

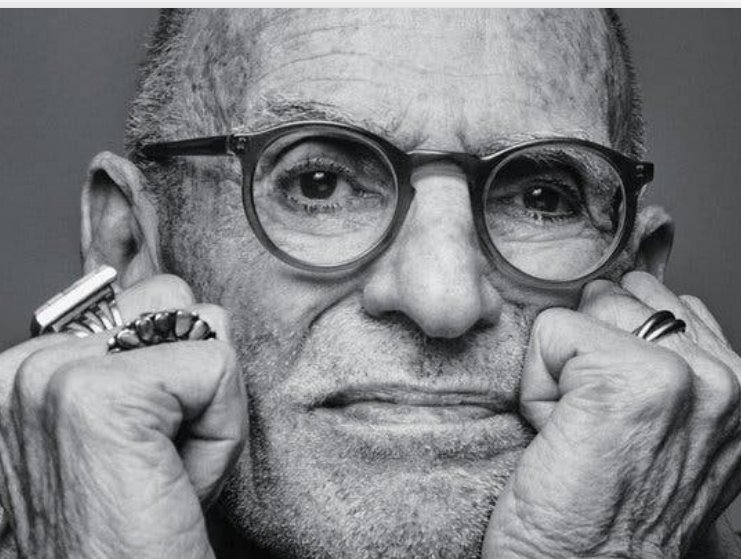


# ELECTION edition



# PRIDE MONTH REMEMBERS LARRY KRAMER

by James Trujillo (he/him), ESD



This year, the LGBTQ+ community saw the death of a titan in the community. Larry Kramer was a gay-rights activist, playwright, author and fighter for human rights. Kramer died this year at the age of 84 due to complications from pneumonia.

Many called him a militant. He is remembered as an unrelenting advocate for the LGBTQ+ community and the people dying of AIDS during the epidemic in the 80s and 90s. Writer Susan Sontag said Kramer was “one of America’s most valuable troublemakers.”

Early in his career, Kramer founded the Gay Men’s Health Crisis (GMHC), a volunteer HIV fund-raising and service organization, though he was later kicked off the group. He subsequently formed the more militant group ACT-UP (AIDS Coalition to Unleash Power), which deployed media-attention tactics to force Americans to focus on the thousands of gay men dying as a result of AIDS. His tactics worked; the national and global attention drew more dollars and focus on the disease.

Kramer also authored the biographical play, “The Normal Heart,” which was later turned into a major motion picture starring Mark Ruffalo. The story is the account of the AIDS epidemic in New York City during the early 80s. The work is a poignant and tragic portrayal of the horrendous suffering of the LGBTQ+ community during that era.

As we reflect today on the violence against African Americans and the uprisings all over the country, we can only hope that the peaceful protests will help us advance civil rights. One thing is certain; Larry Kramer would approve of the current protests and would likely be marching in them right now.

## Protecting Washington with Pride DEPARTMENT OF ECOLOGY

by Dallas McKay (she/her), ECV



On June 15, 2020, the same day the Supreme Court delivered a ruling protecting LGBTQ+ workers from workplace discrimination, Department of Ecology Director Laura Watson (pictured right) raised the rainbow flag at the headquarters building in Lacey.

In addition, all of the regional Ecology offices raised the rainbow flag – this included the Northwest region in Bellevue, Central region in Union Gap and the Eastern region in Spokane.



Questions? Contact [RAIN@ofm.wa.gov](mailto:RAIN@ofm.wa.gov)



# RAIN GUEST SPEAKER

by Dallas McKay (she/her), ECY

Pride month's speaker was Erick Seelbach, Executive Director of the Pierce County AIDS Foundation (PCAF). PCAF offers medical case management and care coordination in the South Sound region, referrals to resources and programs outside of strictly medical needs, and many other services.

For the past 16 years, HIV work led Erick to many different corners of nonprofit and government settings in many different roles. What she learned helped build a foundation of compassion and justice, the cornerstone of PCAF. "I'm thrilled and humbled to be of service to the clients, staff, and community of PCAF. This organization has a strong history of service and is well-positioned to lead the state in ending the [AIDS] epidemic." Outside of work, Erick is a poet and a member of the Sisters of Perpetual Indulgence, the Abbey of St. Joan.

Erick began with a few words related to Pride. She called out Sylvia Rivera and Marsha P. Johnson as forerunners of Pride, and acknowledged the many others that contributed in the journey. She also asked us to remember the victims of the Pulse nightclub shooting of June 2016, a terrible hate crime where 49 people were killed and dozens more injured.

Erick then spoke about HIV, a presence which has wracked the LGBTQ+ community since the 1970s and still persists today. Over 15,000 people live with HIV in Washington State today, most of them gay or bi. About 14,000 have achieved viral suppression, meaning they cannot infect others. Still, there are about 460 new diagnoses each year.

Erick also shared that most people living with HIV, including cis/straight folks, are disproportionately Black. Research proved "risky behavior" is not the cause of the disproportionate demographics, contradicting the initial theory. It's more probable than not that systemic racism is the primary contributing factor: Oppression and microaggressions that reduce immune function; stigma and marginalization; inadequate access to healthcare, nutritious food, transportation, equitable education, accessible information, economic equity and other resources; and mistrust of the medical and public health systems. These added obstacles make it more challenging for BIPOC to achieve viral suppression than white folks who face fewer roadblocks.

While there truly is no silver lining to the scourge of HIV, in the face of government inaction and discriminatory service provision, this epidemic did spur activism as the LGBTQ+ community banded together to care for each other. Erick suggests we may notice some similarity with the COVID-19 pandemic. Erick credited State departments, elected officials, and local officials who have more recently worked hard to ensure we are taking care of people living with HIV.

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Infecting another person with HIV has been a first degree felony assault for many years, despite evidence that criminalization of a health condition has not been an effective way to reduce the spread. The vast majority of people charged are Black and Hispanic. Erick herself has devoted at least 15 years to promoting a change in this law. Today, we can celebrate that the Washington legislature passed HB 1551 this March, reducing the penalty to a misdemeanor. Our great state of Washington was one of the first to enact laws providing for prevention and treatment of HIV. Erick maintains this is one of the best places in the country for someone to live with HIV – we have the most comprehensive resources for support and prevention. Folks who are treated now are much healthier and have a better quality of life than ever before.

While PCAF and all of us have more work ahead - for example to reduce HIV-related stigma, bias, misinformation and to improve care for the geriatric HIV community, we can't end HIV without addressing racism. Erick suggests embracing intersectional activism and organizing, ensuring accessibility needs are met, offering HIV testing at worksites annually, providing child care so parents can get involved, looking at the policies and culture of your workplace and analyzing how they impact people of color, people with disabilities, LGBTQ+ individuals, and other intersectional identities.


### *Get to know PCAF!*

For information regarding statistics, resources or programs, visit their [website](#).

**Erick Seelbach, Executive Director** (Primary pronouns: she/her/hers; secondary pronouns: he/him/his)

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## ANNUAL RAIN ELECTIONS

**We are excited to announce who is running for our 2020-2021 RAIN Leadership positions.**

Even though we have the exact number of nominees for each position, the election process will take place between September 17 - October 14 (active members will receive a Survey Monkey link).

**Be sure to “zoom” over to the RAIN General Membership Meeting on October 15, 2020 for the official announcements.**

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### *RAIN Co-Chair*

- Time commitment is about 12 hours per month, including meetings
  - Serve as the public face of RAIN
- Develop and facilitate Advisory Committee and General Membership meetings
- Act as a representative of RAIN to the Executive Sponsor, the Governor's office, agency leadership, and other stakeholders as needed

### *RAIN Administrative Liaison*

- Time commitment is about 6 hours per month
- Document and maintain meeting notes and documentation related to RAIN
- Coordinate and facilitate Advisory Committee and General Membership meetings
  - Organize annual review and amendments to RAIN's charter
  - Maintain membership and attendance rosters

For full descriptions of the duties of each position, see Appendix A of RAIN's charter, on our [website](#).



# RAIN CO-CHAIR NOMINEES

*Elizabeth Fontanilla*

(she/her)



It has been an honor to serve as one of the co-chairs of RAIN and I would appreciate your support to continue leading the impactful work of making our workplaces safe and inclusive environments for Washington State's LGBTQ+ employees and the people we serve. This past year has been challenging and rewarding as we've adapted our lives and work during a pandemic. I'm so proud of RAIN's Advisory Committee and members who have found new ways to connect and further our mission. This year we will continue our collaboration with the other BRGs, OFM, and the Governor's office to establish equitable foundations for all business resource groups. We are stronger together.

As a Learning Design and Delivery Professional for the Department of Enterprise Services, I facilitate leadership development courses across Washington State. This spring I converted our course on bias in the hiring process to an online delivery and am now working on developing other courses in the Inclusive Leadership series. In addition to serving in leadership roles at nonprofit organizations, previously I have provided training and direct services at the Health Care Authority and the Department of Social and Health Services.

Tiffany and I live in Olympia with our three children and two dogs. With your support, I look forward to continuing to use my facilitation and leadership skills to serve RAIN in the co-chair role.

*Ryan Douglas*

(he/him)



Hi, my name is Ryan Douglas and I use he/him pronouns. I've worked for the State of Washington for nearly 15 years and am currently a bank examiner with the Department of Financial Institutions. I am running for Co-Chair of RAIN, because in the several years I've worked with this group I have been endlessly impressed with the amount of talent and passion displayed by our members and leaders and I want to continue to deepen my involvement in our critical work.

As one of the current co-chairs of the Communications and Outreach subcommittee, I have been focused on expanding the reach of our work and engagement beyond Thurston County and would strive to carry this focus forward if elected to RAIN co-chair.



# RAIN ADMINISTRATIVE LIAISON NOMINEES

*Chase Bayne*

(they/him)



I have been an LPN for 10 years, recently promoted to the Infection Control Team at Monroe Correctional Complex.

I have been with RAIN since July 2019, and facilitating Zoom since October 2019.

In my free time I'm teaching myself hand joinery and refinishing junked furniture.

*Kristen Jenkins*

(she/her)



It has been such a wonderful experience for me to be a part of RAIN for the past year. I have learned so much and have been able to make tremendous progress with integrating LGBTQ+ equity work back at my agency. I am so honored to be recognized with such an amazing group of people. The RAIN BRG by far is the best committee I have been a part of in my years with the state.

As a Program Coordinator with the Washington Student Achievement Council (WSAC), I work every day supporting our programs through administrative work. I am very well rounded with experience in scheduling, note-taking, and project management. I specialize in marketing and communications with internal and external stakeholders. I am very passionate about progressing equity work with all things I do. I serve on the Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Committee at WSAC and I am a sub-committee chair that produces a monthly newsletter, a monthly support group focused around equity issues, and we produce and manage a resources page for all our agency staff. I have experience in developing and facilitating trainings around a variety of equity issues for our whole agency. I am currently serving on the RAIN best practices sub-committee and I am amazed in what we accomplish. I love to brainstorm new ideas, new ways of doing things and I hope to bring a bit of my creativity to this role if selected. Again, being a part of RAIN has truly been such a great experience for me and I look forward to continuing my work and progression with you all.

Thank you so much for your consideration.



*Mourning with and for the...*

# TRANS AND GENDER NONCONFORMING COMMUNITY

by Ryan Douglas (he/him), DFI

As America, and the rest of the world, continues to grapple with violence and hate directed at people for who they are, how they express themselves, or who they love, we want to take time to remember and mourn the members of our trans and gender nonconforming community that we have lost.

The Human Rights Campaign (HRC) tracked at least 27 deaths of transgender or gender nonconforming people in the United States due to fatal violence in 2019. The majority of these deaths were of Black transgender women, and the data shows that trans women of color in particular face a terrible intersection of racism, sexism, homophobia, biphobia and transphobia.

Sadly, at least another 26 violent deaths of transgender and gender nonconforming people have been recorded so far in 2020, putting us on track to exceed last year's reports. More troubling is the fact that, due to underreporting of these types of crimes (or misreporting, such as when a victim is misgendered by law enforcement or the media), these numbers are likely understated.

Borrowing from data compiled by HRC, we want to take time to name those we know of who have lost their lives so far this year:

Dustin Parker – McAlester, OK  
Neulisa Luciano Ruiz – Toa Baja, Puerto Rico  
Yami Méndez Arocho – Moca, Puerto Rico  
Monika Diamond – Charlotte, NC  
Lexi – Harlem, NY  
Johanna Metzger – Baltimore, MD  
Serena Angelique Velázquez Ramos – Puerto Rico  
Layla Pelaez Sánchez – Puerto Rico  
Penélope Díaz Ramírez – Puerto Rico  
Nina Pop – Sikeston, MO  
Helle Jae O'Regan – San Antonio, TX  
Tony McDade – Tallahassee, FL  
Dominique "Rem'mie" Fells – Philadelphia, PA  
Riah Milton – Liberty Township, OH  
Jayne Thompson – Mesa County, CO  
Selena Reyes-Hernandez – Chicago, IL  
Brian "Egypt" Powers – Akron, OH  
Brayla Stone – Little Rock, AR  
Merci Mack – Dallas, TX  
Shaki Peters – Amite City, LA  
Bree Black – Pompano Beach, FL  
Summer Taylor – Seattle, WA  
Marilyn Cazares – Brawley, CA  
Dior H. Ova – Bronx, NY  
Queasha D. Hardy – Baton Rouge, LA  
Aja Raquell Rhone-Spears – Portland, OR

HRC has further detail, including separate links to blog posts on each person identified in this list, on their [website](#).

We mourn for the friends and families of those lost and as a community. And we recommit ourselves to working tirelessly toward a day when trans and gender nonconforming members of our community can live their lives without fear of violence born out of hate and fear.



## Leading the way

# BIPOC LGBTQ+ PEOPLE

by Tracey Carlos (she/her), LNI

Throughout US LGBTQ+ history many **Black, Indigenous, and People of Color (BIPOC)** folks have lead the way in civil rights and are remembered as heroes in their community. As we go through our current civil rights movement, it is important to look to those who have come before us.

Not all cultures question the rights and existence of transgender people. Many Native American tribes treat transgender people as spiritual leaders and have historically accepted their trans members' stated identities. One example I found was a Crow warrior named Osh-Tisch, also known as Finds Them and Kills Them. Osh-Tisch was a Crow badé (Two-Spirit) who saved a fellow tribesman by attacking a Lakota war party in the Battle of Rosebud in 1876. The Bureau of Indian Affairs tried to force Osh-Tisch to wear men's clothing but tribal elders argued that it was against their nature. Osh-Tisch continued to live among the women of the tribe and with other badé, showing that the Crow tribe respected their right to be themselves.

James Baldwin is a notable Black, gay writer and activist. At the age of 23, he moved to Paris to escape the racism he experienced in the US. After seeing an image of Dorothy Counts bravely facing a mob to desegregate North Carolina schools, he returned to the United States to interview people in Charlotte NC and Montgomery AL, writing two essays for *Harper's Magazine*. Baldwin continued his activism throughout his life, including participating in the March on Washington as well as work in Selma AL. He and Bayard Rustin were the only gay men known to participate in the leadership of the Black civil rights movement, as the movement was mostly hostile toward homosexuality at the time.

We can't talk about the LGBTQ+ Rights movement without mentioning Marsha P Johnson and Silvia

Rivera. Both are credited with starting the Stonewall Uprising, setting off the modern LGBTQ+ movement. Both women went on to continue activist work in the movement for the rest of their lives.

Marsha P Johnson, a black self-proclaimed drag queen, worked as a street activist with the Gay Liberation Front (GLF) and ACT UP. Silvia Rivera, a Latina American, also identified as a drag queen and participated in transgender activism including the GLF. Later Marsha and Silvia teamed up to co-found the Street Transvestite Action Revolutionaries (STAR) to help homeless drag queens, young gays, and trans women.

Recently there have been several activists among the BIPOC community. Margaret Cho, a bisexual comedian, actor, and author created the website [Today Love Is Love Is Love](#) to fight for gay marriage in 2004. Lt. Dan Choi, a Korean-American member of the US Army, came out in 2009 on the Rachel Maddow Show to combat "Don't Ask, Don't Tell." Also in 2009, Simone Bell was elected as the first black lesbian State Representative to Georgia, becoming the first black lesbian elected to a state legislature in the United States. In 2012, Chino Scott Chung, a Chinese-Mexican trans man advocated to get the correct gender on death certificates.

There are many more examples of LGBTQ+ BIPOC in our history and today leading the fight for our rights. I am sure there will be many new faces to come. When looking to our history we must be careful not to follow the path of our fellow Americans. We must not let the world forget our heroes because of the color of their skin. We must honor all the people in our past who have fought for our rights. Let us be the example of what truly diverse intersectionality can look like.

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## Rainbow Alliance and Inclusion Network (RAIN)

RAIN exists to help Washington State create safe and inclusive workplaces where every LGBTQ+ employee can bring their full authentic selves to work, enabling them to do their best work every day for the people of Washington. It is a business resource group that advises state agencies on how to create inclusive environments for LGBTQ+ employees and customers.



# COVID-19 AND FURLOUGH RESOURCES

by Sandra Schaefer (she/her, he/him), DRS

## *2-1-1 Washington*

A [comprehensive directory](#) available in ten languages, on local resources that assist with disabilities, domestic violence, education, employment, financial, food, health care, personal/household items, shelter/housing and transportation. Phone Number: 2-1-1

## *Employee Assistance Program (EAP)*

In response to the COVID-19 pandemic, the Washington State EAP is providing increased support to the employees, supervisors, leaders and organizations we serve. Visit their [COVID-19 Resources](#) page for more information.

## *Health Care Authority (HCA)*

Locate services and supports, including [mental health crisis lines](#) by county.

## *National Center for Transgender Equality*

[The Coronavirus \(COVID-19\) Guide](#) provides information on creating an action plan, important resources and emergency funds.

## *Ingersoll Gender Center*

Trans and Gender Diverse Community [Financial Assistance Programs](#) and [resources](#).

## *Human Rights Campaign*

Article and resources on [Gender Affirming Care during the COVID-19 Pandemic](#).

## *National LGBT Cancer Network*

[Coronavirus 2019: What LGBTQ+ People Need to Know](#) (FAQs)

## *Department of Financial Institutions (DFI)*

DFI has compiled a list of information ([English](#), [En Español](#)) about financial resources available to Washington consumers impacted by the Coronavirus.

