



**SOUTHERN
ARIZONA
SENIOR
PRIDE**

SENIOR
LGBTQI+ Elder Voice
FORUM

**PRIDE IS AGELESS.
CELEBRATE!**
**EL ORGULLO NO TIENE
EDAD. ¡CELEBRA!**
JANUARY-FEBRUARY 2024
Volume 20 • Issue One

Celebrating, Supporting, and Uniting LGBTQI+ Older Adults

Senior Pride Turns 20!

As Senior Pride turns 20 this year, we reflect on the journey so far! It is marked by community involvement, innovative programs, friendship, as well as cherished leaders and volunteers. We are filled with gratitude for our past, and are excited to see what is to come. This year, the **Senior Forum** newsletter will highlight past accomplishments and recognize those who have made the organization its current success.

2003 *Fran Coleman* conducts community survey documenting need for senior services and resulting in formation of **Rainbow Train**, offering LGBT competency training for staff of older adult agencies and facilities. *Fran* proposes senior program to **Wingspan**, Tucson's LGBT community center.

2004 Spurred by *Fran's* groundwork, **Wingspan** Executive Director, **Kent Burbank**, creates **Wingspan Senior Pride** to serve older LGBT adults.

2005-2013 When funding was not available for staff, volunteers continued Senior Pride programs including monthly potlucks, the **Senior Forum** newsletter and monthly meetings. In addition, an oral history program, "**A Colorful Life**" is showcased.

2014 **Wingspan** closed. Volunteers resolved to continue services to LGBTQ+ older adults and organized **Southern Arizona Senior Pride**. **Lavina Tomer** became chair of Steering Committee, later volunteer Executive Director. Website is launched. Monthly speakers series is launched and continues through 2021.

2016-2017 Senior Pride launches the **Community Cares Program**, offering friendly visits by our trained volunteers to LGBTQI+ community members who are home-bound, isolated, or living with a disability. The initial and continuing **Women's Grief Support Group** is initiated. The **Senior Pride book club** is organized.

2020 With the help of substantial and multiple year grants, **Honoring A Life** workshops and the **Advance Medical Care Planning Program** are initiated and sustained.

2021 Senior Pride incorporates as a **501(c)3 non-profit organization**. Our first, formal Board of Directors is established. **Keith Ashley**, Interim Executive Director, works hard to create a strong infrastructure and unique programming.

2022 First paid Executive Director **Scott McDonald** is hired. Community Engagement programming continues with lectures, museum tours, writing workshops, and more. New and continued grants are awarded. A **Men's Grief Support Group** and a second **Women's Grief Support Group** are initiated.

2023 Second paid Executive Director, **Mary O'Donoghue** is hired. We look forward to her leadership.



***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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Erin Russ, Coordinator, Advance
Medical Care Planning Program

Kim Hamel-Brown, Program
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About Senior Forum

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O'Donoghue Newsletter Editors
Connie Rose, Graphic Designer

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mail, call (520) 312-8923
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mailing list or email us at
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Holiday Celebration!

On Saturday, December 16th, the Senior Pride community gathered at St. Francis in the Foothills to celebrate, support and unite LGBTQIA+ individuals across Southern Arizona.

There was a special oral presentation by six volunteers highlighting progress through the years and the need for continued, focused efforts to ensure such advancements continue going forward.



Left-right:

Lavina Tomer

Joyce Bolinger

**Terry
DeCarolis**

Tom Buchanan

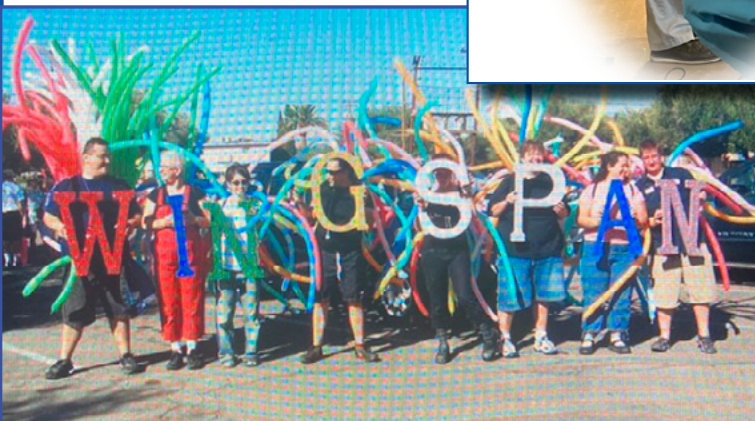
**Mary
O'Donoghue**

***Senior Pride hopes
your New Year,
2024, will be filled
with Peace,
Contentment,
Caring,
and Fun!***



Above:

**Bruce
Hyland**



WINGSPAN – Where it all began!

COMMUNITY PROFILE: PENELOPE STARR BY MEREDITH GLAUBACH

Storytelling has been a through line in Penelope Starr's life. Senior Pride is very lucky that much of the beginning of our program was shaped by a woman who so strongly believed in the power of each of our stories.

Senior Pride was started as a program of the then-prominent LGBT Tucson organization, Wingspan, in 2004. The following year, Penelope became the second program coordinator for the new program.

She playfully called herself a "Professional Queer" during her time in this position.

She led many powerful educational and social programs - some of which may even seem familiar to current Senior Pride participants. Penelope co-produced a program called "A Colorful Life," popular events where well known community elders shared their stories. These were recorded on video, and these oral histories take on new meaning as our community has lost many of these voices. Fortunately, Penelope donated the recordings to the Arizona Queer Archives where they are preserved.

Penelope laid the groundwork for some of the current Senior Pride programs, even though there was a gap in years between her initial efforts and the eventual implementation.

Penelope was openly out, but that was not true of the experience of all of the people she served. She received calls from seniors who said they were in their sixties but had been in the closet all their lives. They were calling



because they had decided they wanted to come out, and they wanted her support. Penelope would have coffee with these individuals and talk through what their next steps in life could look like.

Penelope coordinated Senior Pride for two years. Individuals came to Wingspan for help, information and support. Penelope recruited many of them for Senior Pride, building a cadre of dedicated volunteers. When funding for Penelope's staff position was ended, she encouraged continuation of projects, including this newsletter, the

Senior Forum, which has been edited, written and published by volunteers now for 20 years.

In 2014, Wingspan was forced to close its doors, but volunteers stepped up to keep working on behalf of an under served LGBTQI+ community of older adults. They formed Southern Arizona Senior Pride and both continued and re-vitalized the organization which, 20 years on, still exists because of the commitment, donations and grassroots energy of volunteers. Penelope says that this is the "most important work I've ever done and the most fun I've ever had". She feels she saved lives and the position gave her the sense that she could change the world. In the current political moment, she believes Senior Pride's work is as vital as ever.

In 2004, Penelope founded Odyssey Storytelling in Tucson. Her book, "The Radical Act of Community Storytelling", details much of how this ongoing organization has thrived. Her upcoming book, "Desert Haven" will be coming out April 2024. Learn more at <https://www.penelopestarr.com/>.

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 Workshop

(in person with Zoom option)

Monday, January 8, 10:00am – 12:00 pm

Tuesday, February 13, 4:30pm – 6:30 pm

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

Memorial: A Novel

By Bryan Washington

January 17, 2024 2:00 - 3:30 p.m.

This book has been named a Best Book of the Year by *The New York Times*, *The Washington Post*, *TIME*, *NPR*, and a dozen other entities.

Mike, born in Japan, and Ben, an African American raised in Texas, are a young gay couple in Houston. They've lived together for several years, but the relationship has worn somewhat thin and they both realize it needs critical work. Just as they come to this realization, a rather colossal distraction develops when Mike, upon learning that his estranged father is dying, sprints to Japan even while knowing that his mother is coming to visit in Houston and must stay with Ben. Will this be the catalyst for a deep dive into the merits of their relationship, as they sit on opposite sides of the world?



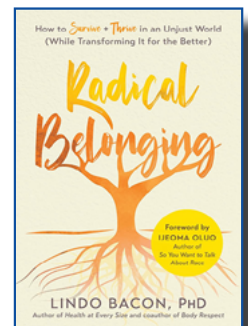
Radical Belonging: How to Survive and Thrive in an Unjust World (While Transforming it for the Better)

By Lindo Bacon, PhD

February 21, 2024 2:00 - 3:30 p.m.

From the author: "Radical Belonging is my manifesto, helping us heal from the individual and collective trauma of injustice and support our transition from a culture of othering to one of belonging."

"Lindo Bacon blends thoughtful analysis, poignant storytelling, important scientific evidence, and trauma and social justice – informed perspectives to help people understand and cope with the all-too-common experiences of discrimination and disconnection. *Radical Belonging* offers hope that we all are capable of transforming our pain into healing and growth." Christy Harrison, MPH, RD



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.

Our success is made possible by supporters like you. Please donate today.

By Check: Make checks payable to Senior Pride or So.AZ Senior Pride
Mail to: 1632 N Country Club Rd,
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Online: Go to our website
<https://soazseniorpride.org>
Click on "DONATE"

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.