



EVENT SPOTLIGHT Leadership Retreat

“Visioning and values for Progress”

By Marianne Ozmun-Wells, DSHS



On December 13 2018, RAIN elected leadership and members of the Advisory Committee participated in a three-hour retreat to engage in team building, visioning, and planning for the year ahead.

Marika Barto and Susanna Fenner facilitated the morning’s activities with an upbeat activity where small groups designed their “ideal teammate”. Turns out, Jamie, Sparkles and Maev represent the absolute perfect teammates - embodying both the characteristics and personalities we’d all love to work with. Not surprisingly, the ideal colleagues were gender non-binary continual learners who also happened to be fun.



RAIN Executive Sponsor John Wiesman, shared his vision for our work in alignment with the requirements in Governor Inslee’s Directive 16.11. Co-Chairs Marianne Ozmun-Wells and Justin Taylor led the group through some visioning and values activities which resulted in the Advisory Committee adopting a set of ten core values for RAIN and, once adopted by the active membership, they will be included in our updated charter.

The values agreed upon for the Advisory Committee include:

- Authenticity
- Communication
- Community
- Courage
- Credibility
- Diversity
- Inclusion
- Integrity
- Justice
- Purpose Driven

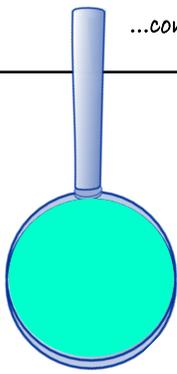


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Did you know...

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.



How about a closer look?

These definitions are based on widely recognized definitions and examples as well as nuanced requests on the part of our incredibly insightful and dedicated Advisory Committee. The definitions as written, are a point of departure for consideration, discussion, and revision.

In the coming months, RAIN will continue to work towards the safety, equity, and best practice inclusion of all LGBTQ+ Washington State employees.



Authenticity

We are present and genuine in our surroundings. We are aligned with our personal character and values. We are able to be vulnerable and we bring our whole selves to our shared work.



Communication

Giving information out and actively listening openly, directly, transparently, respectfully, and in a timely manner.



Community

We are a group with similar identities, interests, characteristics, ethics, and goals. We share experiences, work, and mutual support.



Courage

We are willing to act in accordance with our beliefs, values, and mission even when doing so may expose us to criticism. We remain committed to the pursuit of our common purpose even when it would be easier to acquiesce to external pressure.



Credibility

We are believable, worthy of trust, and committed to acting and working in alignment with espoused purpose and goals.



Diversity

We welcome, support, and recognize as part of our collective strength, diverse identities, experiences, and ways of thinking. We recognize that almost all humans have more than one personal identity and that those intersectional identities offer unique perspectives that allow us to better serve our community. We also recognize that the ultimate goal of LGBTQ+ persons, as well as members of all historically marginalized groups, is liberation from systemic and structural barriers.



Inclusion

We create opportunities for full, meaningful participation on the part of all our members. We recognize that ensuring our venues and activities are fully accessible to those who navigate and/or communicate with the help of equipment, technology, people, or animals is essential to inclusion. We also create an environment in which every individual has personal agency. These sense of agency, or sense of control, is the deep awareness of initiating, executing, and controlling one's own actions in the context of our shared space and purpose.



Integrity

We embrace soundness of character and are true to our values regardless of audience or environment.



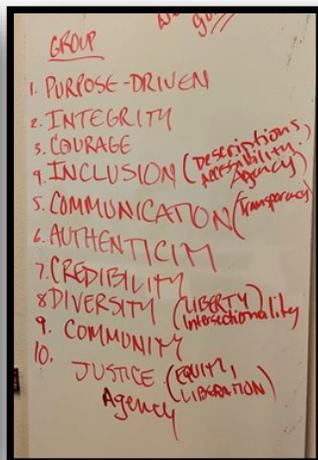
Justice

We believe in fairness for all. We are committed to the pursuit of social justice, not only for our members, but for all.



Purpose-Driven

We were created on the premise of a shared purpose: *Every person in the state of Washington has the right to feel safe, enjoy the benefits of public services, and fully participate in civic life.* That work will always remain our purpose.



We will continue to improve engagement of folks in Eastern Washington and folks with intersectional identities. In addition, we will work to improve our outreach and increase our digital presence throughout the state.

The December 2018 Advisory Committee retreat was the first of what will hopefully become a regularly occurring opportunity to revisit our charter, commitments to our shared purpose and our commitments to one another.

Holiday Celebration Community, Comfort Food, and the Cowlitz County Nutty Narrows

By Marianne Ozmun-Wells, DSHS

During an offsite evening event on December 14, a small group of RAIN members gathered at the Evergreen State College for the first ever RAIN winter holiday celebration.

Participants braved wind, rain, and widespread power outages to come together as a community in a less formal setting. RAIN members invited spouses, partners, and children to join in.

For members of the LGBTQ+ community, the holiday season can be particularly painful. Often the holidays are reminders of the distance between queer folks, their families and faith communities. As part of our commitment to **“help Washington State create safe and inclusive workplaces where every LGBTQ+ employee can bring their full authentic self to work, enabling them to do their best work every day for the people of Washington”**, we felt a safe holiday gathering was fitting.

Kevin Andrew, RAIN member and Assistant Director for Internships and Employer Development at the Evergreen State College, was able to secure space on campus for our gathering. Volunteers “rainbowed” up the place and folks brought potluck items. Everyone from card-carrying carnivores to gluten-free vegans had comfort food at their disposal and the small family atmosphere lent itself to hometown reminiscences.

Which led us to the “Nutty Narrows.” It turned out RAIN member, Mel, hailed from Longview, Washington, a town whose claim to fame is a bridge over troubled asphalt, designed to keep squirrels from meeting their untimely end. The rodent thoroughfare has gained something of national fame and has the moniker, the “Nutty Narrows”.



RAIN Members Jules and Mel read all about the Nutty Narrows at the 2018 RAIN holiday gathering.



John Wiesman, Secretary of Health and RAIN Executive Sponsor, researches the Longview Squirrel Bridge while John’s husband Ted listens in.

One of the most memorable and laughable moments of the evening was when members, mobile phones in hand, simultaneously ‘googled’ “Nutty Narrows”, learned a lot more about a Washington landmark and a little more about each other.



Marianne Ozmun-Wells, RAIN Co-Chair, takes a photo with her wife Jody, and their daughter Allie.



Nutty Narrows Bridge, Longview Washington





PFLAG
Olympia WA

By Tracey Carlos, LNI

At our January general meeting we were lucky enough to have Lucas Miller, Gabi Clayton and Alec Clayton, members of Parents and Friends of Lesbians and Gays (PFLAG) Olympia, come speak with us. They shared what PFLAG is, and their personal stories on why they got involved with the organization. It was an honor to listen to their stories.

Per the Combined Fund Drive (CFD) website, PFLAG's purpose is to "support, educate, and advocate for the health and well-being of LGBTQ persons. PFLAG is the organization of parents, family, allies and LGBTQ people united for equality." To learn more about PFLAG-Olympia you can go to www.pflag-olympia.org. To donate through CFD, use code 1103599. CFD also sponsors PFLAG national with code 0316166 and PFLAG Seattle with code 0524061.

NOTE: RAIN is not responsible for the content of an outside organization's website.



Pizza Klatch Annual Gayla

By Allison Spector, WSDOT

Pizza Klatch is a nonprofit organization based in Olympia. Its mission is to foster resiliency in LGBTQ+ youth and create a safe and positive school experience through support, education, and empowerment. According to its website, Pizza Klatch is a support group for LGBTQ+ youth and their allies.

Meetings are held in classrooms during lunchtime at participating schools. These sessions provide an opportunity for teens to share and have their experiences heard; such as

homophobic harassment, bullying, judgement, marginalization, and discrimination within their family or home. Meetings are places where youth build community and friendships that extend outside school grounds. And, of course, there is the free pizza!

Originally founded in 2007 as a support group for LGBTQ+ youth after a rash of teen suicides, Pizza Klatch has expanded to serve 14 high schools and one middle school in Thurston County. Pizza Klatch sessions are facilitated by adult volunteers from the school's local communities or the broader Thurston County LGBTQ+ community.

To support its mission, Pizza Klatch puts on an annual community celebration: "A Slice of the Good Life" gayla. The gayla was held on February 2 this year. Aleksa Manila, drug counselor by day and drag queen by night, hosted. Featured performers included singer & songwriter Cris Williamson, queer/trans/non-binary comedian and writer El Sanchez, and northwest folk band the Righteous Mothers. The fundraiser earned over \$20,000 for Pizza Klatch, all of which will go to supporting its mission. The funds will aid Pizza Klatch in launching sister organizations across the state, bringing the support and empowerment it has provided Thurston county, to Washington State schools statewide.



Anyone interested in learning more about the work of Pizza Klatch, or to learn about how you can support LGBTQ+ youth in Thurston County, can visit their [website](http://www.pizza-klatch.org). Donations can also be made through the Combined Fund Drive with Charity Code 1481491.

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Update!

Safe Places Washington

By James Trujillo, ESD

When Governor Inslee asked the RAIN BRG to help create safe places for Washington State LGBTQ+ residents and employees, many of us stepped up to

the call of service. RAIN, in conjunction with State HR and the Department of Enterprise Services (DES), worked for two years to create a proposal for the Governor's office, which was approved for implementation. DES has now been tasked with overseeing implementation of the program by utilizing and partnering with the Seattle and Olympia Police Departments, the Washington State Patrol, and other local law enforcement and community members.

A team of BRG and DES representatives recently met with agency deputy directors and shared progress on the program. The overall reception was positive, and while DES is still creating their support structures, we can begin thinking about state facilities implementation today. Any Olympia area or Seattle area state facility that meets the criteria can be considered for participation. More directions will be provided in the spring of 2019 through a page on the DES website, currently under construction. In the interim, for more information about the [Seattle](#) or [Olympia](#) programs, check out their websites for eligibility, program participation and more.

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Help Wanted!

Outreach and Communications Co-Chair

This highly rewarding committee co-chair position works with the Outreach and Communications Committee to create communications products and coordinate outreach activities on behalf of RAIN.

Duties may include:

- Providing engagement activities for members, such as guest speakers, networking activities and icebreakers.
- Creating and maintaining communication products including quarterly newsletters, brochures, pamphlets and other outreach materials and, a public facing website.
- Facilitating monthly Committee meetings, attending Advisory Committee meetings and delegating tasks to committee members.

You can expect to spend 4-6 hours per month fulfilling these duties. Participation is contingent on supervisor approval.

If you're interested, please send an email to [RAIN](mailto:RAIN@ofm.wa.gov) for more information.

Justin Taylor and Marianne Ozmun-Wells staff the RAIN booth at an WFSE event



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Washington State leads the way!

Transgender Medical Insurance Coverage

By Allison Spector, WSDOT

In June 2014, Insurance Commissioner Mike Kreidler issued a landmark ruling affirming the rights of transgender folks to have medical care. Under the ruling, patients are entitled to the same access to health care as cisgender patients. Insurance providers are no longer able to issue categorical denials based on a person being transgender.

The 2014 ruling gave examples of how providers could remain compliant with the new framework, including:

- If an insurer covers breast reduction surgery to lessen back pain, the insurer can not deny breast reduction surgery for gender transition.
- If hormone therapy is covered for other policyholders, it cannot be denied for gender transition if determined to be medically necessary.
- Statewide mandate for coverage of mental health services must apply to transgender patients of all ages, therefore mental health care related to gender transition should be covered by insurers.



While the ruling is revolutionary in its expansion of medical coverage, it does have some limitations. The ruling requires that treatment be shown to be medically necessary and not cosmetic. Insurers can, and do, exclude all coverage considered cosmetic, including gender confirming chest reconstruction/breast augmentation for transwomen. Complaints have been filed with the Office of the Insurance Commissioner (OIC) challenging the “cosmetic” definition of chest reconstruction surgery. In August 2018, the Commissioner reached an [agreement](#) with Kaiser Permanente, reversing their practice of denying chest reconstruction for transgender women.

The agreement stemmed from an investigation initiated earlier in the year when three consumers sought help from OIC. It found that Kaiser Permanente did not consider individual cases. Instead, it issued blanket denials based on exclusions in its policies, treating cases of transgender women differently than cases of cisgender women. At the time, Kaiser Permanente covered chest reconstruction for transgender men and for cisgender women who had undergone a mastectomy. The Commissioner found this double standard was in violation of the Affordable Care Act, which requires insurers to cover services for transgender individuals if they cover the same services for cisgender individuals.

As a result, Kaiser Permanente now covers chest reconstruction for transgender women. Under the agreement, physicians must write a prescription for the treatment for Kaiser Permanente to cover it. In addition, Kaiser Permanente is required to review all denials since January 2016 and determine whether the denied treatments are medically necessary.

The agreement is an example of how Washington is leading the way to affirm the rights of transgender folks. The ruling will go a long way toward ensuring all individuals are able to access the treatment they need.



Consumers in Washington can get help with their health, property, life and other types of insurance from the OIC. Help is available by phone at 1-800-562-6900 or [online](#).



If you feel you have been discriminated against regarding insurance coverage, you can file a [complaint](#) with the OIC.

NOTE: RAIN is not responsible for the content of an outside organization’s website. In addition, this article is **not** legal advice. Any advice should be sought from an attorney who is in good standing with the [Washington State Bar](#).

March RAIN Meeting Renowned Speaker; Different Location!

By Marianne Ozmun-Wells, DSHS

Mark your calendars for the March 21, 2019 RAIN meeting...

We are very excited to share **Judge Helen Whitener** will be our featured speaker!

Please keep in mind that our March meeting will be at the **Department of Health** (310 Israel Rd, Tumwater, WA in the all-staff room not at LNI.)

Judge Whitener was appointed to the Pierce County Superior Court in 2015 by Governor Jay Inslee. She is Co-chair of the Washington State Minority and Justice Commission, Chair of the Washington State Superior Court Judges' Association (SCJA) – Equity and Fairness Committee and serves on the Board of Directors of the International Association of LGBT Judges (IALGBTJ).

As an immigrant from Trinidad and Tobago, a woman of color, a member of the LGBTQ community, and a person with a disability, Judge Whitener understands issues of intersectionality better than most.

In recent weeks, Judge Whitener was awarded the Tacoma-Pierce Bar Association Diversity Award for her dedicated commitment to enhancing and promoting diversity within the legal profession and the Pierce County community. And, on January 31, she was a featured speaker at the first annual Washington state Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Summit.

To learn more of Judge Whitener, you can view her Ted Talk: [‘Claiming Your Identity by Understanding Your Self-Worth’](#).

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By Jasper Marino, ESD and RAIN Best Practices Committee

LGBTQ+ Inclusive Language in the Workplace

Instead of...	Try this...	Why?
Mr., Mrs. Ms., Miss	The person’s name or Mx.	A name is not telling of gender. Avoid assumptions and use their name or the gender neutral Mx. to address individuals.
Son, daughter, mother, father	Family, children, parents, or guardians	This moves away from gendered language, and is also inclusive of different types of family structures such as nuclear families, blended families, foster families, or grandparent(s) raising their grandchildren.
Ladies and gentlemen, boys and girls	Folks, employees, children, people, or everyone	When addressing a group of people, use gender-neutral language rather than assuming gender identities. When writing for a group of people, use gender-neutral pronouns or the title of the group you are addressing. This is more inclusive of individuals that do not use she/her or he/him pronouns.
She/her, he/him	The person’s name or they/them	When referring to an individual who has not disclosed their pronouns, using gendered pronouns can be harmful to them. Unless they have stated their pronouns, use gender neutral pronouns.
She/her, he/him	Their name, the employee, or the applicant	When referring to an individual in a professional setting, such as an interview, use gender-neutral titles or their name until they state their pronouns.

Using gendered language, although it is commonplace, is not inclusive and can be harmful to individuals in the LGBTQ+ community.

There are many individuals who identify as non-binary, gender nonconforming, and/or genderqueer, which means they may not identify as exclusively male or female. Individuals may identify as both masculine and feminine or as neither.

Since gender identity is a person’s internal identity, determining ones gender based on their voice or appearance may lead to misgendering someone. Misgendering can make situations uncomfortable, be harmful to the individual who was misgendered, and cause a loss in trust.

As state employees, it is important to be mindful of the language we use to interact with each other and the people we serve.



about

A WORD FROM OUR SPONSOR...

John Wiesman, Secretary of Health

On December 11, 2018, Alex Azar, Secretary of Health and Human Services, announced that he had asked Washington State Secretary of Health, [John Wiesman](#), to serve as a co-chair of the reconstituted Presidential Advisory Council on HIV/AIDS (PACHA).

Azar made the announcement in a speech at the 2018 National Ryan White Conference on HIV Care and Treatment where he laid out a vision for our country “where the spread of HIV/AIDS has been effectively halted, because every American with HIV/AIDS is receiving treatment and every American at risk of HIV is engaged in the right prevention strategy”.

Washington state’s approach to ending the AIDS epidemic relies on getting people health insurance, having them know their HIV status, getting them into treatment if they have HIV so their HIV viral load can be come undetectable, which equals to not being able to transmit the virus, and if they are HIV negative and at high risk for becoming infected, encouraging them to get onto a daily pill to prevent infection (known as PrEP or pre-exposure prophylaxis).

“For those of us who saw the beginning of HIV, it is a dream that we are at a time when we can truly end new cases of HIV”, said Secretary Wiesman. Achieving this goal he says “requires federal, state and local leadership coordinating efforts and mustering its resources and I am pleased to have this opportunity to help lead public health in an all-out effort to stop HIV. **This is our time to be bold.**”

General Membership Meetings

Meetings are open to all current state employees and are held on the third Thursday of each month.

 **Thursday**
MAR21
 Department of Health
 With Guest Speaker: *Judge Whitener!*

 Thursday
APR18
 Labor and Industries

 Thursday
MAY16
 Labor and Industries

Future newsletter ideas?



Are you aware of a community event others should know about?

Is your agency hosting a diversity related event that needs be highlighted?

If you have ideas for future newsletter features or would like to contribute content, please send your articles (photos are great too - if you have permission!) to RAIN Communications Co-Chair [Tracey Carlos](#), no later than April 22nd, 2019.

Looking ahead...

Days of Interest

