



**SOUTHERN
ARIZONA
SENIOR
PRIDE**

SENIOR
LGBTQI+ Elder Voice
FORUM

**PRIDE IS AGELESS.
CELEBRATE!**

**EL ORGULLO NO TIENE
EDAD. ¡CELEBRA!**

**NOVEMBER–DECEMBER 2023
Volume 19 • Issue Six**

Celebrating, Supporting, and Uniting LGBTQI+ Older Adults

Senior Pride Welcomes New Leader!

The Board of Directors for Southern Arizona Senior Pride is pleased to announce the appointment of Mary O'Donoghue as the organization's new Executive Director, effective October 30, 2023!

Most recently with Pima Council on Aging serving the local community of older adults as both PCOA's Volunteer Services Manager and Neighbors Care Alliance Administrator, Mary has lived in Southern Arizona since 2021 after previously residing in Florida, Ohio, Kansas and Missouri.

Mary's experience in executive leadership and community-based program development has progressed from the leadership of two separate shelters for women and children fleeing domestic violence and the oversight of daily operations for community-based services for adults and residential group homes for youth, to person-centered case management services for children and their families and the direction of professional and direct care staff serving 100+ individuals with developmental disabilities and/or mental health needs. Whew! All this experience has prepared her well to make significant contributions to Senior Pride in both the near term and for many years going forward.



Photo: Sarah Bahnsen

Mary O'Donoghue

"I am enthusiastic about developing strong community collaborations and developing community-driven programs," said Mary. "I embrace the philosophy of Servant Leadership as a guide to motivate, engage, and develop staff and volunteers and I look forward to meeting and getting to know everyone connected with Senior Pride!"

Throughout her professional life and community involvement experiences, including 10+ years as an executive leader, Mary has advocated, educated, and built programs to support and serve the LGBTQI+ community. She brings dedication and passion for the mission and vision of the organization with extensive experience in strategic planning, establishing financial stability and growth, and developing and maintaining organizational processes. Senior Pride's outgoing Executive Director, Scott McDonald, is assisting with Mary's orientation and on boarding for her new role with significant overlap of their time together through the month of November.



Southern Arizona SENIOR PRIDE

*Celebrating, Supporting, and
Uniting LGBTQI+ Older Adults*

1632 N. Country Club Rd.
Tucson, AZ 85716

(520) 312-8923

info@soazseniorpride.org
www.SoAzSeniorPride.org

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mail, call (520) 312-8923
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info@soazseniorpride.org*

Save the Date • Holiday Party

This enjoyable and casual annual event will be held at **St Francis in the Foothills** on the afternoon of **Saturday, December 16th** (same location as last year) with plenty of fun, food and friends! Stay tuned to our weekly eNews for more details as we get closer to the event.

Senior Pride at Tucson Pride 2023

Tucson Pride Parade 2023 was graced by a beautiful, clear, almost-Fall night, and Senior Pride's participation was a highlight for so many of us. A group of over 30 Senior Pride members walked and drove the route, cheering and waving and simply catching up with friends. It was particularly exciting this year as Lavina Tomer, a long-time Senior Pride leader, was the 2023 Grand Marshall. Then Saturday morning, Senior Pride was active again, tabling at the Tucson Pride Festival. Many thanks to all who participated and volunteered.



Photo: Deborah Dobson



Photos: Joyce Bolinger and Meredith Glaubach

COMMUNITY PROFILE: KELL OLSON: DEFENDING LGBTQ+ RIGHTS AS ATTORNEY WITH LAMBDA LEGAL BY JOYCE BOLINGER

Kell Olson cannot forget the powerful image of a seventh grade girl in the last Arizona legislative session. Standing alone, she defended herself against state legislators who were debating the ability of trans kids to participate in sports at their schools.

"I wanted to put my body between her and the legislators who were hurling gross attacks at her," Kell says. This is an example of why Kell has thrown himself into defending LGBTQ rights as a Staff Attorney in the Western Regional Office of Lambda Legal.

Lambda Legal is a national organization dedicated to representing LGBTQ people and those living with HIV in courts and public opinion. Lambda Legal's lawyers have won precedent-setting civil rights cases on everything from marriage equality to expressions of gender identity to health care discrimination.

<https://lambdalegal.org>

Although Kell's cases typically are based in western states, he has represented Florida parents who are challenging censorship laws. He is also on a team that is challenging an Idaho law that dictates that students in all K-12 campuses have to use bathrooms according to sex assigned at birth.



"It is transparently politically motivated to use trans youth as political pawns, judging they are the safest and most vulnerable target," Kell says. He is especially touched by his talks with parents who relate their anguish at the painful struggle to support their children. "The conservative focus on attacking trans youth diverts attention from important issues such as affordable housing," Kell comments.

Kell's road to Lambda Legal began in 2002 at Wingspan, the now closed LGBTQ community center in Tucson. He worked as a youth outreach specialist at Wingspan, eventually becoming the coordinator of the youth program.

He received his law degree from the University of Arizona law school and interned at Lambda Legal as a student. Then, for four years he clerked for two Arizona Court of Appeals judges, followed by seven years as a Deputy Pima County Attorney handling civil cases. He began at Lambda Legal two years ago.

Kell identifies as a trans man. He is married to Jennifer Hoefle Olson and they have twin girls, now in middle school. He enjoys attending astronomy "star parties" and doing karaoke with his daughters. As a family they love hiking and rock climbing.

Kell stresses the real power of talking about our LGBTQ history with young people who haven't seen a backlash like this. "We are in familiar territory even though the issues are different. But we see people connecting to peel back layers of mis-information and fear," he adds.

This gives him the energy and motivation to tackle the hard cases that Lambda Legal takes on.



Pima Council on Aging

Help Line: 520.790.7262
(M-F 8:30am-5pm)

help@pcoa.org

*To learn about in house LGBTQ
Elder Care specialists on PCOA's staff,
email: SBahnson@pcoa.org*

ONGOING EVENTS: For more information, registration and Zoom links visit www.SoAzSeniorPride.org

WE ALL NEED ADVANCE MEDICAL CARE PLANNING!

HONORING A LIFE: ADVANCE MEDICAL CARE PLANNING WORKSHOPS

If you haven't yet attended one of our workshops for LGBTQI+ older adults to properly plan for medical care and end of life needs, you really should before you need it!

Easy-to-complete living wills, powers of attorney and other important documents are covered, as well as other ways to ensure your health care wishes are recorded and your identity as a LGBTQI+ individual is protected.

Honoring a Life Community Resource Fair (in honor of Dia de los Muertos)

United Way Conference Center – 330 N Commerce Park Loop
Thursday, November 2, 11:00am – 4:30pm

Honoring a Life Workshop (in person with Zoom option)

Thursday, December 7, 1:30pm – 3:30pm

The in-person Tucson location will be provided to registrants along with workshop materials a week before the workshop, with Zoom option available upon request. To ensure enough materials, all attendees need to register online via link in upcoming Friday eNews or by clicking the date above.

For more information, or to schedule a follow-up "Meet and Complete" session or one-on-one coaching, please email eol@soazseniorpride.org or call (520) 312-8923.

SENIOR PRIDE BOOK CLUB – <https://soazseniorpride.org> for more information and registration. Or email: info@soazseniorpride.org

The Left Hand of Darkness

By Ursula Le Guin

November 15, 2023 • 2-3:30 PM



Ursula Le Guin

Prolific and groundbreaking writer Ursula Le Guin published *The Left Hand of Darkness* in 1969. It won both the Nebula and Hugo awards and is characteristic of "Le Guin's astounding ability to think outside the Western cultural patriarchal box." (Marlene S. Barr in *Nature*.) In it, "Genly Ai and Estraven - two men in exile from the worlds they know - are pushed into howling arctic-style terrain ... It is a three-month journey of the harshest possible kind. In a landscape barren of anything sustaining, they are reliant

upon and thus begin to love each other. ..." The writer continues, "She gives us a world beyond gender—a world in which gender is so fluid, it is not needed for survival or even convenience." (Victoria Brownworth lambdaliterary.org)

My Autobiography of Carson McCullers: A Memoir

By Jenn Shapland

Dec. 20, 2023 • 2-3:30 PM



Carson McCullers

Acclaimed writer Carson McCullers (*The Heart is a Lonely Hunter*) has never been identified as a lesbian, or even bisexual, although there seems to be evidence contained in her letters that this was the case. Why? You'll notice that Shapland's book is not a biography. Rather, as the writer of *Book Riots* in its Best Books of 2020, states, "This book uncovers ways women's queer history has been ignored. It's a personal, powerful, genre-bending account of literary discovery."

Senior Pride Connects Our Community -- Your Donations Keep Us Strong!

Senior Pride's cultural events, support groups, Community Cares Program, workshops, website with local resources, Facebook page, YouTube channel and weekly e-news updates provide a hub for our community.

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All donations to Senior Pride are tax deductible to the full extent of the law. Please note: We no longer qualify for the Arizona Charitable Tax Credit.