

YOU MATTER.

While working on a creative aging collaboration we were talking about the life of a tree. We talked about how in some years the tree’s ring is wide & how this indicates that the tree experienced a year of great health. The rings also told a story of a forest fire and how it had grown from the scars it sustained.

I directly related this to life, and how we have our ups and downs. As you all know, there is nothing easy about life. One must work hard, be unapologetic in practice, and learn to love safely; but willfully.

Life has a way of weighing you down, especially when you are part of a marginalized population that can, at times, turn in and attack itself. It’s times like these that we need to take time to give ourselves a little pat on the back. Positive affirmations are short statements that can help brighten your outlook on the world and when you say them often, they can really start to have an impact on one’s outlook on life.

These mantras & affirmations do not replace the need for professional help. If you need to talk to someone please do! But affirmations can increase one’s self-esteem and improve mental wellness overall. Here are some examples that people use to help pep themselves up.

- ◆ *“Am I good enough? Yes, I am”.* -Michelle Obama.
- ◆ *“Nothing can dim the light that shines from within”.* – Maya Angelou
- ◆ *“You must do the thing you think you cannot do”.* – Eleanor Roosevelt
- ◆ *“I am beautiful, I am worthy, and I am loved.”* – Britney Spears

I tend to tell myself that *“I deserve to take up space”*, *“I deserved to be acknowledged”*, and my life changing affirmation is *“I am a priority and not an option.”* I would like to send a little love to Miriam who reminded me not to sell myself short. These kind words and taking the moment to remind oneself of how relevant and important one is. I also encourage you to remind people in your life how relevant and important they are to you. You never know how impactful your words can be.

-Jason

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MEMORIES OF AN OLD MAN

II -Shaking the Dust Off Our Shoes – by Ken Felts

It was now the Summer of 1937. We were lucky Dad had the railroad job, although for about a year he had been laid off and it was a difficult time to find employment as millions of working men shared this experience during the Great Depression. My father also lost the farm to the bank as we could not make the mortgage payments. Next, we moved into Dodge City proper and into a large house where my parents rented out rooms for some income. Dad took a job as a caretaker for a city park, and I sometimes joined him at lunchtime. One day he shared his single sandwich with me -bologna, but I was too young to realize just how poor we were. Finally, the railroad recalled laid-off workers, and Dad resumed his job in the roundhouse. Shortly after returning to work, he was offered a promotion, which required relocation to the Santa Fe railroad yards in Raton, New Mexico. Much of the extended family still lived in Dodge City so leaving was difficult, but the raise in pay and the escape from the Dust Bowl was an even stronger pull.

Since the railroad required the location change, they furnished a railroad box car for our furniture and other belongings. While the railroad moved our furniture, the family drove to our new location in our Ford sedan carrying our personal belongings and needed clothing, Dad hooked a small trailer to the back of the car, covered it with a tarp, and we now had a modern covered wagon. It was only 314 miles and gas was twenty cents a gallon.

Raton (Spanish for small rat or mouse) is a small town located at the foot of Raton Pass on the New Mexico side of the mountains. Originally named Willow Springs, it was a major stop on the Santa Fe Trail before the railroad became the preferred mode of transportation. We settled into a small house, and I was entered into a nearby grade school. Photos are of my family and me on our way to Raton. (Next time – My First Bully)



Natural Dyes with Denver Museum of Nature & Science

What's YOUR favorite color? Come dressed in your bright couture and explore nature's vibrant palette with Denver Museum of Nature & Science, inspired by the Museum's temporary exhibition, *Wild Color*, on view until April 7. Share stories of how YOUR Colorado is colorful, see if you can guess which plants render which colors when used as natural dyes, then experiment with

cabbage dye color mixing using kitchen chemistry. Finally, listen to a colorful playlist of songs as you channel your inner artist and create your own bookmark using the watercolor dyes you've made! This interactive color experience will be at The Center during the typical Open Art session. Coffee and pastries will be provided. Space limited to 20 individuals so RSVP is required to attend.

Date: April 4th **Time:** 10:00am – 11:45am

2 & 29 years ago . . .

March marked my second full year of working here at The Center & April 10th marks my 29th year on this earth! I am so grateful to have the provided you all with quality programming and the opportunities to try new things. I began my 20's as an Undergraduate at Indiana University, studying Recreational Therapy & Theatre; unsure about where I would find myself in my life. I am proud to end my 20's as the Coordinator of West of 50 & The Disability Program. I look forward to what the next year of this work & decade of Bryant has to bring! ★ Bryant Mehay ★



Double Feature Movie Night: The Schule of Drag & I Am Divine

This month we have a treat for everyone and it isn't just the new popcorn machine. We will be watching not one, but two separate films. The first will be a compilation of performance video clips from The Schule of Drag, featuring, but not limited to Ava Blu (Avis Blankenship), Steve Anne (Steve Calcagno), Star Gazer (Mary Speegle), La Paloma Santo Catalina (Kathaleen Kelleher) & More!! Directly following that, we will be screening the documentary I Am Divine, a film that follows the life & outrageousness of the prolific counterculture singer, actor, & drag artist Divine. This film features commentary from John Waters, Tab Hunter, & the artist's own mother. All the while displaying exclusive video and audio of the star through his life. Enjoy company, treats, popcorn, sodas, & more with us as we watch The Center's history be made & learn about a piece of our own history.

When: Friday, April 5th

Doors Open: 5:30pm

Movie Starts: 6pm





NEXTSTOP

transit education

In collaboration with the Denver Regional Mobility & Access Council and MTM Transit, we will be hosting a series of educational sessions on the RTD Public Transit system & going out on public transit to explore Colorado. These session will be two-day experiences; one day we have a class at The Center and then the next day, we use the public transit to travel to a predetermined location, spend time there, and then return.

We invite you to join MTM Transit for a class on Denver’s public transportation system April 18th at 12:15pm. MTM not only confirms eligibility for Access-a-Ride for RTD but provides travel trainings ranging from presentations like this, group trips, to one-on-one training for seniors and folx with disabilities. The training on the 18th will be a general overview of the RTD system, Access-a-Ride, and a chance to ask questions about public transportation in Colorado. Hope to see you there!

For our trip this time around, we will be going to Golden, CO. We will leave The Center at 10am on Friday the 19th and be returning in the evening around 5pm.



	In-person Class	Travel Trip
Date:	Thursday, April 18th	Friday, April 19th
When:	12:15-1:30pm	10am-5pm
Where:	Center on Colfax	Golden, CO

LGBTLifePlan

Dunk & Munch: Lung Cancer & The Queer Community Presented by National Jewish Health

Many people know to get enrolled in mammograms to detect possible breast cancer and colonoscopies for colorectal cancer. But people at high risk of developing lung cancer (the deadliest cancer in the U.S.) often do not know about their screening options! Patients 50-80 with a heavy smoking history may qualify for a low dose CT to be covered in full by Medicare, Medicaid and most insurances. Representatives from the Lung Cancer Screening program at National Jewish Health will be visiting The Center on Colfax to explain eligibility, the benefits of Lung Cancer Screening, and the impact of lung cancer on the LGBTQ+ community. We will also discuss how to talk to your doctor about your cancer risks, and why being out to your doctor may be important for your care.

When: Thursday, April 11th 10:30-11:45; Coffee & Pastries Provided



DISABILITY PROGRAM

A social and supportive space for 21+ LGBTQ+ individuals with disabilities.

Coordinator of Disability Services—Bryant Mehay, MA, CTRS

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ADAedu

Date: Tuesday, April 16th

Time: 6-8pm

Where: In person @ The Center on Colfax & On Zoom

Join the Disability Program as we host an education training on The Americans with Disabilities Act presented by Emily Shuman from The Rocky Mountain ADA Center. In addition to the group presentation, attendees will be able to sign up for a one-on-one phone or video meeting with Emily to discuss specific ADA questions or situations. This will be the first in a series of educational programs focusing on the ADA.

Register for the Zoom Link here: <https://us06web.zoom.us/meeting/register/tZApOitrzgoHdLtsmm-iCkYrpvLa4CcaUHP>

About the Training:

The ADA represents a historic milestone, as it is the first comprehensive civil rights law focused on people with disabilities. The ADA opens the doors to participation in employment, state and local government programs, public accommodations, and more by prohibiting discrimination against people with disabilities, their families, and friends. This training will summarize the history of the ADA in the United States, recognize the five titles of the ADA and its enforcement agencies, and define disability. We will examine the rights of people with disabilities and the responsibilities of entities under the ADA.

About the RMADAC:

The Rocky Mountain ADA Center (RMADAC) provides information, guidance, and training on the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) tailored to meet the needs of individuals and organizations in Colorado, Montana, North Dakota, South Dakota, Utah, and Wyoming. The RMADAC is operated by the University of Northern Colorado in Greeley, Colorado, and is funded by the National Institute on Disability, Independent Living, and Rehabilitation Research.

About the Speaker:

[Emily Shuman](#) is the Director of the Rocky Mountain ADA Center (RMADAC). She leads the Center's staff and operations and is responsible for ensuring the objectives of the organization are met.

She works with the ADA National Network and other Regional Directors to improve operational practices and expand ADA Network services. She serves as the RMADAC's spokesperson and works with the media to promote awareness and implementation of the ADA.

As a person with multiple hidden disabilities, Emily is passionate about empowering businesses and individuals to understand their rights and responsibilities under the ADA.

Lunching, Munching, & Developing:

A Review of Topics Explored in 2023

Last year between Jason, Bryant, our interns, and outside organizations, we presented 13 lectures through our three different community education programs: Lunch & Learn, Dunk & Munch, and Dining & Developing. Topics ranged from nutrition to theories of Drama Therapy. Here's a look back at the new things learned in 2023!

Role Theory

In February Bryant kicked off their Drama Therapy education series with Role Theory, which is the idea that humans are role takers & it is the combination of the various roles that we take on through our lives that create our sense of self.

Masks & Mask Work

Bryant continued their series in March where they introduced the history of masks, their therapeutic usage, & cultural meanings. Attendees worked on masks of their own during the session.

Theatre of the Oppressed (TO)

In May, Bryant introduced the idea of TO, which is a system of physical exercises, aesthetic games, image techniques, and special improvisations whose goal is to safeguard, develop and reshape this human vocation by turning the practice of theatre into an effective tool for the comprehension of social and personal problems and the search for their solutions.

Reinventing Yourself

Jason started his Dining and Developing series in May, where he provided dinner and a conversation. Here he focused on reinvention later in life & how to solidify your sense of self.

Maintaining Muscle Mass

In June we were introduced to Grey Trizna from Natural Grocers. In this group she taught about different healthy ways to maintain muscle mass in the later years.

Developing & Maintaining Relationships

Last summer, Emma our summer social work intern explored therapeutic methodology around the keys to building strong relationship foundations.

Love Languages

Jason continued his Dining and Developing series in July. This one focused on unpacking the different kinds of love languages.

Continued on next page

Building Healthy Meals

Grey Trizna returned in August, this time we traveled to the Natural Grocers on Colfax and facilitated a lesson about easy and healthy ways to build delicious meals

Drag as Drama Therapy

In September, Bryant utilized their last three lectures to build up to this presentation. Here, they presented on their Master's Thesis—Drag as Therapy: A Defense for the use of Drag as Drama Therapy. This covered several different Drama Therapy theories and techniques & compared them to the lived experiences of drag artists.

Embracing the Next 50

Jason's final Dining and Developing for 2023 focused on accepting aging as a part of life and embracing the process rather than fighting against it.

Social Work

For their first educational session of their internship, Kadie talked about Social Work, different theories of it, & how it can work with the LGBTQ+ community.

Hate Crimes

In November, we had a representative from the FBI come in and talk about Hate Crime statistics and talk to the community about public safety, awareness, and answered any questions the community had. If you missed this, you should know the FBI always sends us their most attractive agents.

Historic Drag as Theatre of The Oppressed

For the final presentation of the year, Bryant discussed research they conducted at Texas A&M University with the Don Kelly Collection, a massive LGBTQ+ archive of memoirs, periodicals, interviews, & more. The research was titled—Engaged in a Particular and Willful Activity: A Historical Exploration into Drag as Theatre of the Oppressed. Bryant conducted research that focused on Drag as it existed through the latter half of the 20th century and its connection to the practice and theoretical foundation of Theatre of the Oppressed.

Last year we were able to provide a variety of educational topics that interested our community. For this upcoming year, if you have any ideas or concepts that you would be interested in learning about, let Jason or Bryant know, if we can make it happen we will!

April 2024

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
	1 10:30 Lesbian 1:30 Story 6:15 Stitch	2 10 Men's Coffee 2p Sex	3 10:30 Yoga 1:30 AARP	4 <i>10 Wild Color</i> 1:30 +alks	5 10:30 Move 11:45 Med 1:30 DPSG <i>5:30 Movie Night</i>	6
7	8 10:30 Lesbian 1:30 Story 6:15 Stitch	9 10 Men's Coffee 2p Sex	10 10:30 Yoga 1:30 AARP <i>Bryant's Birthday!</i>	11 10 Art <i>10:30 LGBT-LifePlan</i> 1:30 +alks	12 10:30 Move 1:30 DPSG	13
14	15 10:30 Lesbian 1:30 Story 6:15 Stitch	16 10 Men's Coffee 2p Sex <i>6p ADAedu</i>	17 10:30 Yoga 1:30 AARP	18 10 Art <i>12:15 Next Stop</i> 1:30 +alks	19 <i>10 Next Stop</i> 1:30 DPSG	20
21	22 10:30 Lesbian 1:30 Story 6:15 Stitch	23 10 Men's Coffee 2p Sex	24 10:30 Yoga	25 10 Art 1:30 +alks	26 10:30 Move 1:30 DPSG	27
28	29 10:30 Lesbian 1:30 Story 6:15 Stitch	30 10 Men's Coffee 2p Sex	Key Lesbian: Lesbian Lounge Story: Telling Your Story Stitch: Stitch & Bitch Sex: Older Wiser Sexually Smarter AARP: Community Group Art: Open Art +alks: LGBTQ+alks Move: Movement Med: Meditation w/ Quana Madison DPSG: Disability Peer Support Group			