

FEB 2023



SUBCOMMITTEE Updates

FEB 2023

SAFE PLACES

The Safe Places subcommittee was established from Directive 16-11 assigning the RAIN BRG to implement and manage a Safe Place program for all Washington State Agencies. Safe Place WA is a program where the public can seek shelter at state agency buildings and can easily connect with emergency and related support services during a crisis.

CURRENT PROJECTS:

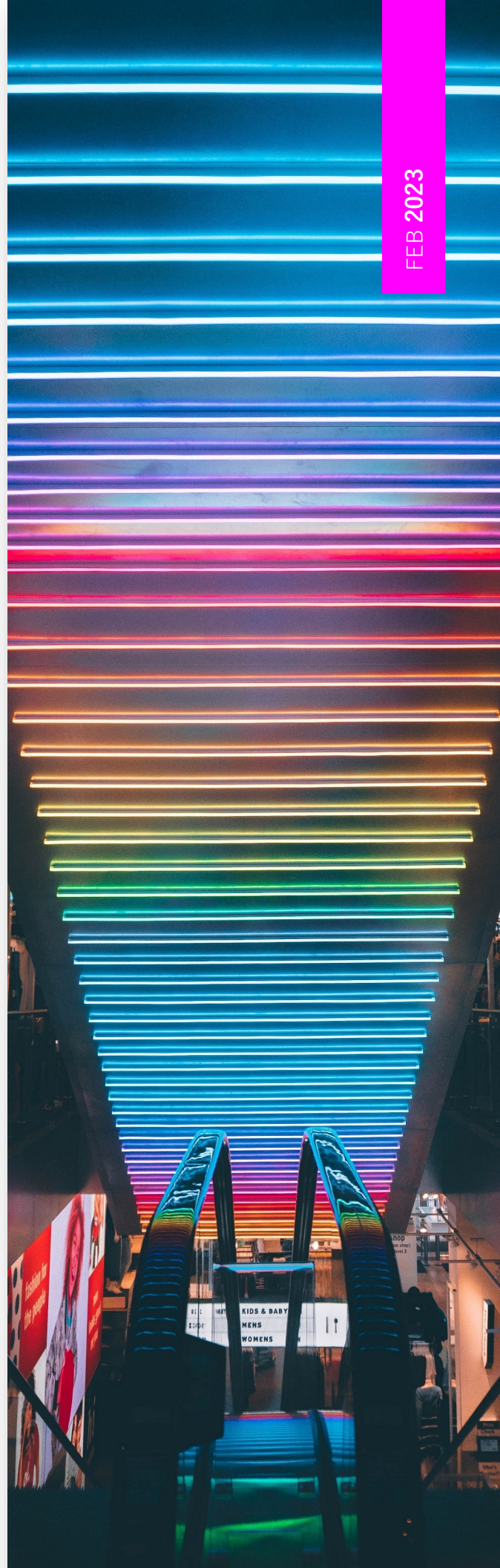
- New decal with QR code
- Building a webpage for community resources

BEST PRACTICES

Throughout our state agencies, great work is being done to create safe and inclusive environments for LGBTQ+ employees and the customers we serve. This committee serves to gather these efforts and provide an avenue for valuable ideas, insights, policies and practices to be disseminated in a way that all staff and our customers can benefit from them.

CURRENT PROJECTS:

- Transitioning in the Workplace Guide
- Family Leave Guide
- “Professionalism” in the Workplace Best Practices
- Pride Month Agency Toolkit
- Other Agency Product Reviews



SUBCOMMITTEE Updates

FEB 2023

COMMUNICATIONS AND OUTREACH

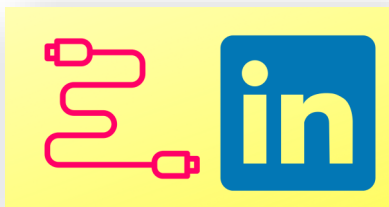
You may regularly find RAIN members at community events promoting the many benefits of state service, providing RAIN 101 presentations, panels at agencies, or interfacing with local organizations and service providers.

The Communications and Outreach subcommittee manages the quarterly RAIN Newsletter, website, social media, and other outreach products. They also organize our monthly guest speakers, Pride month events, and other special events.

CURRENT PROJECTS

- RAIN Brand Guide
- Agency Sponsorships
- RAIN Newsletter
- 2023 Guest Speakers
- Pride Month Event planning
- Social Media Policy

FIND US ON LINKEDIN!



TRAININGS

RAIN provides trainings to Washington state agency employees and institutions of higher education to promote LGBTQ+ inclusivity and best practices in the workplace.

For more information you can view our upcoming trainings below or email us at rain@ofm.wa.gov.

UPCOMING TRAININGS

- Thu, Feb 23 2023, 8 - 11am
[Supporting Trans and Nonbinary Customers](#)
- Tue, Mar 7 2023, 2:30 - 4pm
[The Importance of Pronoun Usage](#)
- Tue, Mar 21 2023, 1 - 4pm
[Supporting Trans and Nonbinary Customers](#)
- Wed, Apr 5 2023, 2 - 3:30pm
[The Importance of Pronoun Usage](#)
- Wed, Apr 19 2023, 8 - 11am
[Supporting Trans and Nonbinary Customers](#)
- Fri, May 5 2023, 1 - 4pm
[Supporting Trans and Nonbinary Customers](#)
- Tue, May 23 2023, 9 - 10:30am
[The Importance of Pronoun Usage](#)

FEB 2023



Governor Inslee's 2022 Equity Summit: ***Working Together for Results***

The Governor's [Executive Order 22-02, Achieving Equity in Washington State Government](#), directed agencies to advance equity and anti-racism in the following areas: Public Contracting, Public Employment, Public Education, and Public Services.

On November 30th, approximately 2,000 community members and state employees came together in-person and virtually to identify specific performance measures and metrics the state will use to gauge how well we are advancing equity.

Together, Summit participants helped lay a strong foundation for achieving equity across Washington state government, now and for generations to come, and learned how to advance belonging, equity, and justice for all, from several incredible presenters.

Visit the Office of Equity to [view the full report](#).



Black History Month

RESISTANCE



FEB 2023



DON'T WEAPONIZE THE WORD 'WOKE';

All parts of Black History are an essential part of American History

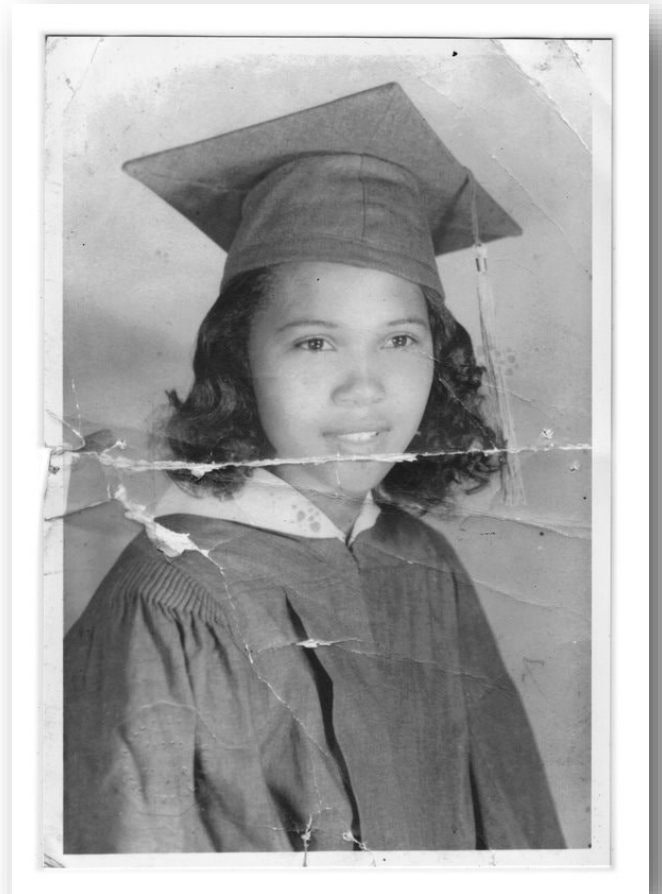
by Shawn Willis (he/him), DES

Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. provided our nation with an inspiring and motivational speech that will echo through the ages as long as all people from different backgrounds are not treated equally and indeed offered opportunities based on that simple premise. Rosa Parks became an icon for refusing to give up her seat on a Montgomery, Alabama bus on December 1, 1955; Congress recognized Rosa Parks as the Mother of the Civil Rights Movement in 1999. President John F. Kennedy: a supporter of the Civil Rights Movement, tragically lost his life by an assassin's bullet in November 1963.

All three great Americans made great and ultimate sacrifices in the quest for all to be treated equally in the eyes of the law, but they were not the only ones who paved the way for them. Accurately learning about the inventions, contributions, and sacrifices of people of color, not just the ones the culture has deemed 'safe and significant,' helps to instill pride while acknowledging that more than one race is responsible for the greatness of the United States of America.

Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. was born on January 15, 1929, and is the most known member of the Civil Rights Movement, which began in 1955. Dr. King began his ministry in 1954 at Dexter Avenue Baptist Church, taking over from another Civil Rights leader who was fighting for Civil Rights when it was not popular to do (even by his own people), Dr. Vernon Johns (April 22, 1892 – June 11, 1965). Long before Rosa Parks refused to give up her seat, Dr. Johns was fighting for equal rights on transportation and inspiring others like his niece Barbara Johns, who filed a lawsuit that was one of the five cases combined in the *Brown vs. Board of Education* leading to the desegregation of public schools by the United States Supreme Court. You can see more about him in the television film *Road to Freedom: The Vernon Johns Story* (1994). James Earl Jones portrays him.

Unfortunately, most of us may not know about the people mentioned because the 'culture' does not communicate much about them, and some of the organizations within the institutions of education and politics reinforce the 'work' of the culture by enacting policies to prevent it.



Continued on following page...

Nine months before Rosa Parks was 'chosen' to be the face of the bus boycott, another young lady was denied her rightful place in history for having the courage to say 'no' for not being treated fairly on a segregated bus. Her name is Claudette Colvin, and she was 15 years old when she was arrested on March 2, 1955. She was 'manhandled' off the bus, handcuffed, and treated worse than Rosa Parks. Although she is still alive today, her story and rightful place in history are not told because a committee that included Dr. King decided to wait for a 'better' case to pursue. After all, the incident involved a minor and circumstances beyond her control. Nevertheless, learning about her ordeal can help us understand some attitudes and behaviors between specific demographics and law enforcement. Read her story in *'The Girl Who Acted Before Rosa Parks.'*

Between June 12, 1963, and January 26, 1969, five champions of Civil Rights lost their lives, but only three are talked about, depending on where you went to school.

The three most commonly talked about are Dr. King, President Kennedy, and his brother Robert. But two other champions interestingly suffered similar fates six years apart Medgar Evers (1963) and Washington State's version of him, Edwin T. Pratt (1969). Both were assassinated in front of their homes, and for nearly 30 years, both cases had remained unsolved (Edwin Pratt's still is) even though the assailants were arrested; laws that allowed for all white juries made way for them to be set free. Why is this important, you ask? It's because history will, in some fashion, continue to repeat itself if we don't strive to understand how the dynamic structure of racism affects our culture, institutions, and the racial socialization of individuals.

If we don't want history to continue repeating itself, we have to provide our current and future leaders from all backgrounds with an accurate account of the Civil Rights struggle, or many will continue to believe it didn't really start until the 1960s and that we are 'much better than where we started.'

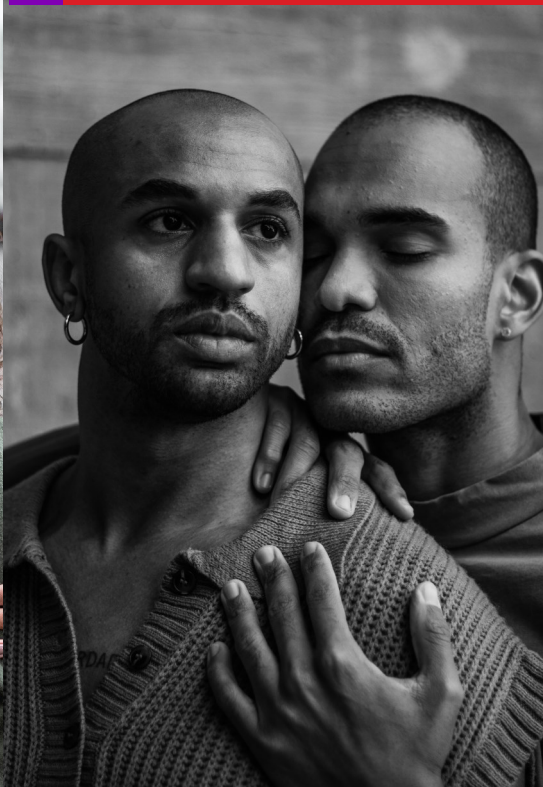


Beyond celebrities and icons, RAIN honors **Black History Month** by highlighting everyday people who represent

BLACK LOVE
BLACK JOY
BLACK FUTURES



 BLACK LOVE IS RESISTANCE





BLACK JOY IS RESISTANCE





BLACK FUTURES IS RESISTANCE



LOVE, =QUALLY



The Journey to Marriage Equality

A Legacy Washington Project



L-R; Manny Santiago, Marsha Botzer, Taja Blackhorn,
former Governor Christine Gregoire

Love, Equally Celebration

by Tracey Carlos (she/they), LGBTQ

Ten years ago, on Feb. 13, 2013, Governor Christine Gregoire signed marriage equality into law. The Secretary of State's Legacy office honored the 10th anniversary at a celebration on Feb. 14, 2023 with music, speakers, and the opening of an exhibit that will be up for the rest of this year.

To start the celebration, The Supertotics, an ensemble of the Seattle Men's and Seattle Women's Choruses, performed several songs and got many of the people in the room up and dancing. The speakers that followed spoke of the decades spent fighting for marriage equality, personal relationships and how they were affected by the change in law, and the short window between the bill being introduced and it reaching the governor's office.

Once the speeches were over, we were invited to the Secretary of State's office to view the exhibit and have refreshments. I would highly encourage people to visit the office over the next few months to see it. It is a beautiful story. You can learn more at [Love, Equally](#).

Along with this exhibit and website you can purchase the book, [Love, Equally: The Journey to Marriage Equality](#) by Bob Young and John C. Hughes, from the Secretary of State's Legacy office through their bookstore. This project took months of hard work to put together all thanks to the Legacy office, a not-for-profit division of the Secretary of State's office.

From the back cover of the book:

The success of the marriage equality movement stunned even its advocates. The transformation from "outlaws to in-laws" was one of swiftest turnarounds in U.S. civil rights history. As recently as 2006, our state law did not prohibit job discrimination against gays and lesbians, and our state Supreme Court banned same-sex marriage. Bruised but not beaten, LGBTQ+ advocates tried a brick-by-brick approach. They got domestic partnerships passed in three phases, capped by a "everything but marriage" law. Marriage equality landed on Washington's November ballot in 2012. Devastating votes against same-sex marriage in other states – 31 losses without a win – informed a new strategy. It would shift the debate from the head to the heart.

Thank you to Governor Jay Inslee, Secretary of State Steve Hobbs, Former Governor Christine Gregoire, Speaker of the House Laurie Jenkins, State Senator Jamie Pedersen, Executive Director of the LGBTQ Commission Manny Santiago, and author Stephanie Coontz for speaking at the event.



PAST

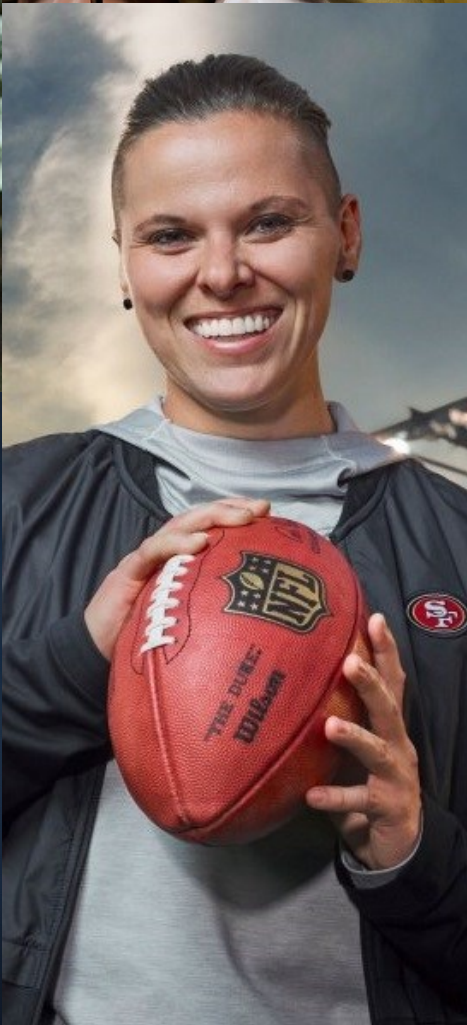
RAIN celebrates
**WOMEN'S
HISTORY
MONTH**

By honoring members and advocates of the LGBTQ+ community from our past and present, who paved the way for future generations.





PRESENT





A close-up photograph of a person's face, specifically their eyes and eyebrows, peering through a jagged, torn hole in a piece of bright pink paper. The person has dark, well-defined eyebrows and is wearing vibrant, multi-colored rainbow eyeshadow around their brown eyes. The background is a solid, light pink color, matching the paper being torn.

Looking for Trans Futures

by Nicklaus McHendry (they/he), ESD

When I came out to a handful of friends as transgender back in 2013, I had never met a transgender adult, not that I knew of, at least. I had seen transgender and gender-nonconforming people, sure – mostly on television, appearing typically as guests on daytime talk shows to explain who and what exactly they were to rapt audiences just as new to the concept as I was, as a pre-teen with gender troubles of my own. In the semi-rural environment of Shelton, Washington, trans folks were hard to find, and I expect that many did not want to be found. Out-and-proud *anyone*, let alone transgender people, were something that existed in a vague “somewhere else,” and their lives were mysteries to me for a time.

For me, the realization that I was trans was both a relief and somewhat terrifying – gaining vocabulary for what I was feeling and going through, for instance, was hugely liberating – but the more I learned, the clearer the gaps in my knowledge became. I began a research expedition into transness, moving from antiquated medical texts to creative nonfiction and autobiography, later into documentary and film. While this was ultimately a positive experience, and one that introduced me to voices in our community that I still lean on, it was also one that required thick skin and a strong stomach at times. Stories of assault, rejection, depression, dysphoria, and loneliness were the standard, not the exception. Two core messages seemed to emerge: first, that a transgender life was hard, full of fear and pain; and second, that no matter how hard that life was going to be, being transgender was not something to be simply opted out of. It would be just as painful, just as hard, to try to be something I was not.

So, what then? The options before me were both obvious and shrouded with uncertainty. What would a trans future be like?

Continued on following page...

Transgender Day of Visibility is celebrated each year on March 31st as a day to be unabashedly out and proud in our gender diversity. It was founded in 2009 by an activist named Rachel Crandall as a celebration of the successes of transgender and gender-nonconforming people, both in the past and in the moment. Its creation marked ten years after that of its somber sibling holiday, Transgender Day of Remembrance, on which we honor those who have passed and those that we have lost to violence and suicide. Every November 20th, the weight of the ever-growing list of names feels heavier than usual, and the unsaid imperative lingers: *See us, accept us, celebrate us, while we are still here.*

This day is a twofold opportunity – to celebrate, and to bring trans issues to the table in a serious way. For our national media, Transgender Day of Visibility will be a day to forefront representation of trans people and demonstrate how far we have come. There are “firsts” and other accomplishments to honor. There will be photoshoots and interviews of gorgeous people across the gender rainbow. I look forward to spending some scrolling time catching up on my iPad from the comfort and safety of my couch. It is a welcome break from what can otherwise be a less than comforting world. Trans joy is, truly, a beautiful thing.

The second element – the hard work of critical reflection and asking the uncomfortable questions – is something that in some cases will be done on an organizational level, involving anywhere from a handful to hundreds of individuals, all of whom will have their own unique impression of what the lives of transgender people are like. Positive or negative, the input they give and the decisions they make will be impacted by the stories they have been told about trans life and the stories that they now tell themselves.

The purpose of examining these kinds of internal narratives in the context of trans visibility is this: when the primary subjects of discussion regarding trans lives are the factors that contribute to life-shortening, we can come to paint a picture of suffering, fear, and rejection as the defining features of a trans future. This is a misstep that in and of itself has consequences, often most acutely felt by transgender and other gender-



diverse youth. In combination with critical errors in attribution (e.g. linking disproportionate rates of anxiety, depression, and risk of suicide with transness itself, rather than the social consequences of transphobia), trans youth can come to believe that their futures are already written in stone – that their lives will be short, painful, and not worth living. We know this story. We’ve heard it before, in too many forms. And it is not true.

This is the challenge our communities are faced with. Changing the way we, cis and trans alike, think about trans life is vital to the wellbeing of trans people. Parents of trans youth need to know that their children have futures that are just as valuable and filled with potential as any other child. Everyone under the umbrella of gender diversity – youth or adult, closeted or out, pre-, post-, or sans transition – should expect to live as full citizens, to love and be loved, and to be their authentic selves while doing so.



This is not the destination, but the starting point for creating the conditions in which trans achievement and joy will flourish into the future.

It's been a decade since my younger self made the decision to live an out-and-proud life, and every day, I make that decision again. It is a decision to be visible, as much as it is a decision to be my authentic self for my own sake. It's the same decision that was made back in 2015, when a group of volunteer educators from Olympia visited our small but vibrant community of queer and trans youth, not just one but many adults of many genders and gender expressions, who had chosen to spend their Saturday introducing us to our larger communities that we would soon be joining as adults ourselves.

It was magical, almost dreamlike, to have our futures painted in strokes of joy and potential so intentionally, by people who were *like us*, and who accepted us fully for who we were, no questions asked. They made the choice to be visible, to be proud, in a time and place where we were all-too-often living in fear. These brave, loving people came to our community to educate and empower, and they did so, but they also gave us a promise that I pass on now with the hope that it reaches those who need to hear it: *despite everything, you will live a transgender life more beautiful and amazing than you can imagine.*

SAVE THE
DATE



Washington State Employees'
LGBTQ+ Business Resource Group

RAIN 

Transgender Day of Visibility Panel

March 31, 2023

MEMBER SPOTLIGHT

Matthew Freeman (he/him/his)

Interview by Kristen Jenkins (she/her), UTC

First, introduce yourself! How long have you been a state employee and what do you do?

Hello all, my name is Matthew Freeman, and I am coming up on my two year anniversary this March when I started at ESD. I am a Human Resources Consultant 2 that works at DSHS for the Office of the Secretary.



Matthew (left) and his softball friend Scott, enjoying a Mariners game.

Where did you grow up?

Well, this is a bit complicated, I was raised in Orange County, CA (Santa Ana, Irvine, Laguna Niguel, and Lake Forest) then when I was 15, I moved to Corona, CA in Riverside County.

How long have you been with RAIN and what keeps you coming back?

I have been with RAIN since August 2022. I keep coming back because it's just so uplifting and a bit of an escape from work.

Why do you think RAIN is important for LGBTQ+ employees?

We have a community outside of work and I feel that having RAIN for the workplace builds a safe haven for LGBTQ+ employees especially when you need someone to talk to that understands you.

What's your community like? Family, friends, whoever YOU consider your community?

I have a real strong softball community that is a make-up of LGBTQ+ and allies. We pick each other up when we are down when it comes to the games, and we encourage one another off the field as well.

Are you more introverted or extroverted?

Totally extroverted, but I like my alone time too.

60s, 70s, 80s, 90s, 2000, etc: Which decade do you love the most and why?

Oh my goodness, so I have say the 90s because I was born in the 80s and growing up the 90s had TGIF and the best Saturday morning cartoons and the music was EVERYTHING!

What are your superpowers?

I am really good at remembering people's names.

How do you show or celebrate love?

Spending quality time with people I love usually over a glass of good wine or prosecco.

Continued on following page...

Say you have a chance to sit down and chat with three celebrities (dead or alive) who would it be and why?

Michelle Obama – I mean you really wanna know why..... hello it's Michelle OBAMA!

Princess Diana – Because she is a July baby like me (cancer for the zodiac peeps) and I want to know what it was like dealing with the media all the time and just wanting your own space.

Ricky Martin – What was it like growing up in the spotlight as a young child and since you came out, what would you change different?

What's a good piece of advice you have been given that you want to share with others?

It's okay to say no. You are only one person and saying yes to everything is exhausting. You just can't do everything so do what you can and make sure you are happy in the end.

What message do you want to tell people reading this?

You never know what someone is going through so be kind and if a conversation gets too heated, you have the right to walk away or say, "I need a breather."

OK last question, what's your favorite (work appropriate) gif OR bitmoji that sums you up in a nutshell?



We want to provide a deeper dive into the unique lives and skill sets of our members all across Washington State.

If you want to nominate someone to be featured in the spotlight, please email RAIN@ofm.wa.gov.

RAIN'S LEADERSHIP TEAM RETREAT; FEBRUARY 15, 2023



The Rainbow Alliance and Inclusion Network (RAIN) is an LGBTQ+ and ally

Business Resource Group

committed to diversity and inclusion

efforts that allow staff to bring their

full authentic selves to work in order

to do their best work on

behalf of Washingtonians.



Questions or feedback

RAIN@ofm.wa.gov

Visit our website

LGBTQ.wa.gov/RAIN

