

CITY OF WEST HOLLYWOOD

World AIDS Day

2021

In honor of the 33rd Anniversary of World AIDS Day.



WORLD AIDS DAY 2021 PROGRAM

CITY COUNCIL REMARKS

LOS ANGELES CITY CONTROLLER

RON GALPERIN

Special Guest Speaker

BRIAN SONIA-WALLACE

City Poet Laureate &

writers from the APLA Writer's Group

AARON CELIOUS, Ph.D.

West Hollywood HIV Zero Initiative Update

PAUL STARKE WARRIOR AWARDS

Presented by West Hollywood City Council

Mayor Lauren Meister

Mayor Pro Tempore Sepi Shyne

Councilmember John D'Amico

Councilmember John Erickson

Councilmember Lindsey Horvath



UNAIDS

This year marks the 33rd anniversary of World AIDS Day which is held every year on December 1. World AIDS Day presents an opportunity for people worldwide to unite in the fight against HIV, show their support for people living with HIV, and to remember those who died.

This year's theme for World AIDS Day is "End inequalities. End AIDS. End pandemics." December 1, 2021, will bring together people from around the world to demonstrate international solidarity in the face of the dual pandemics of HIV and COVID-19. Learn more at unaids.org

RON GALPERIN

LOS ANGELES CITY CONTROLLER



Los Angeles City Controller Ron Galperin serves as the elected watchdog for L.A.'s taxpayers. He oversees more than 160 employees conducting independent audits, managing the City's payroll and disbursements, preparing reports on the City's finances, pursuing waste and fraud, providing information about the City's finances and operations online, and focusing on modernization, management and metrics.

Galperin launched ControlPanel.LA, an open data portal featuring the City's checkbook, details on the goods and services the City buys, assets and liabilities, employee compensation, operating indicators and more. Under Galperin's leadership, the Controller's office has issued audits focused on improving the efficiency and accountability of City government and on delivering quality City services.

Galperin brings more than 20 years of experience as a transactional and litigation attorney and small business owner. He received his J.D. from Loyola Law School in LA and his undergraduate degree from Washington University in St. Louis.



PAUL ANDREW STARKE WARRIOR AWARDS

Warrior Awards are given to employees or volunteers of local agencies who have done outstanding work in providing prevention, education and/or direct HIV/AIDS services to West Hollywood community members. The awardees represent agencies that are funded by the City of West Hollywood and/or are part of the West Hollywood HIV & Substance Use Services Providers Consortium.

Paul Starke was a former member of the Consortium and an employee of Being Alive who died on November 26, 2001. Paul worked in Social Services throughout his life, helping at-risk youth, individuals with substance abuse problems, and people with HIV/AIDS. He was an important part of Being Alive (an organization by and for people with HIV/AIDS) as a member, President of the Board of Directors, and finally as a staff member (West Hollywood Coordinator and Prevention Coordinator). Paul was also very involved in the medical updates sponsored by Being Alive, AIDS Project Los Angeles and the Positive Images Consortium.



Mallery Jenna Robinson LA County HIV Commissioner

Mallery Jenna Robinson is an AfroCarribbean Transwoman and healthcare advocate who currently serves on the City's Transgender Advisory Board. From 2019-2021, she worked for the Transgender Health Department of the LGBTQ Center in Long Beach, providing engagement and service navigation to the community. During her tenure, Mallery implemented several successful programs such as: Rack and Roll (a clothes closet), Snack Shack (food pantry), TRANSport (an essential items delivery service,) and events such as, Come OUT and Pose, and ValenTrans Day. She has conducted several Transgender Empathy Trainings to Sony PlayStation, and Long Beach Vocal Rehab, to list a few. Mallery has also co-hosted several LGBTQ virtual award shows such as Unique Woman's Coalition Our Honors Award and spoken publicly at The Long Beach Transgender Day of Remembrance and the ALL Black Lives Matter march in Los Angeles.



Brian Sonia-Wallace City Poet Laureate

Brian Sonia-Wallace is the 4th Poet Laureate of the City of West Hollywood, the latest in a string of unlikely poetic residencies ranging from Amtrak to Dollar Shave Club to the Mall of America. Since 2012, he has written poems for thousands of strangers based on their stories, which he chronicled in his 2020 book, "*The Poetry of Strangers*." Brian's work has been published in Rolling Stone, The Guardian, LitHub, Poets.org, and more.

Brian is a 2021 Laureate Fellow for the Academy of American Poets for his LGBTQ+ organizing, leading a writers' workshop for APLA Health and curating Pride Poets, a WeHo initiative connecting over 100 LGBTQ+ poets to write poems for 1000+ members of the public at Pride festivals. Pride Poets is a project of Brian's custom poetry business, RENT Poet, which was featured on NPR's *How I Built This* and counts Google and YouTube among its client. Its motto is, "everyone needs a poem."

Brian teaches at UCLA Writers' Extension and with Get Lit- Words Ignite, which brings poetry to youth across LA County. He holds an MA in Sustainable Development from the University of St. Andrews in Scotland. More at briansoniawallace.com / @rentpoet



Darrin Aiken **APLA Health**

Darrin Aiken was a steadfast warrior in the fight against HIV/AIDS for many years and changed the lives of so many people. He was dedicated to helping whomever he possibly could, engaging people from all walks of life.

Darrin began working at APLA Health when it was known as AIDS Project Los Angeles back in 2006. Darrin worked in various programs throughout his time at APLA Health including the Program Coordinator for the African American Gay Men's Health Initiative and the Program Coordinator for Many Men, Many Voices. Most recently, he was a Study Coordinator in APLA Health's Community-Based Research program and the West Hollywood Homeless Outreach Specialist. He also presided over the SPA 6 HIV Network.

Darrin was well known for his incredible smile and big heart. His passion and gift for working with clients and connecting with those most in need of support and services demonstrated Darrin's commitment to his community. This past summer, Darrin unexpectedly passed away and while we grieve his passing, his light remains in our hearts and is a perfect example of a life lived well.



Jamie Baker **Being Alive LA**

Newly-minted Executive Director, Jamie Baker, is described as having a genuine affinity for people and a commitment for compassionate and empathetic care. He is in the *people business* - his staff, his interns and volunteers, his clients, and the others working in our field feel this daily. His warmth and humor welcome you. The ability to listen, and not merely hear, is validating and despite his workload, Jamie is always available to help with the workload of others.

His mind invents ways to keep people connected, even when outer forces threaten to deliver opposing outcomes. During the pandemic, Jamie created virtual field trips for clients to ease the isolation and fill the gaps left by the lockdown. Many clients have reported to staff that they weren't afraid last year with the pandemic, lockdown, and tragic loss of Garry Bowie because they knew Being Alive was in good hands with Jamie at the helm.

Whether he's mindful of the value and importance of our syringe servicing program in reducing new HIV infections, the vital necessity of mental health programs and inclusive support groups to our HIV+ population, or planning for a Being Alive LA when HIV has a cure, Jamie understands the need for the agency.



Derald Hunter **The Los Angeles LGBT Center**

Derald Hunter has been an exemplary staff member of the LA LGBT Center for nine years, and whether it be his role as a Security Officer, Health Educator, Outreach Specialist, or Program Coordinator, Derald's dedication to HIV/STI prevention work and creating a safe and empowering environment for those we serve has never wavered.

In 2020, Derald was deservedly promoted to Program Coordinator of the WeHoLife Program. As a champion of sex positivity, Derald worked with the expanding network of condom distribution partners to grow overall distribution in WeHo by 13%.

In the midst of the pandemic, Derald helped the Program increase and improve its online presence to engage the target audience in an entertaining, sex/body-positive, harm reduction manner, while providing essential prevention education information.

Currently, as a part of the Community Engagement Team, Derald often assists our Sexual Health and Education Program Staff with HIV/STI testing and counseling, issuing information learned through direct client contact to shape his outreach strategies.



Desiree Jade Sol **AIDS Health Foundation**

Desiree Jade Sol, a WeHo resident and former WeHo Public Safety Commissioner, is a dedicated volunteer to so many organizations and groups in the City of West Hollywood.

Desi has volunteered in countless community events within a variety of Public Health Division programs at AIDS Healthcare Foundation (AHF), like The Mobile Testing Unit on Santa Monica Blvd. and she has promoted Out of the Closet testing activations throughout the years. Desiree has been apart of AHF's latest affinity group called *FLUX*, which aims to raise the profile of the Trans and Gender Non-Binary community by leveraging social events, creating safe spaces and innovative advocacy. She has been an advocate for safer sex practices for years leading up to her involvement with AHF.

In 2010, Desiree was cast in the lead role of Maria, in the original musical, "Making Paradise - the West Hollywood Musical." Desi, "the one with the bunny ears," was a staple for decades, cheerleading with the West Hollywood Cheerleaders and West Hollywood Elite Cheerleaders, which both provide support for the LGBT community with fundraising, entertainment and positive energy!



Triana Maldonado **Friends Research Institute**

Triana Maldonado is not only a valuable asset to Friends Community Center (FCC), but also to the populations we at FCC serve. She works hard every single day to make sure participants are listened to, validated, and informed of their options regarding their health and wellness. In addition to lending extra care and attention to our participants, she works tirelessly to make sure all the programs at FCC are running efficiently - finding areas of improvement and maintaining excellent communication with both staff and participants.

One of Triana's most important contributions to FCC, and the City of West Hollywood and Los Angeles, has been her advocacy efforts for transgender women. Triana stays up to date on all the latest news and policies regarding transgender rights and wellness. She utilizes this information to an admirable degree to brainstorm ways to implement new measures to make sure transgender individuals are taken care of through any means possible.

Triana's determination to improve the quality of life for those she works with is truly inspiring, and she is, without doubt, a fantastic role model to those she serves. Her values and determination shine through her work.



Anil Patel **Alliance for Housing and Healing**

For the past 13 years, Anil has been an integral part of the annual Best in Drag Show fundraiser. Not only has Anil (in the guise of his drag persona Chanelta) been part of the show, he has also consistently sold more tickets to the event than anyone else. Each year he has worked tirelessly to ensure a sold-out theater for the event.

In addition, Anil has said "yes" to every request for help, no matter what the task. Each year, he assists with stuffing envelopes to send to potential supporters. He helps raise awareness for Best in Drag Show and Alliance for Housing and Healing by doing calendar photo shoots and appearing in Pride Parades.

He is a fierce and fabulous brand ambassador for the show and is its most vocal cheerleader.

The impact he has had on the event, and subsequently on the Alliance clients who benefit from the funds raised, cannot be overstated. Over the years Anil has dedicated countless hours to the Best in Drag Show event, and he's not finished yet!



The City of West Hollywood is currently seeking feedback about stigma experienced as a result of sexual orientation, gender identity, or HIV status. The City's Social Services Division has launched a short survey and the goal of the survey is to understand how stigma impacts access to care and overall health and wellness. Community members, regardless of HIV status, are encouraged to provide feedback.

You can scan the QR code below to access the survey, or visit online at: <https://www.weho.org/services/social-services/hiv-aids-resources>.

William Alexis Rogel "Memo" The C.I.T.Y. x1 Youth Group

William has been an active member of the LGBT Youth Community for over 6 years now.

At the age of 19, William contracted HIV and made it his sole mission and passion to service his fellow peers by educating them about the risks of HIV. His journey led him to a number of community organizations, including The C.I.T.Y. x1 Youth Group and Reach LA, where he contributes many of his skills through prevention outreach, peer counseling, and the production of youth events.

As a Peer Health Worker and Recruiter, William has helped oversee clinic activities like Gaymer Night, volunteer functions at The Faultline Bar, and the annual Ovahnness Ball. He has also volunteered his time with the Los Angeles Regional Food Bank, which helps feed the local homeless population, Veterans, schools, shelters, and low income families in need.

His remarkable dedication, energy, and passion for community service have won him both the admiration and respect of the youth which he serves.

