SAGECollab

Celebrating Excellence, Advancing Equity

Impact Stories from the 2026 SAGECollab Partner of the Year Award







sage

Advocacy & Services for LGBTQ+ Elders

We refuse to be invisible®

About SAGE

Founded in 1978, **SAGE** is the world's largest and oldest organization dedicated to improving the lives of lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, and questioning (LGBTQ+) elders.



In partnership with its constituents and allies, SAGE works to achieve a high quality of life for LGBTQ+ elders, supports and advocates for their rights, fosters a greater understanding of aging in all communities, and promotes positive images of LGBTQ+ life in later years.

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LGBTQ+ Aging Today

LGBTQ+ elders are a diverse and resilient population whose lives have been shaped by both challenges and community. While many have built strong support networks and played important roles in advancing equality, they continue to face unique barriers as they age, including discrimination, social isolation, and difficulty accessing affirming services and care.

Recent findings from SAGE's State of LGBTQ+ Aging Survey highlight these ongoing concerns. Nearly half of LGBTQ+ elders reported experiencing social isolation, 83% are concerned about their financial security, and more than 9 in 10 are concerned about finding affordable and LGBTQ+-inclusive long-term care. These challenges are often even greater for transgender and nonbinary elders, LGBTQ+ older people of color, rural elders, people with disabilities, and those with lower incomes. SAGE works to address these gaps through advocacy, education, and programs like SAGECollab that connect LGBTQ+ elders to affirming services, resources, and community support where they live.



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SAGECollab:
A National Network Rooted in Local Community

Launched in 2023, SAGECollab is SAGE's national network of local organizations working together to support LGBTQ+ elders. The network includes LGBTQ+ community centers, HIV service organizations, pride organizations, grassroots groups, and other trusted organizations already serving elders in their communities.

Rather than building SAGE Centers in every community, SAGECollab strengthens the organizations that are already doing this work. By providing education, resources, technical assistance, and opportunities for connection, SAGE helps local partners expand their impact while connecting LGBTQ+ elders to affirming services and community where they live.

Today, SAGECollab includes 127 partner organizations across 42 states, Washington, DC, and Puerto Rico. Together, these partners help LGBTQ+ elders find affirming services, build community, access resources, and connect with support close to home.

This approach allows SAGE to extend its impact far beyond New York and South Florida while ensuring that elders can access trusted, culturally responsive support in their own communities.

127
Partners

42
States
+ DC & PR



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SAGECollab is our throughline to LGBTQ+ elders across the country; our direct connection to the realities, needs, and daily experiences of elders in their own communities. Through ongoing conversations, our partners share what they are seeing on the ground: emerging challenges, gaps in services, shifting local conditions, and the creative solutions they are developing in real time. This grassroots insight shapes the resources we create for LGBTQ+ elders and the people who care for them, ensuring that SAGE's national tools are always grounded in lived experience.

When asked how LGBTQ+ elders have benefited from their organization's participation in SAGECollab, one partner shared:

"SAGECollab membership has provided a robust vehicle (tools, partnerships et al) to help more LGBTQ+ older Oregonians be seen, represented and served by Oregon's aging services infrastructure, helping us fulfill our mission to improve the wellbeing of older LGBTQIA2S+ Oregonians through research, education and advocacy efforts."

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Partner feedback also helps SAGE respond quickly to emerging needs. When several SAGECollab partners raised concerns about how a federal government shutdown was affecting elders' access to benefits, food assistance, and other essential services, SAGE rapidly developed the *Navigating Limited Access to Benefits* guide to help LGBTQ+ elders navigate disruptions safely and confidently.

SAGECollab also helps ensure that LGBTQ+ elders can find support close to home. When an elder contacted the National Resource Center on LGBTQ+ Aging seeking local resources, SAGE was able to connect them with trusted SAGECollab partners in California. The elder later shared:

"The world can feel like a lonely place. Thank you for helping me be connected with others who share in my concerns and who are working to make isolation and loneliness decrease one person at a time by building community and forming connections."

Their words capture the heart of SAGECollab: connecting LGBTQ+ elders to community, reducing isolation, and ensuring that no one has to navigate aging alone.



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SAGECollab Partner of the Year Award

To celebrate the extraordinary work, SAGE established the SAGECollab Partner of the Year Award in 2026. The award recognizes organizations that exemplify the spirit of collaboration, innovation, and community impact that defines the SAGECollab network. It honors partners that go above and beyond to address the needs of LGBTQ+ elders while strengthening the communities they serve.

The award is named in memory of *Reynaldo Mireles, Jr.*, a beloved advocate, connector, and coalition builder whose vision helped shape SAGECollab. Reynaldo believed that lasting impact comes from working together and that strong partnerships create stronger communities. His commitment to collaboration, mentorship, and equity continues to inspire SAGECollab's work today.

This year's nine nominees reflect the diversity and strength of the SAGECollab network. From intergenerational programs and community centers to housing initiatives and statewide advocacy efforts, each organization demonstrates innovative approaches to supporting LGBTQ+ older people. Together, they represent the power of local leadership and collective action to improve the lives of our elders across the country.

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AZALEA

Location: Arizona

A**ZALEA** (Arizona Alliance for LGBTQ2S+ Equity in Aging) is helping build a more inclusive and connected future for LGBTQ2S+ elders across Arizona. Since its founding in 2023, the organization has grown into a statewide network that brings together older adults, service providers, advocates, researchers, and community organizations from urban, rural, and tribal communities. Through forums, community conversations, and partnerships, AZALEA elevates the voices of LGBTQ2S+ elders while addressing issues such as social isolation, access to affirming services, and inclusion across aging systems.

At the heart of AZALEA's work is creating meaningful opportunities for connection. Regular gatherings, virtual events, and intergenerational programs help LGBTQ+ older people build relationships, share experiences, and strengthen community ties. Through statewide surveys, community-led initiatives, and collaborative partnerships, AZALEA is also helping identify needs, shape solutions, and improve support systems for LGBTQ2S+ elders.

By fostering collaboration and amplifying elder voices, AZALEA is helping create communities and networks where LGBTQ2S+ elders can age with dignity, pride, and a sense of belonging.

Learn more at https://www.azaleainitiative.org/

AZALEA
Arizona Alliance for
LGBTQ2S+ Equity in Aging

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Golden Rainbows of Illinois South

Location: Southern Illinois

Golden Rainbows of Illinois South (GRIS) helps LGBTQ+ older adults and people aging with HIV in Southern Illinois stay connected, informed, and supported. Serving adults age 50 and older, the organization offers social, educational, and support programs that reduce isolation and promote well-being. Through its Get Up and Get Out (GUGO) program, participants engage in activities such as swimming, kayaking, book discussions, and social gatherings that foster friendship, connection, and belonging.

GRIS also provides educational programs on topics including healthcare, housing, legal planning, and healthy aging, while community events and aging summits connect participants to valuable information and resources. An emergency assistance program provides support during times of hardship, and the organization works with local and statewide partners to advance equity for LGBTQ+ elders throughout the region. Through advocacy, collaboration, education, and social connection, GRIS helps older adults age authentically and live healthier, more connected lives.

Learn more at https://www.goldenrainbows.org/



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The LGBTQ Community Center of the Desert

Location: Palm Springs, CA

For many LGBTQ+ elders in California's Coachella Valley, the LGBTQ Community Center of the Desert is more than a service provider. It is a trusted community hub that helps people stay connected, supported, and engaged as they age. Through its Community Health Worker (CHW) Connector Initiative, The Center helps elders navigate aging-related challenges, including access to in-home care, Medicare counseling, estate planning resources, caregiver support, bereavement services, and monthly food boxes. Ongoing staff and volunteer training helps ensure all elders, including transgender and nonbinary older people, are treated with dignity, respect, and understanding.

The Center also creates meaningful opportunities for friendship, wellness, and purpose through card groups, fitness classes, walking programs, peer support groups, and a weekly phone check-in program that helps older adults stay socially connected and supported. These activities foster healthy aging, connection, and a sense of belonging. Whether through supportive services, educational programs, or community gatherings, The Center helps LGBTQ+ elders feel valued, connected, and empowered to build healthier, more fulfilling lives.

Learn more at https://thecentercv.org/

the center
LGBTQ Community Center of the Desert

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Mary's House for Older Adults

Location: Washington, D.C.

Mary's House for Older Adults in Washington, DC, provides affordable, affirming housing designed specifically for LGBTQ+ and same-gender-loving (SGL) elders. Founded by Dr. Imani Woody, the organization was created to address the need for safe, culturally responsive housing where LGBTQ+ and SGL older people can live openly and authentically. The community includes 15 affordable studios and shared spaces that foster friendship, belonging, and connection.

More than housing, Mary's House offers a supportive environment where residents can participate in activities, access resources, and remain engaged through gathering areas, a library, fitness room, and gardens. Its impact also extends beyond the building through the Villages initiative, which supports LGBTQ+ elders aging in place across the Washington, DC, region. By centering inclusion, community, and belonging, Mary's House has become a national model for LGBTQ+ affirming elder housing and helps ensure no one ages alone.

Learn more at https://www.maryshousedc.org/

MARY'S HOUSE
FOR OLDER ADULTS, INC.
Creating LGBTQ/SGL friendly Residences and Environments

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MiGen

Location: Michigan

MiGen helps LGBTQ+ elders across Michigan access the support, services, and community they need to age with dignity and confidence. Through statewide virtual services and in-person programs, MiGen connects elders to resources related to housing, caregiving, healthcare, benefits, long-term care, transportation, food access, and technology support. At the same time, social gatherings, arts and cultural programs, community events, and intergenerational initiatives create opportunities for LGBTQ+ older people to build relationships, celebrate their identities, and strengthen their sense of belonging.

MiGen also works to strengthen systems of support for LGBTQ+ elders across the state. Through partnerships, training, and collaboration with aging service providers and LGBTQ+ organizations, the organization helps create more welcoming and affirming services. Signature events such as Rainbow Resilience: An Ageless Fashion Affair elevate the visibility and stories of LGBTQ+ elders while challenging stereotypes about aging. By expanding access to resources, fostering connection, and advancing inclusion, MiGen is helping LGBTQ+ elders remain connected, supported, and empowered as they age.

Learn more at https://migenconnect.org/

MiGen
Michigan LGBTQ+ Elders Network

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Perfect Pair, Pairs with Pride

Location: The Midwest

Through its Pairs with Pride program, Perfect Pair helps LGBTQ+ elders build meaningful relationships, strengthen community connections, and reduce social isolation. The program pairs LGBTQ+ elders with college students for one-on-one friendships that foster connection, learning, and mutual support across generations. Pairs are thoughtfully matched based on shared experiences, interests, and identities, with an intentional focus on serving LGBTQ+ elders from diverse backgrounds, including transgender and gender-diverse elders and elders of color. To support participation, the program offers both virtual and in-person options and helps cover transportation and activity costs.

Rather than focusing solely on loneliness, Pairs with Pride centers joy, belonging, and community. Participants connect through activities such as arts and cultural events, advocacy opportunities, and shared discussions that help elders celebrate their identities and reconnect with their communities. Participants report feeling more connected, valued, and understood, while also building greater appreciation across generations. As the program expands nationwide, it continues to demonstrate how intergenerational relationships can strengthen community, improve well-being, and ensure LGBTQ+ older people remain connected, supported, and celebrated.

Learn more at www.perfectpair.org/pairs-with-pride

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Rainbow Connections ATX

Location: Austin, TX

Rainbow Connections ATX (RCATX), a program of Family Eldercare, helps LGBTQ+ elders in the Austin area stay connected, supported, and engaged in their communities. Through free and accessible programming, the organization creates welcoming spaces where elders can build relationships, celebrate their identities, and age with dignity. Social and educational opportunities, including book clubs, museum visits, caregiver support groups, potlucks, walking groups, and virtual programs, are designed to reduce isolation and meet a range of transportation, mobility, and communication needs.

A hallmark of RCATX's work is the Legends of Pride program, which honors LGBTQ+ community members age 60 and older during the Austin Pride Parade and highlights their resilience, leadership, and contributions. The organization also connects elders to advocacy opportunities and resources that support their well-being. Looking ahead, Family Eldercare is developing Iris Gardens, an LGBTQ+-affirming affordable housing community expected to open in 2027. Together, these efforts help LGBTQ+ elders in Central Texas build community, reduce isolation, and thrive as their authentic selves.

Learn more at https://www.rainbowconnectionsatx.org/

Rainbow
Connections ATX
family ELDERCARE

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Waves Ahead, Corp.

Location: Puerto Rico

Since 2017, Waves Ahead has helped LGBTQ+ older people in Puerto Rico and across the Caribbean access affirming services, build community, and age in environments that affirm and support them. Waves Ahead supports LGBTQ+ elders facing barriers such as discrimination, social isolation, poverty, housing insecurity, and limited access to culturally responsive care. Through behavioral health services, HIV support, suicide prevention, trauma-informed counseling, and community outreach, Waves Ahead connects our elders to critical resources that promote well-being and improve quality of life.

Waves Ahead also creates opportunities for connection and visibility through cultural events, wellness activities, arts programs, Pride celebrations, community forums, and intergenerational gatherings. Beyond direct services, Waves Ahead works with healthcare providers, universities, community organizations, and public agencies to strengthen support systems for LGBTQ+ elders and advance inclusive policies and practices. Its development of three housing initiatives further expands access to safe, affordable, and affirming housing, helping LGBTQ+ older people throughout Puerto Rico and the Caribbean live healthier, safer, and more connected lives.

Learn more at https://www.wavesahead.org/

WAVES AHEAD
PUERTO RICO

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Southern Arizona Senior Pride: Inaugural SAGECollab Partner of the Year

Location: Tucson, AZ

We are proud to recognize Southern Arizona Senior Pride as the inaugural recipient of the SAGECollab Partner of the Year Award! This recognition is named in memory of Reynaldo Mireles, Jr., a dedicated advocate and coalition builder who helped pioneer SAGECollab and honors organizations that embody collaboration, mentorship, and a deep commitment to advancing equity for LGBTQ+ elders.

Founded in 2004 as part of Tucson's LGBTQ community center, Wingspan, Southern Arizona Senior Pride began as a space for social connection. After Wingspan's closure in 2014, community volunteers sustained the work, and in 2020, the organization became an independent nonprofit. Today, it is a leader in LGBTQ+ aging services in Southern Arizona. Supported by a dedicated staff and more than 80 volunteers, the organization offers programs that reduce isolation, improve health outcomes, and help older LGBTQ+ people age with dignity.

At the heart of its impact is the Community Cares Program, which provided more than 3,300 services in 2025 alone from transportation and home support to friendly check-ins and caregiver relief. The program's emergency assistance fund has also helped participants remain safely in their homes and access urgent care. Alongside this, Senior Pride offers peer support, advance care planning, provider training, and advocacy—all grounded in a community-centered approach.

SOUTHERN ARIZONA SENIOR PRIDE

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Southern Arizona Senior Pride: Inaugural SAGECollab Partner of the Year

Location: Tucson

LGBTQ+ elders in Southern Arizona face many of the same challenges as their peers—housing, healthcare, and financial stability—alongside heightened risks of isolation, discrimination, and lack of affirming services. Through strong local partnerships and engagement with SAGECollab, Southern Arizona Senior Pride continues to meet these needs with culturally responsive care while strengthening a broader network of support.

Looking ahead, the organization is focused on expanding its programs, growing its Community Cares reach, and hosting its annual Aging with Pride conference. As we celebrate this recognition, we also honor Reynaldo Mireles, Jr.'s legacy—reflected in the collaboration and care that define both SAGECollab and Southern Arizona Senior Pride's work to ensure LGBTQ+ elders can age with connection, dignity, and respect.

Learn more about Southern Arizona Senior Pride at https://soazseniorpride.org/



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Thank You

Thank you to our 127 Partners for all you do day in and day out to support LGBTQ+ elders.

For more information, visit https://SAGEUSA.org

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