



NOVEMBER 2023

A MESSAGE TO OUR OUTGOING LEADERSHIP

On behalf of RAIN, Washington's LGBTQ+ Employees' Business Resource Group, we wanted to take a moment to express our heartfelt gratitude for your outstanding service and commitment to promoting equality and inclusion for all. Your tireless efforts have helped to create a welcoming and supportive space where everyone feels valued and respected.

We are especially grateful for your unwavering dedication to furthering LGBTQ+ rights and for your advocacy on behalf of the community. Your leadership has been instrumental in creating opportunities for others, and your commitment to supporting state employees has made a real difference in the lives of so many.

We also wanted to extend a special thank you for your specific work in the past couple of years promoting transgender awareness and for your efforts to ensure that all members of our community feel seen and heard. Your commitment to this cause has been truly inspiring, and we are grateful for all of your leadership whilst the world seemed on fire.

As you move on to new adventures, please know that your contributions to RAIN will never be forgotten. You leave behind a legacy of service and dedication that will continue to inspire us all for years to come. Thank you for everything you have done, and best wishes for a happy and fulfilling future.





FDA LIFTS DISCRIMINATORY LIFETIME BANS FOR LGBTQ+ DONORS

by Kristen Jenkins (she/her)

RAIN welcomed Mario C. Brown, the LGBTQIA+ Biomedical National Partnership Manager for the American Red Cross, to their September General Membership meeting. Mario went over the new FDA guidelines and answered questions from the attendees.



On August 7, 2023, after almost four decades of lifetime bans due to the AIDS crisis, the American Red Cross implemented the FDA's updated guidelines for individual donor assessment for all blood donors regardless of gender or sexual orientation.

In the early 1980's, the FDA restricted men who have ever had sex with other men (MSM) and women who have ever had sex with MSM from ever donating. In 2020, the FDA updated their guidelines to being able to donate after a 3-month deferral period that men would have to refrain from sex with other men entirely. The new guidelines changed the questionnaire to non-gender-based questions and are the same restrictions regardless of sexual orientation. With the new guidelines, gay men who are in monogamous relationships can now donate without the deferral period, and more.

From the Red Cross:

"Under the FDA's individual donor assessment guidance, there are no eligibility criteria related to men who have sex with men. Any individual, regardless of gender or sexual orientation, who has had new or multiple sexual partners in the last three months, and also had anal sex in that timeframe, will be asked to wait three months to donate blood from last anal sex contact. Individuals who have had anal sex in the last three months may be eligible to donate as long as they did not have sex with someone new or with multiple partners during that timeframe. We understand how blood donation deferral related to anal sex may feel like it unfairly targets gay and bisexual men. Please know, the Red Cross is committed to achieving further progress and will continue to provide data to the FDA in support of making blood donation even more inclusive."

To learn more, visit the [American Red Cross](#).

DOMESTIC VIOLENCE AWARENESS MONTH

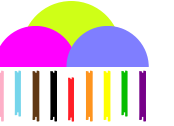
by Sarah Mosberg (she/xe), ATG

Love. Acceptance. Bravery. Pride. It's easy to get caught up in the positivity the 2SLGBTQIA+ community can project, especially during times of celebration. It's what isn't talked about that poses a risk to friends and loved ones. Threats. Stalking. Physical abuse. Rape. Intimate partner violence (IPV) is a reality for all too many people and queer folx are not immune to it. On average, nearly 20 people per minute are physically abused by an intimate partner in the United States. During one year, this equates to more than 10 million people. Those identifying on the queer spectrum are just as – and in some cases more – likely to suffer from these abuses than cisgender and heterosexual people.

Domestic Violence Awareness Month (DVAM) was launched nationwide in October 1987 as a way to connect and unite individuals and organizations working on or raising awareness of domestic violence issues. Though cisgender women were the focus of early IPV campaigns, increased awareness has broadened understanding of who victims are. Anyone, regardless of their identity or that of their partner, can experience IPV. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) 2010 National Intimate Partner and Sexual Violence Survey (NISVS), bisexual and transgender persons experienced IPV at higher rates throughout their lifetimes. The survey outlines that 61% of bisexual women, and 44% of lesbian women, compared with 35% of straight women experienced IPV. Among men, a third of bisexual men (37.3%), versus a little over a quarter (29%) of heterosexual men, had experienced IPV. Gay men were slightly less likely than heterosexual men to experience this (reported by 26%). An analysis of the 2015 United States Transgender Survey found that more than half (54%) of all trans and non-binary people have experienced IPV at some point in their lifetimes.

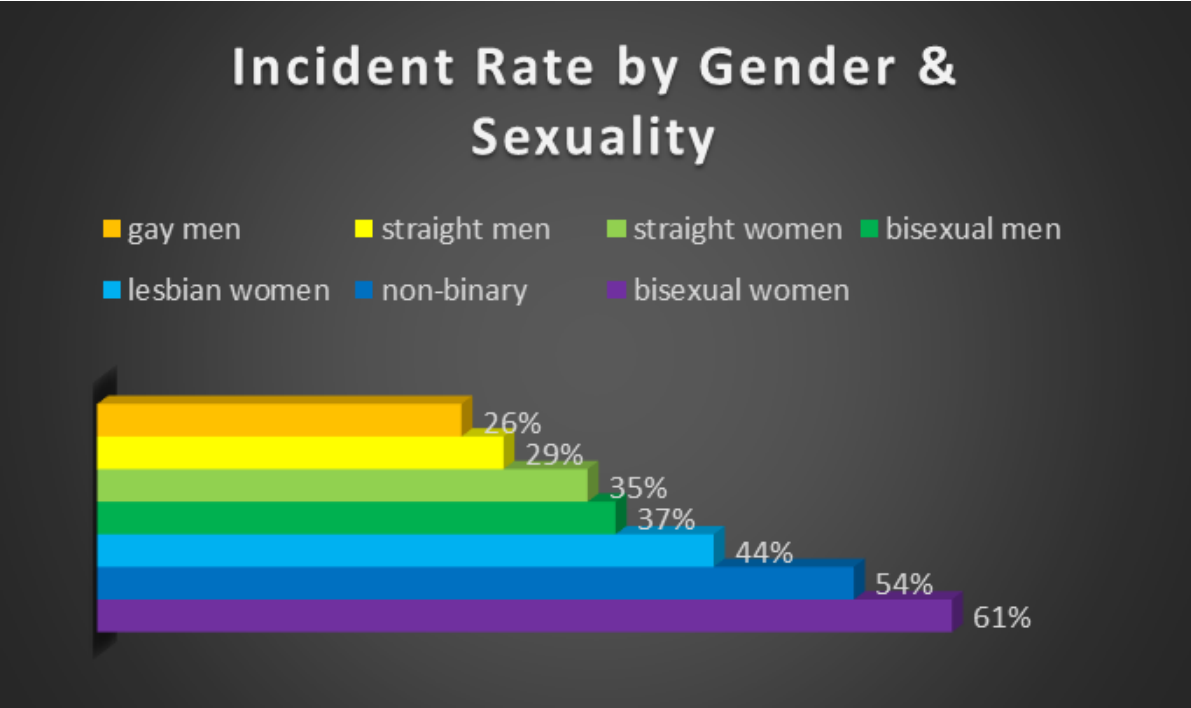
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Intimate partner violence accounts for 15% of all violent crime. However much of these abuses go unreported. In the US, [The Bureau of Justice Statistics](#) estimates at least one-third of all domestic violence incidents aren't reported.

Many victims don't report because they feel it won't do them any good or could make the situation worse. For 2SLGBTQIA+ victims, there may be added dangers associated with outing oneself. Others feel that airing problems among the queer population will take away from progress toward equality or fuel anti-LGBTQ bias.



Intimate partner violence is so pervasive due, in part, to the many forms it can take. IPV is the “willful intimidation, physical assault, battery, sexual assault, and/or other abusive behavior as part of a systematic pattern of power and control perpetrated by one intimate partner against another. It includes physical violence, sexual violence, threats, economic, and emotional/psychological abuse.”

[National Coalition Against Domestic Violence. \(2021\). Domestic violence in Washington.](#)

Domestic violence is a broader term that includes intimate partners as well as immediate family members, relatives, ex-spouses and partners, and roommates.

The abuse itself can manifest in many different ways:

- **Physical Abuse:** Pushing or kicking a person. Slapping, biting, or strangling someone. Locking a person out of their home.
- **Emotional Abuse:** Name-calling, acting out of jealousy, manipulating, humiliating, and degrading a person, and threatening.
- **Sexual Abuse:** Forcing someone to have sex. Compelling a person to dress more sexually than they wish to.
- **Economic Abuse:** Denying access to their bank accounts or credit cards. Preventing someone from going to a job. Limiting access to health insurance.

2SLGBTQIA+ people face barriers to seeking help that are unique to their sexual orientation and gender identity. Folx in the queer community may be denied assistance and domestic violence services as a result of homophobia, transphobia, and biphobia. In many localities there is a lack of appropriate training regarding LGBTQ domestic violence for service providers. Generally, low confidence in law enforcement or the absence of counselors/health care providers with competency in LGBTQ issues discourages individuals from pursuing aid. Domestic violence shelters are typically female-only, and transgender individuals may not be allowed entrance due to their gender/genital/legal status. Overall, many victims are unaware of LGBTQ-friendly assistance resources.

A person in crisis may have difficulty understanding their options or deciding what the best course of action is. It's important for the community to make resources accessible and to enhance the channels of support already in place to include 2SLGBTQIA+ awareness. October is a call to action for crisis intervention which includes education, safety planning, supportive counseling and health care, law enforcement support, housing options, and legal remedies.

Much progress has been made to support domestic violence victims and survivors, to hold abusers accountable, and to create and update legislation to further those goals. There's still a lot of work to be done, bringing this issue and its link to the queer community to light is just the first step. Look beyond the social platitudes that are used to stereotype the 2SLGBTQIA+ community to understand the real issues that people face every day and what needs to be done to help.

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RESOURCES

If you have questions about your legal rights as an LGBTQ victim of domestic violence, read this [helpful guide](#) from the American Bar Association.

Develop a [Personalized Safety Plan](#) using the National Coalition Against Domestic Violence (NCADV) guide or explore [resources](#) for victims and survivors including race, age, citizen status, and ability-centered assistance.

These [organizations](#) are working with the intersection of domestic violence and LGBTQ victims and survivors.

Washington State Coalition Against Domestic Violence

711 Capitol Way, Suite 702
Olympia, WA 98501
(360) 586-1022 Fax: (360) 586-1024
(360) 586-1029 TTY
Website: www.wscadv.org

1511 Third Avenue, Suite 433
Seattle, WA 98101
(206) 389-2515 Fax: (206) 389-2520
(800) 886-2880 In State
(206) 389-2900 TTY
Email: wscadv@wscadv.org

Washington State Native American Coalition Against Domestic and Sexual Assault

P.O. Box 3937
Sequim, WA 98382
(360) 352-3120 Fax: (360) 357-3858
(888) 352-3120
Website: www.womenspirit.net

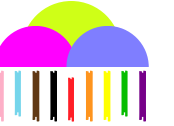


WASHINGTON STATE IS A HAVEN

FOR THOSE SEEKING REFUGE
FROM REVERSALS OF RIGHTS

by Marianne Moez Ozmun-Wells (she/her), DOL + Seamus Mulcahy (he/him), PARKS





Over the past few years, there has been a significant increase in proposed and enacted legislation attacking bodily autonomy, recognition of identity, education, and historical truth-telling.

In 2023 alone, according to the [Human Rights Campaign](#):

- Over 520 anti-LGBTQ+ bills have been introduced in state legislatures, a record;
- Over 220 bills specifically target transgender and non-binary people, also a record; and
- A record 70 anti-LGBTQ laws have been enacted so far this year, including:
 - Laws banning gender affirming care for transgender youth: 15
 - Laws requiring or allowing misgendering of transgender students: 7
 - Laws targeting drag performances: 2
 - Laws creating a license to discriminate: 3
 - Laws censoring school curriculum, including books: 4

In Washington state, even though there have been bills introduced attempting to minimize rights and protections for LGBTQ+ people, we enjoy a high quality of life, scoring a 21 out of 23 on the Equity Policy Profile.

According to the [Movement Advancement Project](#), Washington remains one of the best states in the nation for LGBTQ+ equity. While other states passed laws attempting to erase transgender lives, Washington state passed Senate Bill 5599, enacting protections for young people seeking affirming and potentially, life-saving care.

According to Sen. Marko Liias' (D-Everett), who sponsored the bill, *“Washington has long been a place where members of the LGBTQ+ community are welcome and embraced,”* Liias said. *“As other states across the country introduce and pass legislation to take their rights away, we here in Washington are sending a clear signal: we hear you, we see you and we love you.”*

Washington State continues to recognize that human beings should have autonomy over their own bodies. We are fortunate to live in a state which validates the fact that those capable of conceiving pregnancy are the best judges about whether their bodies, minds, and life circumstances are poised to carry, deliver, and raise a child.

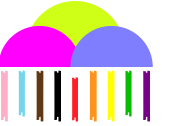
Since the United States Supreme Court overturned Roe Versus Wade, California, Oregon and Washington, remain states where people seeking abortion can come to access safe abortion services. The increase in abortions in Washington state, presumably related to Idahoans seeking safe care, has been significant. In the single year since the Supreme Court Decision, Washington saw a monthly [increase of 16.5% over the previous year](#).

While other states continue to push for prohibitions on what teachers can teach in public schools with regard to sexual orientation and gender identity, Washington state as a whole has no such prohibitions. Moreover, curriculum which teaches the truth about racism in the USA and books which enlighten, educate, and inspire have not been under attack in our fair state like they have in others.

While we enjoy the rights, freedoms, and protections that Washington state affords, we cannot be complacent about this reality. As Governors and legislatures change, so too do the laws governing a state. We must also recognize that not all our queer and trans Washington State niblings experience the same level of freedom to live out loud that many of us along the I-5 corridor enjoy.

We need to simultaneously celebrate and mobilize, bask in our visibility and validation, while always working to improve the quality of life for those who do not share our liberties.

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- 1)** Washington State Law Against Discrimination prohibits discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation and gender identity in the areas of employment, housing, public accommodation, credit, and insurance. (RCW 49.60)
 - a.** You may not be denied entry to or any services at any public establishment (Generally, any place that sells goods, offers food or drink for charge, is a place of entertainment, recreation or assembly, or is for the lodging of guests) on the basis of sexual orientation or gender identity.
 - b.** Washington State law prohibits wedding related services (wedding planners or photographers) from being restricted to only heterosexual couples, HOWEVER, recent United States Supreme Court rulings relating to a similar law in Colorado found this law is unconstitutional in the case of both bakers and website designers. As such, while wedding related services are explicitly covered by Washington State law, they remain untested by the federal courts.
 - c.** You may not be fired from a job or denied a job on the basis of sexual orientation or gender identity.
 - d.** You may not be asked about your sexual orientation or other protected class status during a job interview or application process.
 - e.** Harassment against an employee based on that employee's sexual orientation or gender identity is prohibited.
 - f.** Employers should permit employees to dress in a manner that is consistent with their gender identity or expression.
 - g.** The law may consider any medical treatment for an employee's transition as a temporary disability and any request for a reasonable accommodation due to a medical procedure, such as a request for time off, must be addressed in the same manner as with any other employee who has a medical condition. Generally, employers are required to provide reasonable accommodation to persons with disabilities and temporary disabilities.
 - h.** Records kept by a company for legal purposes (tax forms, payroll records, workers' compensation documents, etc.) should reflect the employee's legal name, all other references (e-mail, photo ID, organization charts and directories, business cards, and workplace signs) should be consistent with the employee's gender identity and expression.
- 2)** In employment and places public accommodation, same sex spouses must be treated equally to opposite sex spouses. (RCW 49.60 and Obergefell v. Hodges)
- 3)** All licensed healthcare providers are prohibited from performing "conversion therapy" on minors. (RCW 18.130)
- 4)** Washingtonians have the right to change their gender marker to "X" on state issued ID, driver licenses, and their birth certificate. (WAC 308-104, WAC 308-105, WAC 246-490-075)
- 5)** When a minor estranged from their parents seeks assistance in a licensed homeless shelter, the shelter is required to notify the parents within 72 hours. However, when a minor is seeking reproductive or gender-affirming health care, licensed shelters may instead notify the Department of Children, Youth and Families (DCYF). DCYF may then attempt to mediate a family reunification if feasible, and also has the power to place a child at a host home without parental consent. (RCW 13.32A.082, RCW 74.15.020)
- 6)** Washington has a "shield law" which defines gender affirming care and reproductive health care as "protected health care services" in state law. (Shield Law, RCW 5.51.020, 5.56.010, 9.73.040, 9.73.260, 10.55.020, 10.88.250, 10.88.320, 10.88.330, 10.96.020, 10.96.040, and 40.24.030)
 - a.** The law prohibits state authorities from cooperating with any out of state subpoena, court order, arrest warrant, or extradition request for an individual for obtaining protected health care services.
 - b.** The law effectively shields people fleeing prosecution for obtaining gender affirming care or reproductive health care in a state where those services are illegal from prosecution in Washington.
 - c.** It also shields those accused of helping someone else access protected health care services and those that come to Washington from out of state to obtain protected health care services.
- 7)** Washington generally treats foreign countries' custody rulings as reciprocally valid in the state, however, when the custody law of a foreign country violates fundamental human rights or treats homosexuality with the death penalty, it may not be enforced in Washington. (RCW 26.27.051)

WASHINGTON LGBTQ+ LAWS

RAIN does not provide legal advice.
This is an overview of laws meant for reference only.



**In honor of
Native American
Heritage Month,
RAIN recognizes our
2SLGBTQIA+ ancestors,
elders, and modern
Indigiqueers.**



WE'WHA
(ZUNI)



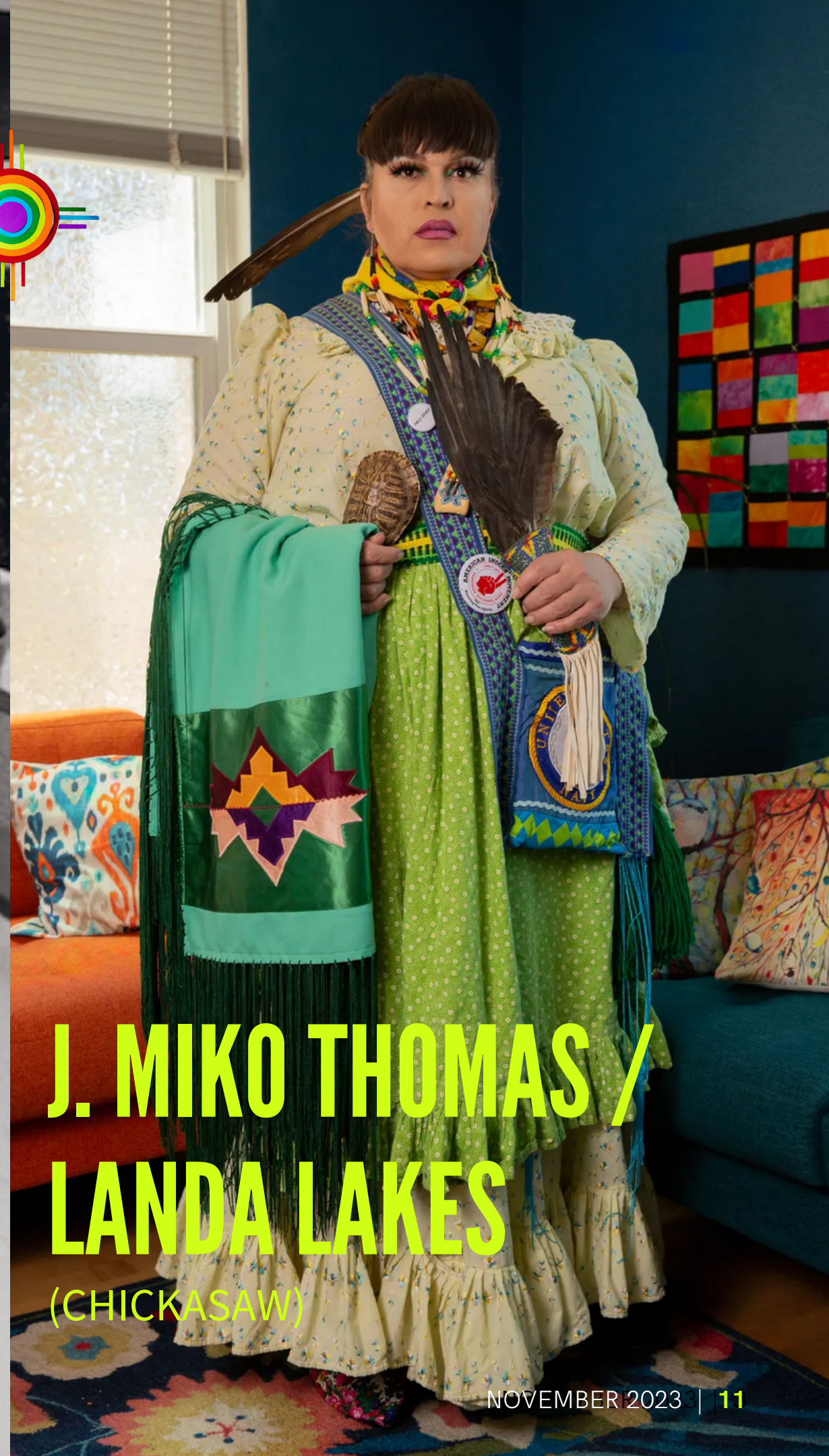
OSCH-TISCH
(CROW)



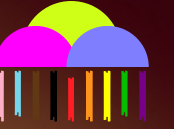
DAHTESTE
(APACHE)



**BARBARA
CAMERON**
(HUNKPAPA LAKOTA)



**J. MIKO THOMAS /
LANDA LAKES**
(CHICKASAW)






RAIN




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“Being queer and being indigenous are both beautiful identities to carry that are sacred when they intersect... But we often must fight twice as hard just to show that we are worthy of living and thriving.”

SOMÁH HAALAND, PUEBLO ACTION ALLIANCE

A person with dark hair tied back, wearing a denim jacket, holds a transgender flag (blue, pink, and white stripes) in front of their face. They are looking off to the side. The background is a scenic view of a mountain range under a clear blue sky.

TRANSGENDER DAY OF REMEMBRANCE

NOVEMBER 20

REMEMBRANCE, VISIBILITY, AND TRANS FUTURES

by Ariel Kay-Barto (she/her/any), ESD

This article will discuss hate crimes and violence against Trans people. If these are a potentially triggering topics for you, please engage in a way that best supports your psychological safety.

Every year on November 20th we observe Trans Day of Remembrance, a day to memorialize those who have been murdered as a result of transphobia. Transgender Day of Remembrance was founded in 1999 by a small group to memorialize the murder of Black transgender woman [Rita Hester](#) in Allston, Massachusetts. Transgender people [are over four times more likely than cisgender people](#) to be the victims of violent crime. The intersections of racism and transphobia lead to some of the worst health outcomes for Black transgender people. A 2011 study by the National LGBTQ Task Force found that Black transgender and gender nonconforming people face some of the highest levels of discrimination of all transgender people. While there are laws protecting trans people in Washington State that doesn't make life automatically easy. In that same [2011 study](#) it was found that 21% of the 348 trans survey respondents in Washington State were denied equal treatment by a government agency or official.

This has been a record setting year of [anti-transgender legislation](#). This political movement is fueled by disinformation, bigotry, and a highly organized political apparatus that impacts more than transgender people.

There are two notable days of recognition for trans people, Trans Day of Visibility (March 31) and Trans Day of Remembrance (November 20). It's a double-edged sword to be only visible to be hunted.



In her book All About Love, scholar and author bell hooks defines love as being “*The will to extend one’s self for the purpose of nurturing one’s own or another’s spiritual growth*”.

Transgender people in an act of love, self-love, and the nurturing of others spiritual growth, built [Trans Futures Week](#). A week created by and for trans people to ask “*If we could make something that would offer not just affirmation that a better world is possible, but genuinely valuable information for how to make it a reality, what might that look like?*” This celebration pushes beyond awareness and mourning and into the important work of building that world.

This Transgender Day of Remembrance I hope that we can all extend ourselves for the purpose of nurturing another’s spiritual growth and connect that love to the act of creating belonging in the workplace. This can look like learning, practicing your coworkers’ pronouns before the virtual meeting, asking hard questions about barriers to transgender customers accessing our services, and continuing to show up every day to do better.

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REMEMBERING ANGIE ZAPATA

"We would ask everyone to remember my sister - remember her like we do, as a beautiful, wonderful, precious teenager. She would want us to remember the happy times in her life, and, together, and in Angie's memory, make the world a better place."

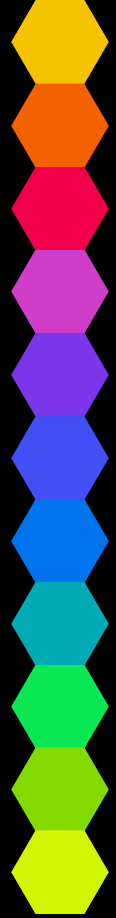
"We will always love you, Angie, and we will always miss you, mija."

- [Gonzalo Zapata](#) brother of Angie Zapata

I also wanted to take this opportunity to share some of the story of [Angie Zapata](#) who was murdered in Greeley Colorado July 17, 2008. Her case was one of the first, that a defendant accused of murdering a transgender person, was being tried under a hate crime law.

I think about this case, about Angie, all the time for a few reasons:

- The District Attorney who tried the landmark case later compared being [gay to alcoholism](#), calling for increased funding for conversion therapy, a dangerous and violent practice now [illegal in many states](#). That [district attorney](#) is now a sitting United States congressperson in the House of Representatives.
- Angie was murdered less than a two-hour drive from where Matthew Shepard was murdered, yet the face of queer hate crimes is the white gay man not a Latina Transgender teen.
- The year Angie was murdered we were the same age, it was the year I came out publicly - we frequented the [same gay clubs](#), and she was murdered in the place where I was born. It's so easy to compare my life to hers. To lay out the years I got and she didn't. The systems in place that didn't protect her. Whenever I have the privilege of being able to impact something (a system, a person, a queer event, a form, etc.) I have to think about what would have helped Angie Zapata thrive? What can I give the world that would be even close to the impact her life could have had? It's such a selfish impulse to compare our lives like this, or to contextualize trans liberation in a way that centers my experiences as they compare a trans person who no longer has a voice to advocate for her own feelings and experiences. Centering yourself around these experiences is a very human impulse that is easy to do on Transgender Day of Remembrance. The point of sharing this story is so you all can learn about Angie Zapata and think about the people in your communities and lives and what they need so we don't have to remember them.



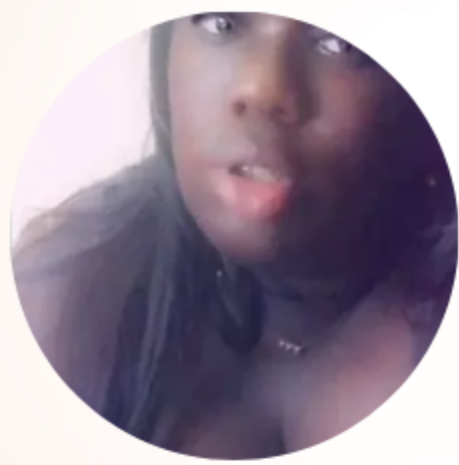
GONE TOO SOON

REMEMBER THEM

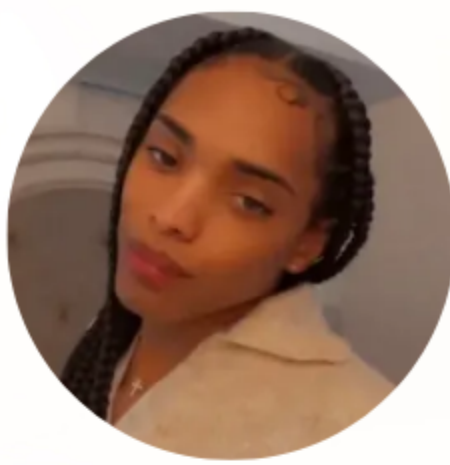


Tortuguita, a 26-year-old Indigenous queer and non-binary environmental activist and community organizer, is remembered as a “*radiant, joyful, beloved community member*” who “*brought an indescribable jubilation to each and every moment of their life,*” and “*fought tirelessly to honor and protect the sacred land of the Weelaunee Forest. They took great joy in caring for each and every person that they came across.*”

Tortuguita was shot and killed by Georgia state troopers in Atlanta, Georgia on January 18, 2023 during an ongoing protest alongside other self-described “forest defender” protestors against a proposed \$90 million, 85-acre police training facility deemed “Cop City” by activists, slated to be built in the Weelaunee Forest in Atlanta.



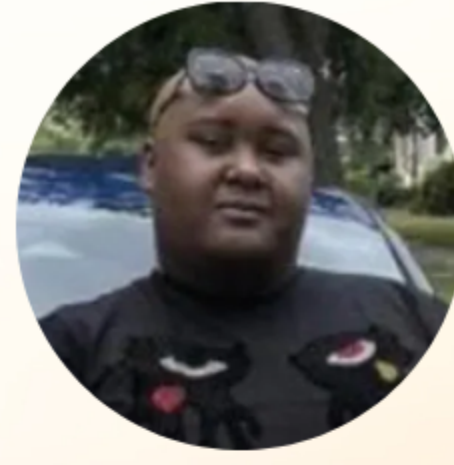
LaKendra Andrews



London Price



Lisa Love



Dominic Dupree



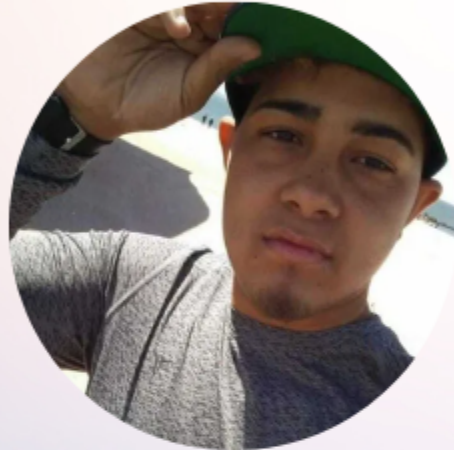
A'nee Johnson



Sherlyn Marjorie



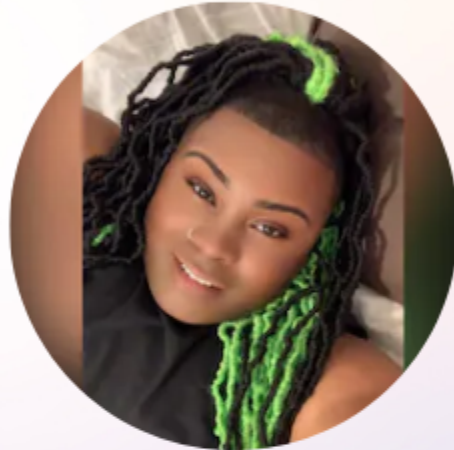
Chyna Long



Luis Angel Diaz Castro



YOKO



Thomas 'Tom-Tom' Robertson



DéVonnie J'Rae Johnson



Camdyn Rider



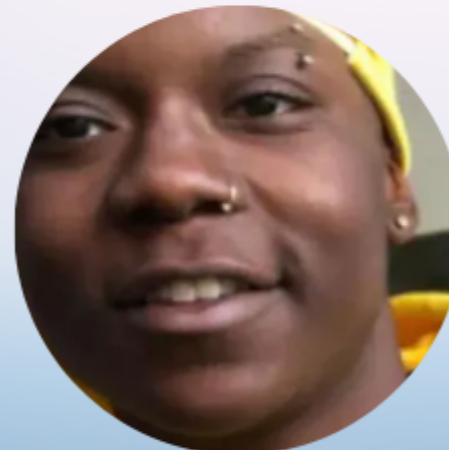
Jacob Williamson



Chanell Perez Ortiz



Ashia Davis



Banko Brown



Koko Da Doll



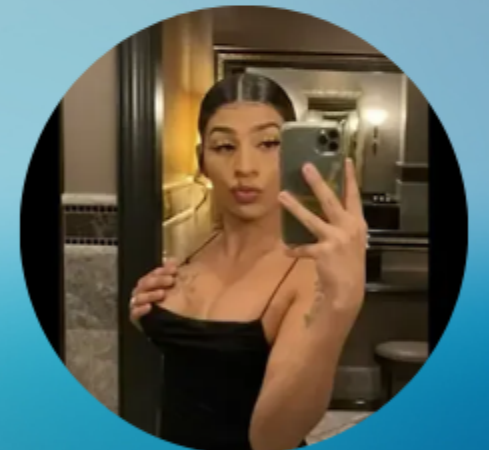
Ashley Burton



Ta'Siyah Woodland



Chashay Ashanti Henderson



Maria Jose Rivera Rivera



Zachee Imanitwitaho



Unique Banks



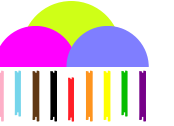
Kc Johnson



Jasmine "Star" Mack

LOVE CONQUERS HATE

You can learn more about those lost to fatal violence this year (that we know of) by visiting the [Human Rights Campaign](#).



THE HOLIDAY BLUES

NOT JUST A CHRIS ISAAK SONG

by Marianne Moez Ozmun-Wells (she/her), DOL

The holidays, especially the winter holidays, can be socially and emotionally taxing under the best of circumstances. Navigating family dynamics, unrealistic pressures to spend, and diminishing daylight hours all contribute to lower moods and higher stress.

If we consider the added complexities and risks of being LGBTQIA2S+ including, but hardly limited to: Separation from family and faith communities, internalized conflict over the meaning and significance of holidays and traditions, gathering spaces that center alcohol consumption, internalized homo and transphobia, and the weariness of perpetually being “othered,” it is not surprising that we are at greater risk for addiction and mental illness.

It is so important to hear and internalize the truth that it is NOT our identities which predispose us to increased risk for mental health and substance use disorders; it is the historical and ongoing alienation, discrimination, harassment, and societally sanctioned abuse which set us up for disproportionate substance use and mental health disorders.

We have all heard the grim statistics, that we are more likely to have substance abuse problems, more likely to have anxiety and depression and suicidal ideation. You can read all the newest stats and facts from the [2023 SAMHSA report](#). We also know that hate against us has increased exponentially in the past couple of years.

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SUMH Times is a periodic column addressing Substance Use and Mental Health (SUMH) in the LGBTQIA2S+ community, because we could use a little help SUMHtimes.



So here is the good news. Y'all, we are resilient AF! We don't just bounce back, we bounce back fabulously with a full suite of power tools, dripping décor, and glitter! So much glitter.

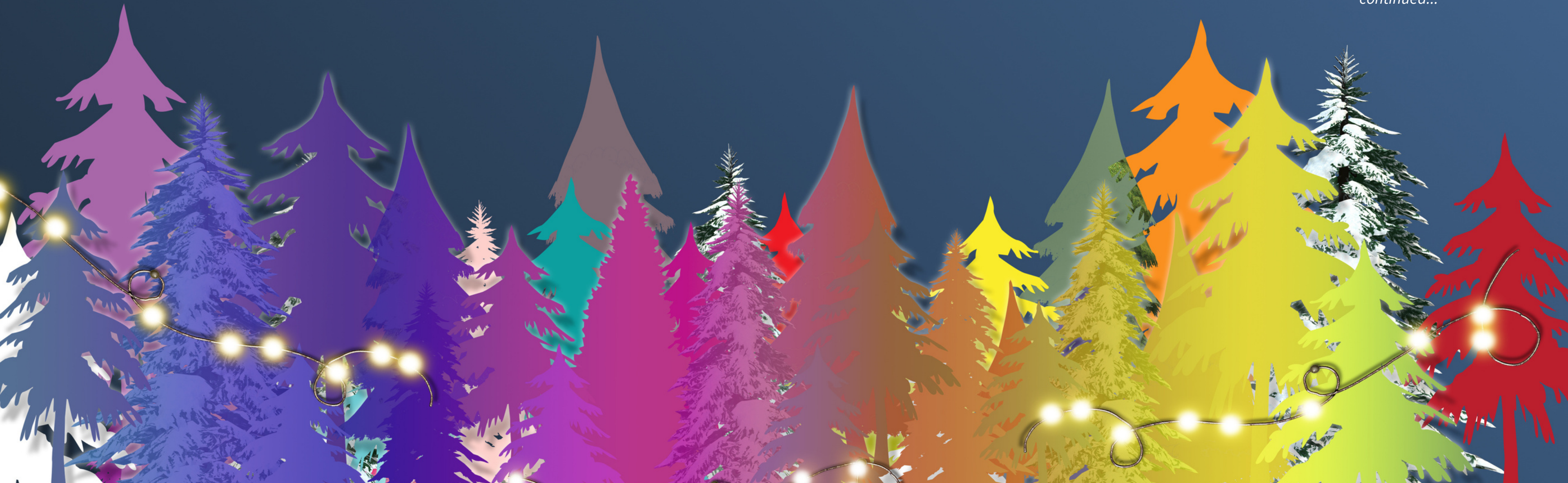
And while we can work silk suspenders or a feather boa for days, the accessories don't have to be a mask for what we are dealing with internally. There are things we can do proactively to treat ourselves and one another better than the straight/cis world has often treated us.

Here are a few ideas:

- Make new traditions. You get to decide the reason for the season and the sights, sounds, and tastes that are part of it. Claim the ones from your origins that bring you joy and scrap the rest. If your holiday is a mash up of a Kwanzaa Kinara, a new bejeweled collar for your cat, munching Lumpia, burning sage and palo santo, while Judy Garland spins on vinyl, it is perfect!

- Connect with others. One of the best ways to shift our own mood is to be of service to others. There are so many opportunities to volunteer and be in community during the winter holidays. Check out [Volunteer Match](#) - I even plugged in Omak and Forks and found opportunities from food bank work to raising puppies (squeeeeeee!).
- Become a mocktail mixologist. If you love the pomp of a well-made adult beverage but don't like the middle of the night drunk dialing your ex that comes on the heels of too much hooch; alcohol-free drinks are all the pomp with none of the payback. Check out this [page of recipes](#) - ooh that berry burlesque looks scrumptious!

continued...





- Do **something**. Sometimes we wait for the energy and motivation to call a friend, go to a movie, or just people watch from a coffee shop. The thing is that doing something is often what generates energy and motivation. We sometimes have to fight the inertia of December's Seasonal Affective Disorder in order to generate the momentum we need to reach our full measure of fabulousness.
- This one is super important: tell someone if you are not okay. Seriously! Tell SOMEONE! It is always okay to share your pain and there is a good chance others have been where you are. Call, e-mail, text, let somebody know.

We are all dealing with a lot in 2023. Some of us more than others. Chances are if you do reach out, your recipient will benefit as well. There is a story called, **The Boy, The Mole, The Fox and The Horse** by Charlie Mackesy. There is a point in the book where the boy asks the horse, "What is the bravest thing you ever said?" the horse, replied, "Help." He goes on to say that asking for help is not about giving up, it's about refusing to give up.

- This is to the rest of us. No matter how much fortitude some of us can muster, reaching out is not always possible so, it's up to community reach in. You know those RAIN members who are always there? Then suddenly they aren't. There is nothing preventing us from shooting off a teams message to say, "Hey I was just thinking about you, wanna get coffee?" A dear former colleague taught me about micro-connections, small acts that keep us tethered, if even loosely. Every now and then I will get a random gif from that friend, it might be a cat in cowboy boots, but it always makes me smile, always makes me feel thought of.

For all of us, reaching out or reaching in, find ways to connect during the holidays and all the days.

Here are a few resources to help with the holiday blues, anxiety, depression, or substance use that you might be concerned about.

- Our [Employee Assistance Program](#)
- SAMHSA Help line 1-800-662-HELP (4357)
- NAMI's HelpLine at 800-950-NAMI (800-950-6264) or text "NAMI" to 62640.
- If you are in crisis right now, call or text 988



RAIN
MEMBER
SPOTLIGHT

TESSA MOE

SHE/HER
DOC

Interview by Kristen Jenkins (she/her)



Hi Tessa! First off tell us a little about yourself, what you do for the state and how long have you been involved in RAIN?

I live out on the Olympic Peninsula with my wife (who also happens to be my best friend), our four children, three cats, two reptiles, and our ankle-biting wiener dog.

Currently, I am the Administrative Assistant to the Captain at Clallam Bay Corrections Center. Before I was moved into this position, I was a Corrections Officer here for almost a decade.

I have been involved in RAIN for the last two years now. I joined as soon as I found out about BRG's and had moved to an office position.

What keeps you coming back to RAIN meetings and why do you think it's important?

The people keep me coming back. This group has some of the most genuine, down-to-earth, at times hilarious, and always welcoming people I have ever met. That is not to discount the work that RAIN does to bring equity and equality not only to LGBTQIA2S+ State Employees but also to Washingtonians at large. RAIN's dedication to making our state a safer, accepting, and equitable place where everyone can be their authentic self and bring that authentic self to work is inspiring. You rock, RAIN!

Where did you grow up?

When I was an adolescent, most of my time was spent between Grays Harbor, WA, and being overseas at military bases in Turkey and Germany. After my Dad got out of the service, we moved from Grays Harbor to Port Orchard, and I mainly lived there until I graduated from high school.

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

My community is mainly my wife, our kids, and my sister-in-law's family. I also have a core group of Dungeons and Dragons friends. While we might give each other a hard time, we are always there for each other.

Are you more introverted or extroverted?

People might be surprised by this... But I am one hundred percent an introvert. My partner always says I am an extroverted introvert and maybe there is some truth to that, but I believe it is due to situational necessity and not necessarily by choice.

Early Bird or Night Owl?

Work requires that I get up early, but I am a total night owl! I always revert to "factory settings" of staying up to 3 or 4 am when I go on vacation.

If you could sit down with three celebrities for dinner (dead or alive) who would it be?

Patrick Stewart, Ian McKellen, and Audrey Hepburn

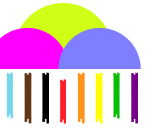
Any favorite books, TV shows, or movies right now?

TV Shows would have to be One-Piece (Live-action and Anime), Shadow and Bone, and the Wheel-of-Time.

What's something on your "bucket list" of things you want to do in life?

I want to visit several countries in Asia, Europe, and the Middle East. Not only for the culture and historical sightseeing but, also to experience their cuisine and music. Both food and music are a huge part of my life.

continued...



Do you have an inspirational quote you turn to a lot?
“It is possible to commit no mistakes and still lose. That is not a weakness. That is life.”

Patrick Stewart as Captain Jean-Luc Picard – Star Trek TNG

While some may not view this as inspirational, I have turned to this quote a lot during various hard times in my life. Remembering that a situation turning out badly or for the worse isn’t a reflection on me, that it just happens sometimes, has been a powerful motivator and has picked me up several times.

What message do you have for the people reading this?
You are important. You are unique. You are special. You are worth it. We often devalue ourselves, sell ourselves short, or put our needs on the back burner. You are more impactful and more important than you may ever know. Just by being your authentic self, you make this world a better place, you have a positive impact on everyone who knows you.

**Last question -
what meme
sums you up in a
nutshell?**



VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITY

courtesy of DOH

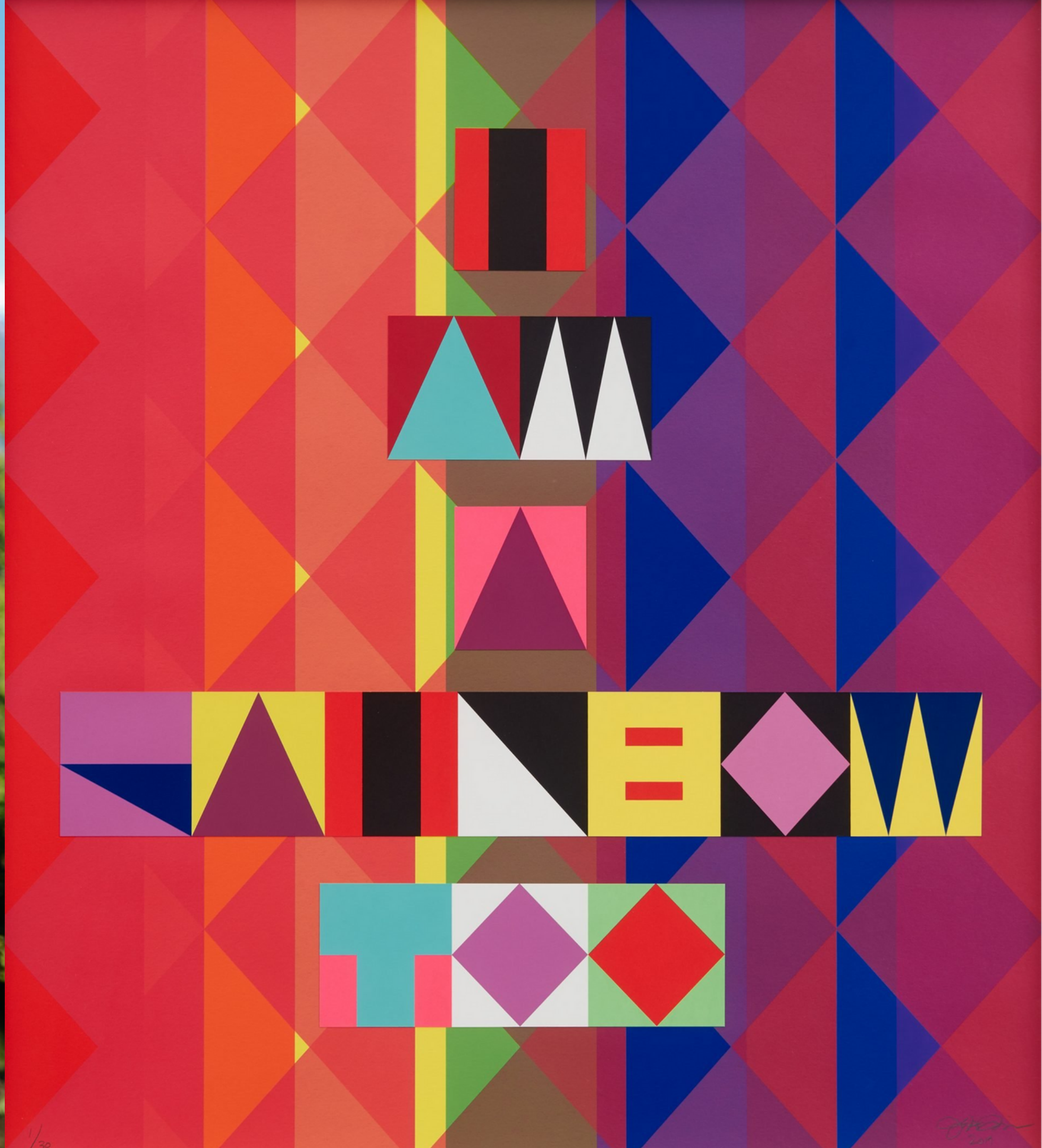
All Kids Win (AKW) is a [nonprofit organization](#) that provides weekend food for students in Thurston County. Volunteer “parties” to bag food can be arranged for any weekday evening or available Saturday at their office near the Lacey Timberland Library on College Street in Lacey.

For folks who would like to help but are unable to bag food, there are other opportunities to help such as creating labels with motivational sayings to be adhered to sandwich sized zip bags or notes of encouragement. These items can be created wherever the volunteer may be and mailed to the AKW office.

Please contact Deanna East, NTEF Executive Director at 360-628-3281 for more information.



RAIN



rain

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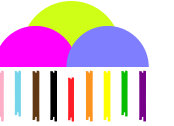
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THE RAINBOW ALLIANCE AND
INCLUSION NETWORK (RAIN) IS AN

LGBTQ+ & 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.

Visit our website

LGBTQ.wa.gov/RAIN

Questions or feedback

RAIN@ofm.wa.gov

