

You're never too old to set another goal or to dream a new dream. — We are bidding 2023 goodbye & ringing in 2024 with excitement. To mark the occasion we've chosen to highlight 12 of West of 50's most inspirational accomplishments from 2023. All of these achievements could not have been accomplished without our awesome community members! Now let's reflect on this past year; we are so proud of all that we have done!

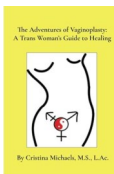
1. **February 28th Queer Woke with Phil Nash.** This program became the largest Queer Woke program at that time, hosting 48 individuals during the event.

2. **March's West of 50 Newsletter highlighted Creative Aging as a new direction for all programing.**



In that same newsletter the Disability Program noted that it would be using Health Protection/Health Promotion Model for growth. Once again highlighting the importance of evidence-based practice.

3. **March 24th The Adventures of Vaginoplasty: A Trans Woman's Guide to Health.** Cristina Michaels releases her first book and gave a presentation at The Center. The event welcomed 25 individuals, a majority of them having never been to The Center before.



4. **March 31st Scarlet Holiday, our West of 50 intern, wins the Patrice Santiago Award from the Park Hill United Methodist Church.**

5. **April 28th WOF hosts The Center's Got Talent for the first time.** The event sat 85 guests and had 20 participants.



6. **June 8th West of 50 and Denver Public Library hosted their first joint pride event. Be Proud, Out Loud: A Pride Party for Older Adults** was hosted by Steve-Ann And Cowpoke Avi. The event was a smash with BINGO and Karaoke.



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January

Center Closed Dates

-January 1st– Center Closed

-January 2nd —NO WOF programming -

-January 3rd—NO WOF programming -

-January 15th MLK Day—

Staff will be marching in the Parade-

-January 19th Center Closed -

Remember– If Denver Public Schools close due to inclement weather the Center will be closed.

- Be sure to check the website-

7. **June 21st, West of 50's Tea Dance**—Returned



with its largest crowd yet! The dance welcomed over 100 attendees who were entertained with music, drag, dancing, and giveaways.

8. **At this year's PrideFest West of 50 launched its most aggressive PrideFest activation yet.** The program hosted BINGO, Dildo

Tossing, and educational sessions. The program raised over \$1,400.00 from its Dildo Toss.

9. **July welcomed the launch of the Lesbian Lounge.** This group focuses on conversation and welcomes speakers.



10. **July 29th The Disability Program hosted its first Disability Pride Month Event.** Welcoming over 30 community members, this has become a yearly community event for the program.

11. **September 20th Jason presented at the Denver Art Museum's Creative Aging Convening on Queer Aging.** This presentation highlighted how queer generations experienced life. His goal was to educate others on the barriers the community has faced over the years.

12. **The Denver Art Museum and West of 50 launch their first Wellness Friday on December 1st.** This free one-day workshop provided attendees with programs that focused on memory, meditation, and movement.

13. **December 8th West of 50 hosted The Center's Holiday Party and Art Show.** The event was a smash with some of the program's best art yet, live performances by Gila Moonstar, and giveaways. The event welcomed 126 community members.



Ice Tree

Ice tree shimmers at dusk
Glass branches hold the last
sleet-lacquered leaves
while fingers sting
for woolen gloves
lost the week before

Skating icy sidewalks
I blow circles in the sky
dream of childhood
hot chocolate picnics
In the snow

by Jo Ann Zvares

The Center's Got Talent

Auditions

COMING IN FEBRUARY

We are looking for...
Poetry - Comedy - Instrumental - Burlesque
Variety Acts - Dancers - Singers
Drag - Comedy
You!



Interested in watching The Center's Schule of Drag Show?

Reservations are required for the Sunday, February 4th 4:00p show. Seats will fill up quickly, so give them a call to lock up your spot! More info on pg. 4.

**** Reservations MUST be completed by phone with a credit/debit card ****
303.993.5812 or mary@milehighmarys.com

God & Flowers

The Creator designed the planet, earth. The Creator added atmosphere, water, mountains, and valleys.

Pretty to look at but not very stimulating.

The Creator added animals, not sure which one to make, so The Creator made many animals in different shapes and colors.

Hmm, earth is still boring. It needs color.

So, The Creator designed the sunflower – straight, tall, big yellow bloom with seeds to be eaten. This is good. [It's pretty, I like it.](#)

After a while, The Creator got bored with the tall yellow flower. The Creator's neck hurt from looking up.

The Creator looked down at the brown earth. Boring. So, The Creator made crocus flowers. Some crocuses were yellow, some blue, some purple, etc. It's pretty, I like it.

After a while, The Creator got bored, and The Creator's neck hurt from looking down.

So, The Creator went crazy. The Creator made tulips in pink, red, white, yellow. Then roses and more and more flowers. All were different colors and sizes.

The Creator was so impressed that he designed a rainbow that went from one horizon to another in an array of color for all the animals to see.

The Creator noticed that The Creator's creatures had stinky poop! So, The Creator created the lilac, the jasmine, and other fragrant flowers to sweeten the smell.

And The Creator rested. It took a lot of effort to get this right.

The next day The Creator looked back on what he had done.

And The Creator knew that humans should be designed as beautiful as the rainbow.

Humans were made in beautiful colors, some tall and some not. Humans were designed to love the variety of each other, and all things designed by The Creator.

Each was loved by The Creator! A rainbow in the sky and a rainbow on the planet caused a great growth in The Creator's heart. The Creator shared the growth in the heart with all of Earth's people.

By Linda Spear

WOF Field Trip—To the Denver Museum of Nature and Science Free! Did you know that the museum was established 123 years ago? And has become one of our nation's greatest entertaining and educational institutions? Yup it has! On this visit you will be able to see *Mysteries of the Ice Age* and *Wild Color* with your entry. This is in addition to all the wonderful exhibit halls the museum has to offer. Feel free to RSVP online or sign up with a WOF team member! *Thank you to the Denver Museum of Nature and Science for being a friend!*

Date: Thursday, January 11th, 2024

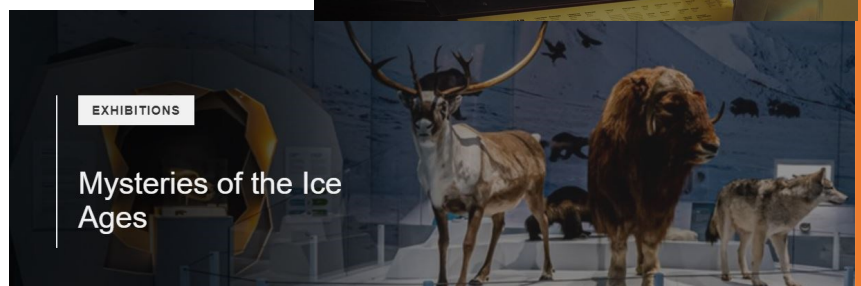
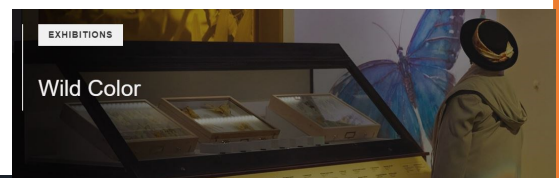
Location: Denver Museum of Nature and Science— 2001 Colorado Blvd, Denver, CO 80208

Time: 12:00p to whenever

Cost: Free

Fee: None - so feel free to sign up a friend.

Transportation will not be provided.



The Center's Schule of Drag

(pronounced 'School')

Instructor:

The Transcendent August Celestial



Class Schedule

Saturday, January 27th & 28th from 10:00 AM to 3:00 PM @ The Center

Saturday, February 3rd 11:00am to 3:00pm @ The Center & Sunday

February 4th 12:00pm to 6:30pm @ The Center & Hamburger Mary's

Syllabus



Stage Presence

Movement & Performance

Costume Concepts

Audience Interaction

Makeup

Live performance at Hamburger Mary's

Class size is limited & a \$25.00



Non-refundable registration fee due at time of registration. To register go to The Center's website.



**THE
CENTER**
ON COLFAX
West of 50

LGBTLifePlan

February 14th

Advanced Care Planning

Lunch Provided; RSVP strongly recommended

Participants will gain insights into conversations about healthcare preferences and the best ways to ensure their wishes for care through the end of life are honored. We will explore topics such as identifying a healthcare agent, basic advance care planning, how to have "the conversation", building a support network, and accessing community resources. Designed for individuals navigating the journey of aging alone or in partnership with others.

LGBTQ+ individuals tend to rely on caregivers who are not legally recognized such as partners and chosen families to aid with caregiving or daily living. Due to this, our community must be educated on what documents they need to protect themselves from individuals who do not want to respect their wishes.

This could result in surviving LGBTQ+ partners or other loved ones being unable to carry out funeral and burial wishes, being shut out of an inheritance, forfeiture of a family home, or other dire consequences for the serving caregiver or loved one. West of 50 is excited to introduce its newest program LGBTLife Plan. LGBTLife Plan is a monthly program that will bring in speakers who will focus on helping one get ready for the end of the rainbow. The following is the list of new programming & speakers:

January

LGBTQ+ALKS

Thursdays from 1:00p—2:30p

Begins January 18th

Staff Facilitated

A support group focused on aging and grief all while fostering a healthy outlook and building community.

January 31st

End of life Planning

Lunch Provided; RSVP strongly recommended

One way to exercise control now and in the future, particularly for the LGBTQ+ community, is to prepare for the end of life. This class will guide you through the landscape of estate planning, end of life financial matters, and the importance of advance directives. Learn how to prepare to write your will, ensure your wishes are fulfilled and identity is respected even when you aren't able to advocate for yourself. Secure peace of mind by joining us - because being prepared doesn't diminish our vibrancy; it enhances our resilience.

March 13th- Funeral Home Preparations

April- The End of the Rainbow Resources with Denver Public Libraries.

Free Financial Coaching for older adults 55+

Sunshine Home Share's Financial Wellness & Empowerment Program serves older adults aged 55 and above in the Denver area by offering free one-on-one financial coaching sessions. Our experienced financial social workers are dedicated to assisting you in navigating the complexities of budgeting, managing debt, and improving your credit. Beyond these essential aspects, our program is designed to empower you to articulate and achieve your unique financial goals. By partnering with us, you not only gain access to expert guidance but also a supportive environment that fosters financial resilience. To schedule an appointment contact Becky at becky@sunshinehomeshare.org

About Becky: Becky Brazell (she/her) is a licensed social worker and the Program Manager at Sunshine Home Share Colorado. She has worked in affordable housing settings for over a decade and presently provides free financial coaching for older adults in Metro Denver. She earned her Master's in Social Work from Washington University in St. Louis with a focus in community practice, and dual Bachelor degrees in Ethnic Studies and Social Work from Colorado State University.

Thankful 4U West of 50's Thanksgiving Celebration— Is worth it? This is my favorite West of 50 event. We spend months planning this activation. Every year we reflect on what worked well and what did not from the years prior. For this year, we changed the location to increase parking & seating, have access to a bigger kitchen, and a proper stage. We worked on ways to improve our options for people with dietary needs and wants by allowing people to choose their own meals.

We worked hard on selecting a look and feel to the table setting that was homey, classic, yet environmentally responsible; keeping some of the old features that had made the last two activations a success. I made the decision to make the RSVP process online as we are missing community member's demographic data. This is hurting my ability to apply for grants. To keep people engaged we introduced BINGO with awesome prizes and kept the awards program.

Upon the roll out of the registration we sent every person who attended a West of 50 event an invitation to the celebration. RSVPs started to fill up quick! We were excited! After a week and a half we opened the enrollment to the broader community. Before we knew it we hit our goal of 90 RSVPs and had a waitlist. This is when fear sunk in... What happens if community members aren't able to attend that should be able

to? I call you Legacy Members—The ones that show up every week. You all get priority seating. We needed to ensure you had a spot at the table. I started calling people that we did not know. We sent emails asking if they knew what they had signed up for. Many responded stating they were planning on attending. We sent emails to the larger audience asking for people to let us know if they could not attend so that we could open up the wait list. SILENCE.

The day of the event we knew we would have walk-ins and falloff. It's natural. The one exception was 2022, that year every person who signed up came. But, Bryant and I called every person the night before and reminded them of the event. The year before that, Kerry and I called people and invited them and then called them the night before.

This year I decided we were not going to do that. We don't have time to call 90 people. I thought... *"They are adults. They signed up for a free meal, BINGO, and a show. They will come"*. The fall off was painful. Our most prized event had over 20 people not show. Don't get me wrong the event was a success! The food was great, space was great, the awards went well, the parking continues to be an issue. But, I think that comes with the territory when you're hosting a lot of people. But it leaves me with one question. Is it worth it? Yes. -Jason

Thankful 4U! A special **Thank you** to the **Community Group** for all your assistance on the Thanksgiving event! **Steve** and **Avis** you are amazing. Without your guidance and feedback the improvements to this year's program would not have happened.

Thank you Johnny, Bobby, Alex, and Kadie for all your work and support. **Ashley S., thank you** for taking photos and help with marketing. To the **WES** team we **love you!** you are amazing! **Thank you** for your continued support. **Ty Woo—We love you!** See you at the Tea Dance. **Bryant**— Once again we put on an amazing event and I could not be more proud of our work. **Great job** and **thank you** for all do for **West of 50**. Lastly, **thank you** to **Kris** and our **funders**. You made this happen.
Thank you for all who donated to the event!



Cheers to our Thankful4U Award Recipients



Vitality Award

- Ernie Daniels
- Saint Jude
- Cliff Hawkins
- Richard White



Aspiration Award: Linda Spear & Tara Lloyd-Burton (not pictured)



Impact Award: Avis Blankenship & Michael Van Dalsem

Holiday Party & Art Show!

Thank you to the **Community Group** for your support, feedback, & help. **Steve, Avis, Micheal V.,** & the other community members that assisted us with setting up & decorating. Thank to **Robin C.** for providing us with Hanukkah decorations. **YOU ROCK**

Thank you to our **artists**— Without your creativity we could not have an art show. I am so **grateful** that you allowed us to display your work. You have brought notoriety to the program.

Kadie & Alex— **Thank you** for stepping up. Thanks to you 126 people made it through the building. **Kadie**—**Thank you** for being an amazing intern. I am **proud of you.**

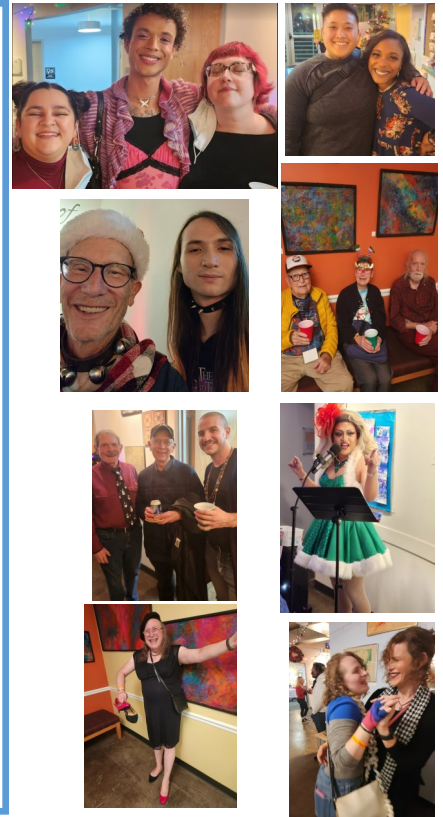
Jaylin—**Thank you** for sticking around and helping use clean up. It was a lot...

Kris, Ashley S. & our funders— **Thank you** for support. You have helped our community more than you will ever know.

Bryant— **Thank you** for your ideas, support, & hard work. **You kick ass & I'm so proud of you & our work. Way to be the best.**

Gila Moonstar— I am a fan! You did a wonderful job! You are beautiful inside and out.

Center Staff— **Thank you** for letting us take over the building.



The Center's Holiday Party & Art Show Breaks a New Record! When I start this position Rex said to me, *"Jason, every year Sage has an art show, and I want people to come and see it"*. That year I had a small budget. I partnered with my friends from WES who assisted with decorations and brought in a lot of my items. Trees, cake stands, table cloths, so on. Kerry and I hosted a show that was simple, elegant, and fun and just for the SAGE community that year. We had about 40 attendees.

Due to the prior year's success the event's budget had been expanded. I explained the concept of the activation to Bryant and we reviewed what had worked and what needed new life. We introduced new branding, expanded the activation to the broader community, Bryant recommended putting art in every room, and we brought in entertainment. The 2022 show welcomed just over 60 individuals.

For this year we took a more focused and clean approach. Micheal King was provided his own room, we separated art by concept, and did a better job of telling a story with people's work. When it came to decorating. I relied on feedback and provided direction on how things need to look and feel. Resulting in a space that allowed for movement and more organized concept to the show.

This took several days to implement. Bryant, did a wonderful job working with the artist to ensure we had their art labels. Steve, Katie, Micheal V., Robin, and other community members helped us decorate. Rex popped into my office and noted that Senator Micheal Bennet had heard about the Art Show and would be stopping by to see it, resulting in an exhilarating completion of the show. When it was all said and done we had created something I am so proud of. GREAT WORK and Thank you to our artists.

The day of the party Bryant spent so much time putting up additional lighting, making sure things looked amazing. He added immensely to what was already an awesome art show.

For the event itself we welcomed Gila Moonstar as the performer, had an open bar, and appetizers. When the doors opened for the event within 30 minutes we had already hit 39 attendees. By the end of the night we had 126 individuals come through The Center. Gila, did a wonderful job entertaining the crowd, Bryant managed the bar, and Kadie and Alex welcomed guests. There was dancing, singing, and so many new faces. I could not be more happy with the event. Thank you to all that helped make this activation a success.—Jason

Coordinator of Disability Services—Bryant Mehay, MA, CTRS

Email: bmehay@lgbtqcolorado.org **Phone #:** 303.951.5228



Sexuality & Disability

Third Mondays, beginning
September 18, 2023
5:30 - 7:00 PM

for adults 21+

THE CENTER
ON COLFAX
lgbtqcolorado.org



Disability Peer Support Group

Fridays at 1:30 pm

THE CENTER
ON COLFAX
lgbtqcolorado.org

During each meeting of this hybrid group, we will dive into a specific topic, ranging from representation of disabled sex and sexuality in the media, to consent, to healthy sex practices. This program will also feature special guest speakers that will come in and share on relevant topics. The content of this group will be based in the most current research & guided by the community and its interests.

Ages: Adults ages 21+

When: Due to MLK Day and President's Day the JAN and FEB meetings will be 4th Monday of the month: **Jan 22 & Feb 26**

Location: Virtually or In-Person at The Center on Colfax

Registration is required to receive the Zoom link for virtual participation. You will receive a confirmation email with the Zoom information once you register.

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. For questions, please contact Bryant at bmehay@lgbtqcolorado.org.

When: Every Friday from 1:30 - 3:00 PM

Where: Virtually or In-Person at the Center on Colfax. Visit <https://thecenteroncolfax.salsalabs.org/disability/index.html> to register for the zoom link.

Upcoming Group Cancellations:

January 19th—Closed for Holiday

January 2024

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
	1 Center Closed	2 NO WOF	3 NO WOF	4 10 Art	5 10:30 Move. 11:45 Med. 1:30 DPSG	6
7	8 10 Lesbian 1:30 Story 6:15 Stitch	9 10 Men's coffee 2 Sex	10 10:30 SS Yoga 1:30 AARP	11 10 Art 12:00 DMNS	12 10:30 Move. 11:45 Med. 1:30 DPSG	13
14	15 MLK Day No Programming	16 10 Men's coffee 2 Sex	17 10:30 SS Yoga 1:30 AARP	18 10 Art 1:00 +alks	19 Center Closed	20
21	22 10 Lesbian 1:30 Story 5:30 Sex & Disability 6:15 Stitch	23 10 Men's coffee 2 Sex	24 10:30 SS Yoga 1:30 AARP	25 10 Art 1:00 +alks	26 10:30 Move. 11:45 Med. 1:30 DPSG	27 10 Schule of Drag
28 10 Schule of Drag	29 10 Lesbian 1:30 Story 6:15 Stitch	30 10 Men's coffee 2 Sex	31 10:30 SS Yoga 11:45 End of Life Financial 1:30 AARP	<p>Key</p> <p>Lesbian: Lesbian Lounge Story: Telling Your Story Stitch: Stitch & Bitch Sex: Older Wiser Sexually Smarter AARP: Community</p> <p>Group Art: Open Art +alks: LGBTQ+alks Move: Qigong Movement Med: Meditation DPSG: Disability Peer Support Group</p>		