

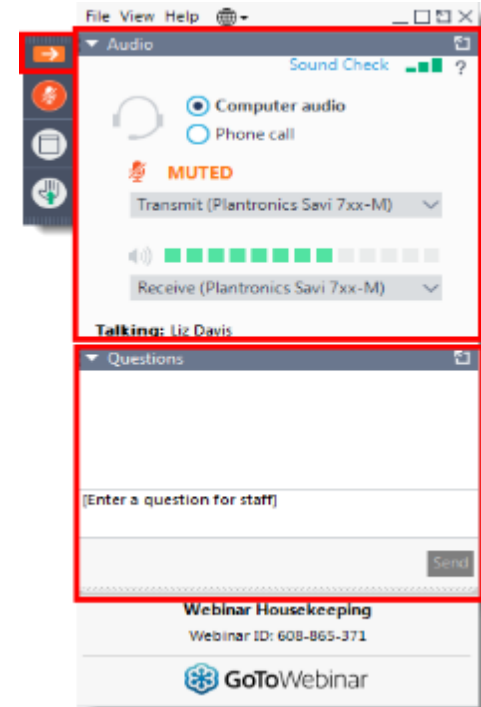
Serving LGBTQ Older Adults: Innovative Approaches to Help LGBTQ Older Adults Engage

June 22, 2021



Webinar Instructions

- **Audio options**
 - Use your computer speakers or dial in to the conference call
- **“Questions” box**
 - Q&A session will be at the **end** of the presentation, but feel free to submit your questions at any time during the presentation. Click on the dropdown arrow icon “▼” to pop out the questions box where you can type and submit your questions.
- **Webinar recording will be available**



engAGED

- National effort to increase social engagement among older adults, people with disabilities and their caregivers
- Administered by the National Association of Area Agencies on Aging (n4a)
- 17 Project Advisory Committee members:
www.engagingolderadults.org/partnerships
- Funded by the U.S. Administration on Aging, which is part of the Administration for Community Living

Presenters



Bill Gross

Assistant Director of Special Programs,
SAGE

Kate Spelman

Aging with Pride Program Specialist,
AgeOptions, Inc.



Ronald Bourque

Director of Compliance & Facilities,
Elder Services of the Merrimack Valley
and North Shore

LGBT Older Adult Population

- 2020: Estimated **3 million** LGBT adults 50 years of age and older
 - 2030: As many as **7 million**
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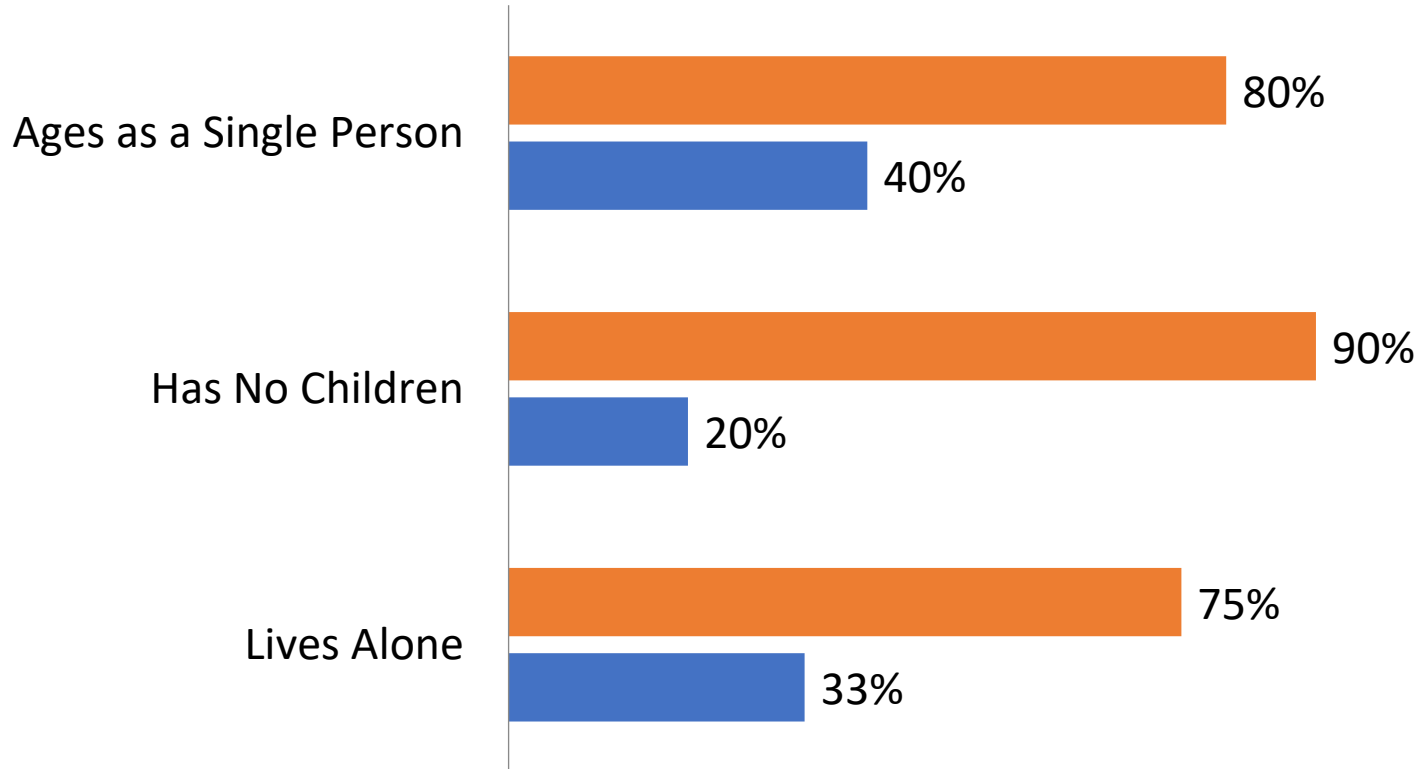


What makes LGBT older adults unique?

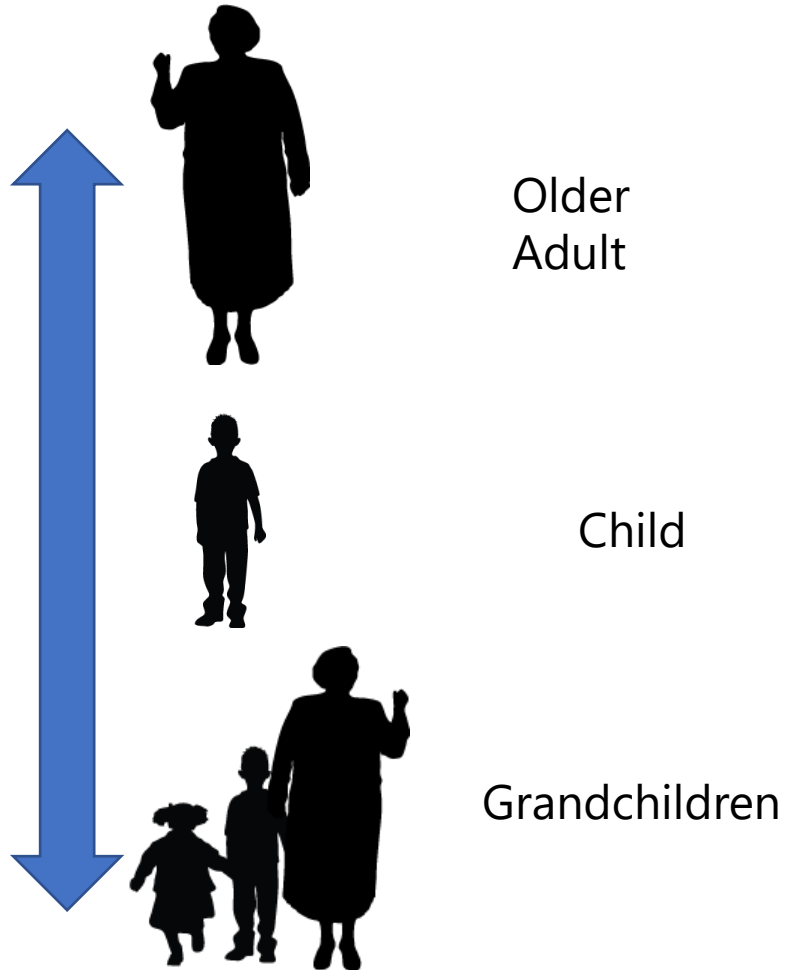
- *Many LGBT older adults **live alone** and rely on other older adults for support and **caregiving**.*
- *A **history of discrimination** leaves many LGBT older adults with a general **distrust** of mainstream institutions.*

% of Older Adults

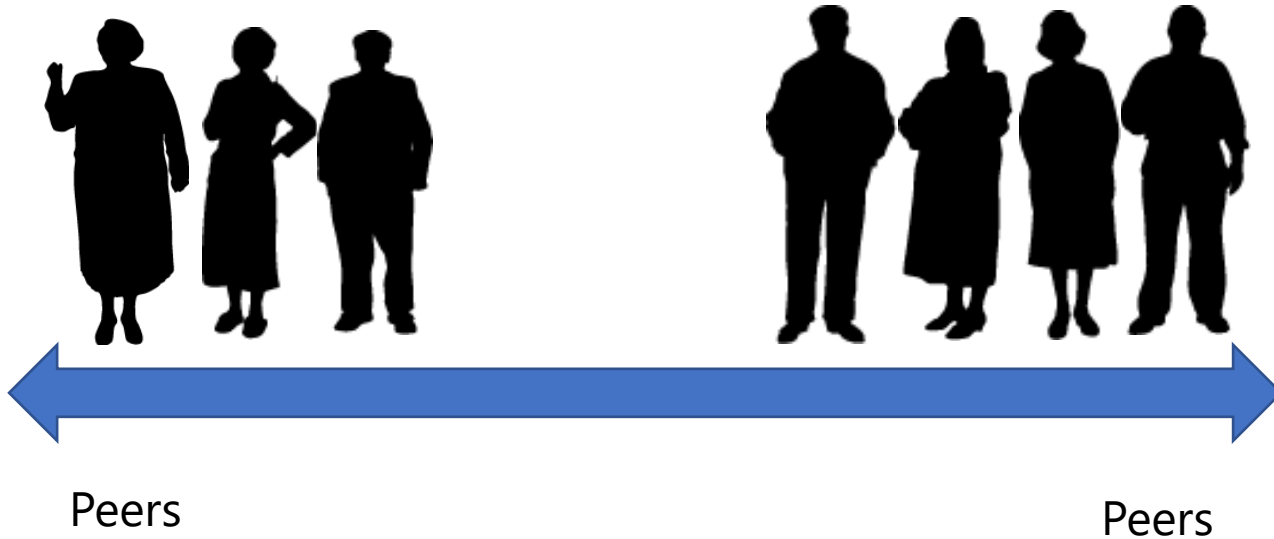
■ LGBT



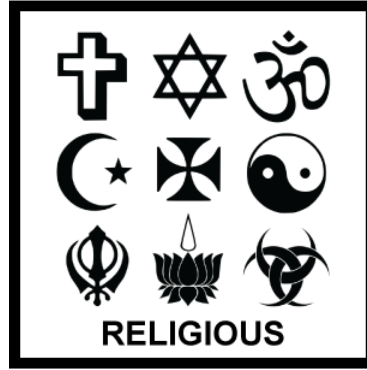
Vertical Caregiving



Horizontal Caregiving

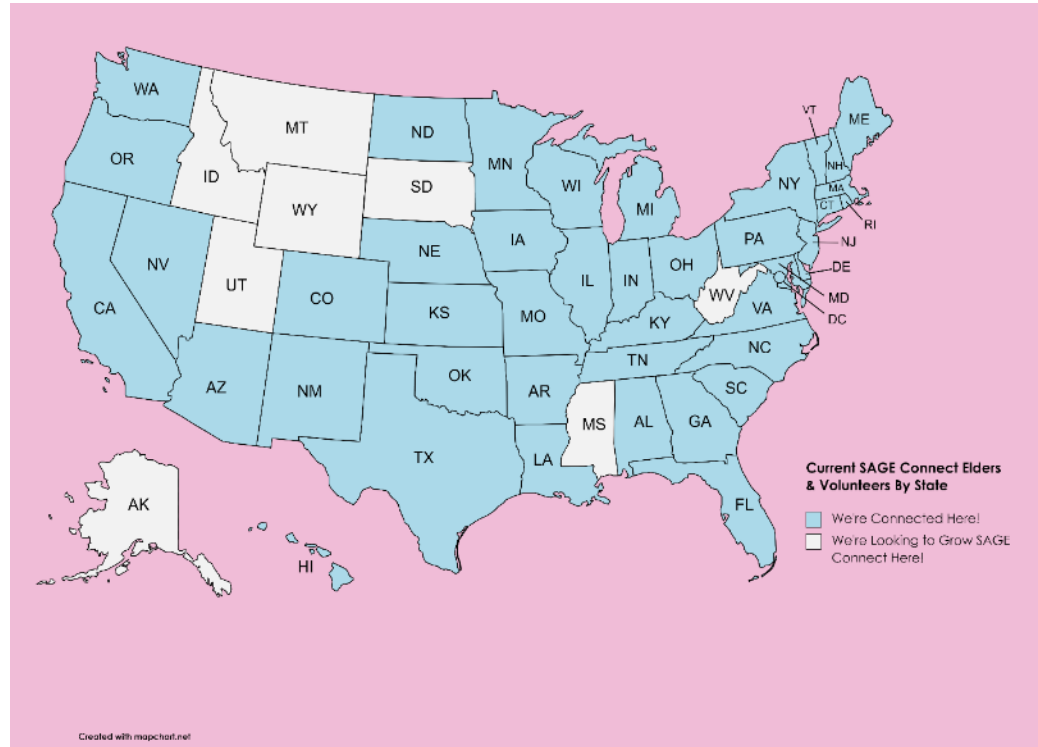


Distrust of Mainstream Institutions



SAGEConnect Program

- National phone buddy program
- Started in May of 2020
- Volunteers commit to 6 weeks of calls
- Almost 550 program matches have been made



Friendly Visitor Program

- Started in 1979
- Oldest program of its kind in the country
- Over 100 trained volunteers, ages 21-74, who provide weekly social support to isolated LGBT older adults
- Volunteers are screened/trained and receive ongoing supervision



Top Reasons to Volunteer



- Connection to grandparents/older people in their life
- Wanting to “give back” to a generation that came before
- Reflections on own aging process



Jerre
Participant
SAGE Friendly Visitor Program

Joelle
Volunteer
SAGE Friendly Visitor Program

Participant Feedback

- “I’m 88 and newly out, and this is a perfect match.”
- “I really look forward to the weekly visits. It makes all the difference.”
- “I cherish it. We are like family.”
- “I am bedbound and don’t get around much. It provides a friend, someone from the world. I feel like I’m living, that I have an activity I can do and that makes it nice for me. I’ve made a new friend. It adds something to my week.”

THANK YOU!!



BILL GROSS

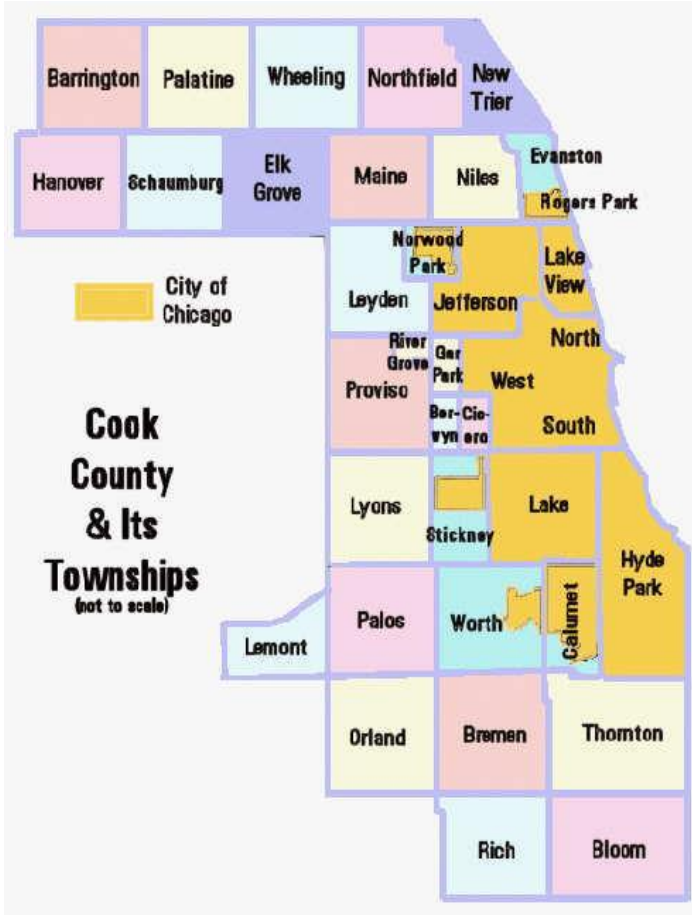
BGROSS@SAGEUSA.ORG



engAGED - June 22, 2021

Diane Slezak,
CEO and President, AgeOptions

Kate Spelman,
Aging with Pride Program specialist, AgeOptions



The Area Agency on Aging of Suburban Cook County



YEAR AT A GLANCE

FY2019 Program Data

172,077

INDIVIDUALS REACHED

1,170

PARTICIPANTS IN
HEALTH PROMOTION
PROGRAMS
STATEWIDE

741

CAREGIVERS SERVED
THROUGH THE
CARING TOGETHER,
LIVING BETTER
PROGRAM

292,655

MEALS SERVED AT
CONGREGATE DINING
LOCATIONS



Thrive with Pride from AgeOptions is a new program that leverages affirming churches and other non-traditional service partners to broaden the scope of inclusive and accessible aging services.



We hope to alleviate social isolation in LGBT+ older adults and to improve their mental and physical health outcomes.



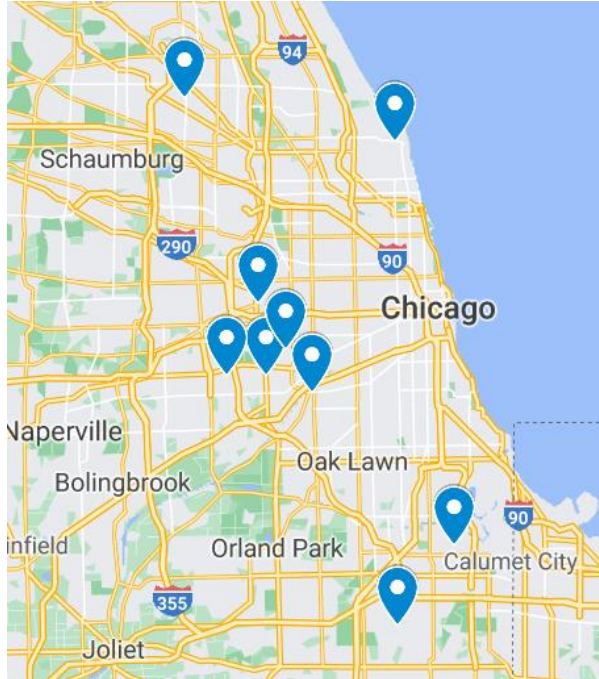
Our Program Design (pre-COVID)

Cafe partners were asked to meet at least once a month, providing a safe and welcoming space for older LGBT+ adults and caregivers to congregate.

AgeOptions would supply informational programming, bringing our educational services to the cafes. In addition to providing cafes with speakers, this would allow for our AgeOptions service lines to improve their offerings for LGBT+ older adults.



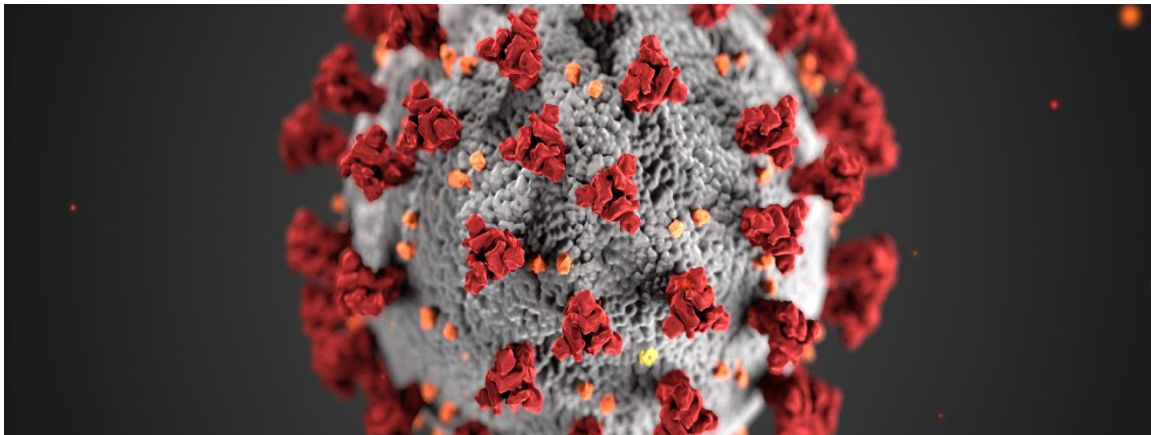
Cafe Partners



Thrive with Pride began with a grant from Community Memorial Foundation, a healthcare foundation covering the suburbs of western suburban Cook County and some of DuPage County. The grant enabled AgeOptions to hire staff and provide small stipends for five project sites. A later grant from The Chicago Community Trust's LGBTQ Community Fund allowed for the addition of four additional sites. The network now totals nine sites spread throughout the Chicago suburbs.



NEW PLAN!

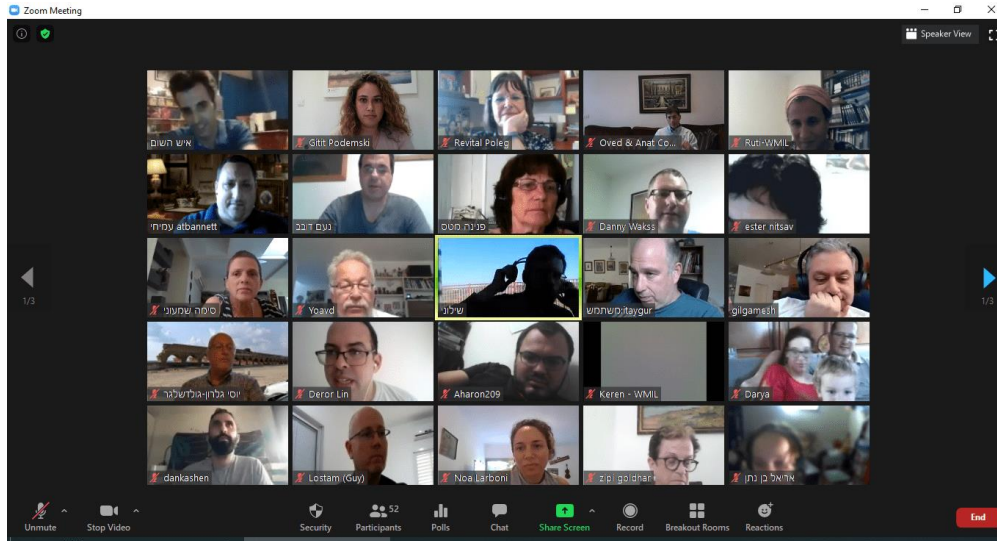


Of course the COVID-19 pandemic made meeting in person unsafe. In June 2020, Thrive with Pride premiered in a new, all-virtual format.

AgeOptions provides a monthly informational session, featuring an expert or community resource presenting on a topic of interest. Individual cafe sites host follow-up discussions on a variety of online formats.



What's going well?



- Online cafes provide an accessible way to participate for those with mobility or transportation issues (including speakers!).
- Participants throughout our service area can choose a cafe partner that suits their needs.
- Recording presentations has allowed us to build an online resource library.
- YouTube views are surprisingly high.





Preliminary Outcomes:

In our very small sample size of Thrive with Pride participants responding to a 35-question online survey:

- 47% of respondents reported that the program gave them a sense of community belonging
- 86% reported feeling more comfortable accessing older adult services
- 21% reported fewer emergency room visits than the prior year
- 57% said that they shared information they learned at Thrive with Pride with a friend or family member



And what's ... not great.

- Covid-19 prevented traditional outreach activities, and made it difficult to recruit new participants.
- Low participation is demoralizing to the cafe leaders as well.
- Working with churches can involve translation from the social service world to the theological realm!



Other LGBT+ Initiatives: SAGE Care credentialing

We will continue to train staff on LGBT+ cultural competence, maintaining our SAGE Care platinum credential. We also aim to include LGBT+ cultural competency in our Requests for Proposals to our funded agencies.





Other LGBT+ Initiatives: SAGE Table

AgeOptions has also had great success with intergenerational programming - we hope to repeat and expand on our success with our virtual SAGE Table.

(Learn more about the SAGE Table program at <https://www.sageusa.org/what-we-do/sage-table/>)



Other LGBT+ Initiatives: Drag Bingo!

We are hosting two bingo events for Pride Month in 2021 -

Join us for an intergenerational bingo happy hour at 5:30pm on Wednesday, June 30!

Info and registration are at our website:

<https://www.thrivingwithpride.org/bingo.html>



Thanks!

More questions? Please reach out!

kate.spelman@ageoptions.org





LGBT
SENIOR SOCIAL
CONNECTION

Elder Services of the Merrimack Valley, Inc.

Choices for a life-long journey



NORTH SHORE
ELDER SERVICES

We began our journey
on
July 18, 2013

Partnership between
Elder Services of the Merrimack
Valley & North Shore
&
Merrimac Council on Aging





LGBT & Friends

"Meet & Greet"

Dinner & Dessert Social



When: Thursday, July 18th

Where: Merrimac Senior Center

100 East Main Street

Merrimac, MA

Time: 6:30- 8 p.m.

Please join us for this networking opportunity to connect our LGBT Aging Community and plan possible upcoming programs and events (LGBT: Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender).

For More Information or to RSVP Contact:

Laura or Gerry at 978-346-9549

ldmailman@townofmerrimac.com or Outreach@townofmerrimac.com

Or

Ron at 978-946-1476

rbourque@esmv.org

*Sponsored by the Merrimac Council on Aging
In Partnership with Elder Services of Merrimack Valley
Handicap Accessible, Transportation available by request*

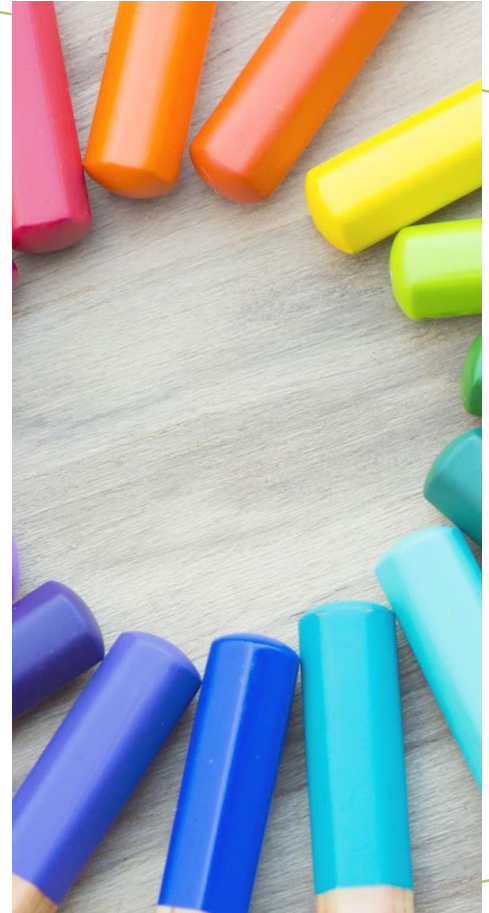
An opportunity for our aging LGBT population to network and connect with one another.

An opportunity to identify potential programs and events in the future.

Event to be local.

Evening event so that those still working during the day could also participate.

Serve food and drinks.





We sent the flyer to:

- ~ Councils On Aging
- ~ ASAPs -Aging Service Access Points
- ~ Bookstores
- ~ Libraries
- ~ Adult Day Healths
- ~ Supportive Housing Sites
- ~ Anywhere we thought seniors might see it.

We had 10 participants that first night!

All vocalized how thrilled they were that an LGBT senior social event was being offered outside of the Boston area.

This made us excited to plan another event the following month!



In the beginning...

- ~ Potluck & Conversation
- ~ \$2.00 Donation
- ~ Friends of the Merrimac Senior Center made the commitment to pay for the meals each month.
- ~ Name the group
- ~ What do the group to be? Social? Educational? Both?
- ~ How often do they want to meet?



MISSION STATEMENT

The LGBT Senior Social Connection seeks to improve the quality of social engagement, reduce anxiety and isolation as we age. We offer support, education and resources available to LGBT older adults in the Merrimack Valley and surrounding communities.





Welcome

The LGBT Senior Social Connection seeks to improve the quality of social engagement, reduce anxiety and isolation as we age. We offer support, education and resources available to LGBT older adults in the Merrimack Valley and surrounding communities.

The Connection welcomes all LGBT seniors and their caregivers! We host a monthly, no cost, buffet-style dinner to encourage social interaction and group discussions, facilitated by a peer. When possible, guest speakers are asked to present on topics of interest.

LGBT seniors who want to make new friends, find local community connections and share their positive ideas about how to successfully age healthy are encouraged to join.

About Us

Elder Services of the Merrimack Valley, Inc.
A private non-profit agency established in 1974. Our mission supports an individual's desire to make their own decisions, secure their independence, and remain living safely at home.

Merrimac Council on Aging
Advocates for older adults, manages the resources needed to develop services, provides education for seniors and their families regarding choices in their care and community services available to them.

Join Us

Every 3rd Thursday, 6:30 - 8:00 pm
Merrimac Senior Center
100 East Main Street, Merrimac, MA

Drop-ins are always welcome!

We welcome **sponsorships** to help with the cost of dinners, guest speakers and to facilitate social outings. For sponsorship opportunities, please contact us.

Contact Us

Ron Bourque
978-946-1476
RBourque@esmv.org

Laura Dillingham-Mailman
978-346-9549
LDMailman@townofmerrimac.com



LGBT

Senior Social Connection

Network and connect with older adult in the Aging LGBT Community across the Merrimack Valley.

A partnership by

Elder Services of the Merrimack Valley, Inc.

Choices for a life-long journey

Merrimac Council on Aging



Some of the activities throughout the years...

- ~ Movie nights
- ~ Game nights
- ~ Summer mixers & gatherings at assisted living facilities
- ~ In-house entertainment

~ Speakers

- “The Basics of Transgender Health from a Physician Perspective”.
- SHINE
- SMP
- “Making Decisions When It Matters Most” – Decisions around health care proxy, etc.



MOST POPULAR – Sue Katz, Author



The LGBT Senior Social Connection ran solely on volunteer hours the first four years.

We received our first financial donation in December 2018.

Our Communication & Relations Manager was able to secure a pocket of consistent funding that we use for activities and promotion materials to publicize our group in order to expand it.



A Good News Story

A participant stated that this group literally changed his life.

After high school he began attending college to become a teacher. Back then, being a teacher and being gay was a toxic combination, so he married and hid his sexuality for decades. This led to great bouts of depression, lasting years and in the end kept him literally bed-ridden. Back in 2018, he began therapy and was given a list of LGBT groups his therapist suggested he investigate. The LGBT Senior Social Connection was the only group outside of the Boston, MA area, so he found the courage, took the first step and attended a gathering. He's been attending ever since!



So grateful for this group, look forward to attending every month. G. L.



Before this, there was nothing for us in the Merrimack Valley. We had to travel to the Boston area. Now we have a place in our own back yard. C. Y.

I thought I was alone in this area. Now I'm making local friends through this group. M.

Thank you for starting a group in the Merrimack Valley! V. T.

10TH ANNUAL LGBT ELDERS IN AN EVER-CHANGING WORLD

A virtual one-day conference focusing on interdisciplinary practice and community engagement for working with lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender older adults and caregivers.

Friday, June 25, 2021

9:00 a.m. – 3:00 p.m.

4.5 CEUs available

REGISTER NOW

For more information about the conference, email lgbtelders2021@gmail.com.

lgbteldersconference.org

Conference Fee:

\$95-with CEUs / \$75- No CEUs

\$25 – Seniors and Students

Share Your Innovations

- Please share your social engagement innovations with engAGED!
- All programs submitted will be considered for inclusion in a database of social engagement innovations

<https://www.engagingolderadults.org/hub>

engAGED Virtual Aging Network Social Engagement Summit

July 22, 2021

12:45 – 2:15 pm ET

<https://www.engagingolderadults.org/engaged-virtual-summit-2021>

Connect With Us!

- www.engagingolderadults.org
- Facebook: @engAGEDCenter
- Twitter: @engAGEDCenter
- info@engagingolderadults.org

Commit to Connect

- ACL campaign working to combat social isolation through:
 - Network of champions
 - Connection to resources
 - Establishment of partnerships
 - Sharing of successful initiatives



COMMIT TO
Connect

acl.gov/CommitToConnect

Questions and Discussion

Please use the questions tab in your GoToWebinar module to submit your questions or comments.

Thank You!

- Thank you for attending today's webinar!
- The recording will be available on www.engagingolderadults.org.