries to help you start the week off right. Feel free to bring your favorite game to share or pass around your family photos or the newspaper. This Community & Coffee group is open to all and is designed for you to foster healthy friendships where all individuals feel welcome and safe.

This group is open to all and is here for community building and meeting new friends.

When: Every Monday from 10:00am—12:00pm.



Stitch & Bitch—A new evening group that provides space for sewing, crafting, and conversation. The Center will provide sewing needles, thread, basic crafting supplies, and two sewing machines available for use during these sessions.

So join us for an evening of fun and bitching!

When: Every Monday evening 6:15p —7:45p

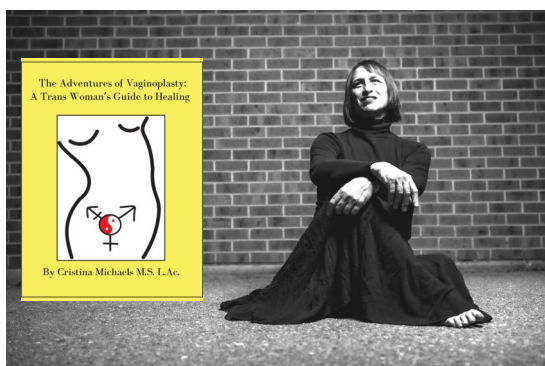
The
Adventures of
Vaginoplasty:
A Trans
Woman's Guide
to Healing
A Book
Release Event
By our very
own
Cristina
Michaels

There is so little information about what to expect from the powerful gender affirming procedure of vaginoplasty. Let alone how to heal and recover after this gender confirming surgery. After years of treating the transgender community in her private acupuncture practice, Cristina Michaels has taken years to gather some of the most useful complementary medical tools to help the transgender population in their long and arduous twelve-month journey.

Using the experience of a number of other transgender women who have gone through this empowering procedure, along with her own experience, Cristina brings you this comprehensive book that will tell the reader what to expect weekly and monthly and give them a guide

to their own healing and recovery. There is a Friends and Family chapter to help those allies and caring loved ones. If you are preparing for your vaginoplasty or are within your first year of recovery, this book is just what you need.

When: Join Cristina and the West of 50 Team to celebrate her and the release of her new book on **March 24th from 5:30-6:30 PM** with an open discussion about the process and the importance of this book.



Hey Bryant–

Happy one year anniversary!

Thank you for all your hard work, ideas, jokes, positive vibes, and unlimited pride. You are an essential part of the team and we could not do what we do without you! **Thank you** for all you do! Bryant's one year anniversary is on March 16th.



Women's Salon Takes a Break– At this month's meeting it was decided that the group would take a break. The hope is that by taking some time the group would feel energized and return in late summer to in-person meetings. Look to June or July for updates on the group's return.

Coming soon...

The Center's Got Talent!

A variety show for LGBTQ+ older adults & friends. Hosted by Steve Anne, CowPoke Avi, and August Celestial.



Want to be in the show? Additions will be held on **March 2nd starting at 1:00 PM** and **March 7th at 5:30 PM**. All talents welcome! **Contact Jason or Bryant to RSVP**. All talents are welcome as this a 21 and up show. Auditions are limited to no more than 3 minutes.

The talent show is slotted to be the evening of April 28th. We are still working on the dates and location of the event. As soon as this has been set we will update the newsletter and inform participants. Currently we are looking for 12 performers with the option of potentially having more than one act. Each performance can be up to 5 minutes.

Eye to Eye- Portraits of Pride, Strength, Beauty

In honor of Women's History Month our friends over at Denver Public Library– Bob Ragland Branch have turned their library into an art gallery for a special show focusing on women who aren't typically recognized as being part of women's history: older women in the LGBTQ+ community.

The women in the portraits grew up when coming out meant risking their health, jobs, housing, families, and friends. To stay safe, many stayed silent for years. In these portraits, they break that silence to be seen as they really are to show you that being openly LGBTQ is profoundly human and courageous. Their history **IS** women's history.

To celebrate our amazing women and this exhibit we are going to gather for lunch at the Source then see the exhibit at the library. **Transportation will not be provided, and community members are responsible for their own lunch.**

When: March 15th at 12pm Meet at the Source for Lunch. Following lunch, we'll go to the library to see the exhibit. RSVP with Jason or Bryant.

Address: The Source Dining Hall: 3350 Brighton Blvd. Denver, CO 80216

Address: Bob Ragland Branch Library: 1900 35th Street, Suite A, 80216

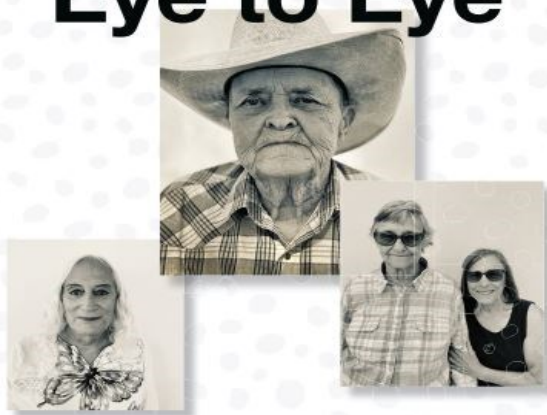
Dunk & Munch—Mask for Mask

Masks have had a presence in all of human history, from Africa, China, the Ancient Greeks, and the Christian Church during the Dark Ages. Their uses have ranged from ceremonial and religious to their more well-known use in theatre and performance. Throughout all of humanity the common thread is the mask represents transfiguration. Writer Elaine Shefer asks the pivotal contradiction of masks: "by wearing masks, are individuals hiding or revealing who they 'really' are"? Join Bryant in a discussion of the history of masks and their use today, as well as take the opportunity to construct your own mask during the discussion. Coffee & Donuts provided



When: Wednesday, March 8th at 11:45-1pm

Eye to Eye



Portraits of Pride, Strength, Beauty

a photo exhibit celebrating older women of the LGBTQ community

March 1-25, 2023

On display during library's hours

Bob Ragland Branch Library
1900 35th St., Suite A, Denver, 80216

Come view and experience stunning portraits of older women breaking their silence to be seen as they really are, to show you that being openly LGBTQ is profoundly human and courageous. Their history IS women's history.



Also, join us for a discussion panel with photographer Carey Candrian and some of the women who posed for the portraits. March 11, 12-1 p.m.
denlib.org/eyetoeye



Visit denverlibrary.org/accessibility for accommodation information or call (720) 913-8487



BROILED GRAPEFRUIT

Halve a red or pink **grapefruit** and loosen segments from membranes and pitch with a paring knife. Sprinkle each grapefruit half with 1 tablespoon **light brown sugar** and 1/4 teaspoon ground **cinnamon**. Broil on a baking sheet until the top is slightly browned, 4 to 5 minutes. Top with 1/2 cup plain **low-fat yogurt** and sprinkle with more **cinnamon**.

Senior Companion Program



Lunch & Learn- Join Emily as she unpacks how you can become more engaged with in your community and the many ways service and vol-

unteerism connects individuals to opportunities that foster social connections, improve mental health, encourage civic duty, and lend your support to take action on causes you value.

Emily is a valued partner from the Senior Companion Program at Spark the Change Colorado, an AmeriCorps Seniors program. She assists the West of 50 team with connecting and managing their Senior Companion Program as we are a volunteer station for Spark the Change Colorado.

When: Wednesday, March 22. Time 11:45am—1:00pm
RSVP with Jason or Bryant

POINTS OF LIGHT

The Civic Circle

The Civic Circle® helps individuals connect to opportunities and understand that doing good comes in many forms. It is a framework that represents your power to lead, lend support and take action for causes you care about and to lead a civic life.

The Civic Circle was developed by Points of Light during its 2018 strategic planning process to represent a person's power to lead a civic life. The Civic Circle is comprised of nine elements, each of which represents an active way to engage that has been inspected for trends and impact.

For details on each element of The Civic Circle, ways to engage, and specifics on research and trends, visit pointsoflight.org/civic-circle or scan the QR code with a smart device.



An interview with a Senior Companion Michael-

Michael is an active member of Spark the Change. West of 50 is in partnership with Spark to help provide support to our community members who are over

the age of 50 or have a disability. Contact Jason or Bryant to learn how to become a Senior Companion.

What made you want to get involved in the program? *"I saw it as an opportunity to serve. I realized that I had not taken any opportunities to serve and that was lacking in my life."*

Why are manholes round? *"Because if they were square, they would fall in. Is that part of the interview?" "Yes."*

What is your favorite part of being a Senior Companion? *"Being able to accompany my clients to activities and being able to talk with them, really getting to know them. It is my intention to be a positive influence in people's lives and this opportunity allows for me to do just that."*

What do you think of garden gnomes? *"I prefer them not painted and slightly hidden."*

What is the most frustrating part of being a Senior Companion? *"The driving... I drive a lot. Half the time it is by myself. You know... traffic and all that."*

Was it hard to get started in the program? *"No. I had already been driving a person who became my client when I joined the program. It made sense to join. Not only do I get spend time with my friends, I enjoy the gas money and stipend."*

What would you do if you found a penguin in your freezer? *"Well. I would take him to the zoo. But I would not force him to live outside a freezing atmosphere."*

If you don't mind me asking, are you compensated for your work? *"Yes." How much?* *"It's currently \$3.15 an hour. But it's going up to \$4.00 in March. I also get \$.58 a mile for gas, holiday pay, paid vacation, and if you work over four hours in a day you get a lunch stipend."*

How would you sell hot cocoa in Florida? *"With ice cubes."*

Have you ever been in a fight? *"Yes." Did you win?* *"There were no winners."*



The Center on Colfax's LGBTQ+ Disability Community Program

As it was back in August 2022 when the first LGBTQ+ Disability Peer Support Group launched, the vision for this program is to engage and empower LGBTQ+ adults with disabilities towards self-actualization, to work towards reducing social isolation, and to build connection with the goal of improving the overall health and wellness of this community. This program is holistic, humanist, non-clinical, and evidence-based. Right now, the focus of the program is on expanding the number of people we serve and connecting with more organizations that represent and serve you. Also note that groups through the West of 50 are available to you! Please know you can reach out to me at any time by email at bmehay@lgbtqcolorado.org or call in at 303.951.5228.

Thank you,

Bryant Mehay, MA, CTRS | Coordinator of Elder and Disability Services

Weekly Programming

Disability Peer Support Group:

Mondays 5:00pm-6:00pm & Fridays 1:30pm-3:00pm

This hybrid peer support group is for individuals who have a disability and identify as a member of the LGBTQ+ community. This is a drop in space that provides conversation, social support, and resource sharing. This group is free to attend. Registration is required if you intend to participate virtually.

Virtual Registration: <https://thecenteroncolfax.salsalabs.org/disability/index.html>

Health Protection/ Health Promotion Model for Growth

The model that I will be using as the basis for program development is the Health Protection/Health Promotion Model. This model was developed as a means for tracking client progress towards self-actualization during Therapeutic Recreation treatment. In the context of this program I will utilize the model's continuum towards self-actualization to make decisions on the types of programming brought to The Center, to track individual growth and engagement, and as a measure for the state of the program.

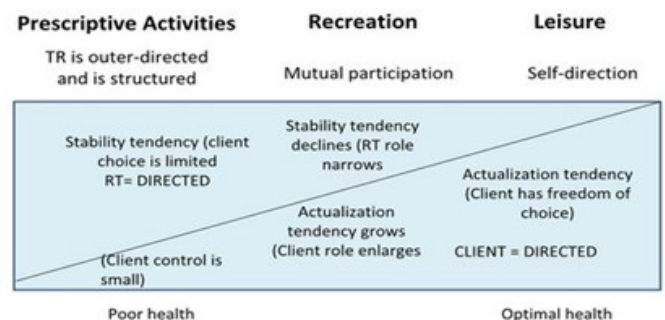
Relevant Terms and Definitions:

Prescriptive Activities: The point on the continuum where the professional provides direction and structure as clients start the process of perceiving themselves as being able to successfully interact with their environment, i.e., feelings of mastery, success, and the moving towards mastery of their health.

Recreation: Activities that take place during leisure time that are constructive, teach new skills, and provide new ways of interacting with others, philosophies, and values.

Leisure: "Is growth promoting... a means to self-actualization because it allows people to have self-determined opportunities to expand themselves by successfully using their abilities to meet challenges. Leisure is freely chosen and intrinsically motivated.

Health Protection/Health Promotion Model (Austin, 2009)



Cont. on next page.

Stability Tendency: Concerned with maintaining the “steady state” or health protection of the individual. In this stage, individuals are attempting to keep stress at manageable ranges and protect themselves from bio-physical or psycho-social harm.

Leisure: “Is growth promoting... a means to self-actualization because it allows people to have self-determined opportunities to expand themselves by successfully using their abilities to meet challenges. Leisure is freely chosen and intrinsically motivated.

Stability Tendency: Concerned with maintaining the “steady state” or health protection of the individual. In this stage individuals are attempting to keep stress at manageable ranges and protect themselves from bio-physical or psychosocial harm.

Actualization Tendency: The drive towards health promotion which “focuses on efforts to approach or move toward a positively valence state of high-level health and well-being”

How it Will Impact Programming:

Peer Support Group Leaders: As of now, I am present for every Peer Support Group and stay for the duration of the group. At the very beginning of this program I prompted conversation and encouraged engagement. As it has progressed, attendees have begun to lead the conversation with ease. The eventual goal is to have someone step up into the role of Peer Facilitator while I step back from that role. In this way, the model provides a guide for identifying those that have reached a place of self-actualization and are ready to step into that role.

Program Selection:

Using the continuum of this model, I have had the biggest hand in the program selection so far, i.e., the peer support groups. However, we have already experienced community involvement through the discussion of the development of a sex & sexuality group. The goal is for the development of new ideas to be based in community need and directed by the individuals who attend programs.



Disability Community Outing—Spring Awakening: Spring Awakening is an alternative rock musical adaptation of Frank Wedekind’s provocative 1891 play. In late nineteenth century Germany, a group of schoolchildren explore their own sexual identities within a brutal and suppressive society. Unable to break through their parents’ and teachers’ infantilization, these students set out to explore what it means to love and connect. **Part realism painting and part My Chemical Romance concert, this musical gives a powerful voice to those who have traditionally been silenced** and provides a stark warning for those who look to strip away autonomy. Join us as we take a trip up to the Parson’s Theatre at the Northglenn Arts for an invited Final Dress of Phamaly Theatre Company’s production of Spring Awakening.

Transportation will not be provided for this trip, but we will assist you with managing public transportation! Bryant will be taking the 120X line from Union Station.

6:50 Meet at Union Station to take public transportation to the Northglenn Arts

7:03 Arrive at Thornton Park-n-Ride – Gate B

7:20 Arrive at Parsons Theatre, 1 E Memorial Parkway, Northglenn, CO 80233

7:30 SHOW BEGINS

9:30 Head back to Park-n-Ride

9:50 Leave Wagon Rd. Park-n-Ride – Gate D to head back to Union Station

11:15 Arrive at Union Station

When: Wednesday, March 22nd curtains at 7:30. Space is limited. Contact Jason or Bryant to RSVP

March 2023

Women's History Month— To all the powerful women— Thank you for moving outside of expectations! For fighting for more! For owning your terms! You are an inspiration!

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
Key: C-Coffee — Community & Coffee Story — Telling our Story DPSG — Disability Peer Support Group Trans — Trans Support Group Sex — Older, Wiser, Sexually Smarter Vet — Veterans Support Group SS Yoga — Silver Sneakers Yoga Res Nav — Resource Navigation Stitch — Stitch & Bitch			1 Zero Discrimination Day 10:30 SS yoga 1:30 AARP	2 10 TAX AID 10 Open ART 1 auditions	3 10:30 Qigong 11:45 Med 1:30 DPSG	4
5	6 10 C-coffee 10:30 Res Nav 1:30 Story 5 DPSG 6:15 Stitch	7 10 men coffee 1:30 trans 2 sex 5:30 auditions 6 vet	8 10:30 SS yoga 11:45 Dunk & Munch 1:30 AARP	9 10 TAX AID 10 Open ART	10 <u>Center closed</u>	11
12	13 10 C-coffee 10:30 Res Nav 1:30 Story 5 DPSG 6:15 Stitch	14 10 men coffee 1:30 trans 2 sex 6 vet	15 10:30 SS yoga 12 Eye to Eye 1:30 No AARP	16 10 TAX AID 10 Open ART	17 <i>St. Patrick's Day</i> 10:30 Qigong 11:45 Med 1:30 DPSG	18
19	20 10 C-coffee 10:30 Res Nav 1:30 Story 5 DPSG 6:15 Stitch	21 <i>Omnisexual Awareness day</i> 10 men coffee 1:30 trans 2 sex 6 vet	22 10:30 SS yoga 11:45 L&L 1:30 AARP 6:50 Spring Awakening	23 10 TAX AID 10 Open ART	24 10:30 Qigong 11:45 Med 1:30 DPSG 5:30 Book release	25
26	27 10 C-coffee 10:30 Res Nav 1:30 Story 5 DPSG 6:15 Stitch	28 10 men coffee 1:30 trans 2 sex 6 vet	29 10:30 SS yoga 1:30 AARP	30 10 TAX AID 10 Open ART	31 <i>International Transgender Day of Visibility</i> 10:30 Qigong 11:45 Med 1:30 DPSG	