



Coalition of Rainbow Alliances Monthly Meeting June 9, 2024

Members Present (Zoom)

Brian Sylvester President
Sheila Morris Treasurer
Lori Carlsen Secretary
Shelley Vaughn Member at Large
Bert Morton
Candice Clotfelter

Lisa Cotton, Vice President
Jenna Broom, Member at Large
Jim Barr, Ex-officio
Lee Korty
Rex Schadow
Harry Carlsen

Meeting called to order at 4:09 pm

Approval of minutes from May 12, 2024. Lisa made a motion to accept the minutes, Rex seconded the motion. Motion carried.

Treasurers Report- Brian gave the Treasurers report for Sheila until we can get her up and running. See printed reports. Jenna made the motion to accept the financial reports and file for audit, Lisa seconded. Motion carried.

Executive Board Meeting- Will be held Monday June 10, 2024

Committee Reports

Membership- Brian reported that we received one volunteer form online that has been responded to. Another membership orientation was conducted on May 15th at 7:00 p.m. and we had two people attend. PrideLinc has contacted CORAL to see if we would be able to speak to one of their meetings in July. Brian will be delivering the membership orientation to them at that time.

Social Media - The Facebook group had 60 posts this month which is an increase of 167% and were viewed by 2,901, another increase of 116%. We have 20 new members in the group, bringing the total to 850. The top

posts were the Springfield Pridefest after posting with 393 views, Pride Night post with 308 views, and Logan County Pridefest with 266 views. The Facebook page had 41 posts this month and was viewed by 2,000, an increase of 13%. We have 10 new members bringing the total to 922. The top posts were Harvey Milk Day with 593, the Pride Flags with 425, and Pansexual Day with 299.

The Instagram account stands with six members but was viewed by 115 users, an increase of 2%. The website had 182 visitors, an increase of 40% and 255 sessions with an increase of 46%.

Activities- Lisa reported we will be doing a meet and greet at Whimsey Tea 5:30 to 7:00pm in July. Lisa will talk with Gordon to set up date. Juneteenth Celebration at Comer Cox Park June 15th set up will be at 8:30am and Parade line up will be at 9:30am at the MLK Drive and Brown St. Lee will man the booth in the morning on Saturday. Harry and Lori will do the booth on Sunday.

Finance- Brian reported that he and Sheila Morris will be setting up some time for her to take over as Treasurer and have a committee meeting. Since the 2024 budget goals were approved at the last meeting, Brian did some catching up on some of the categories and reported that our approved donation figures for the year are already \$1,000.00 over what we had forecast.

Partners & Supporters- Brian reported that the first meeting of the ISBE will be June 13th to kick off the project to create a LGBTQ+ education curriculum for the high school level. One issue that has already been brought to light in our conversations is how to deal with the preconceived ideology towards the LGBTQ community with students who have been raised to believe discriminatory notions towards that community.

Illinois Outreach Network has created an online network for LGBTQ organizations to post events and activities for all to see. Brian registered CORAL on the network and will make this part of the social media committee's responsibility to post information.

Katarina Francesca of Maribis of Springfield reached out to CORAL on May 15th to inquire on how they might make a donation. She was not forthcoming with how much that donation might be but Brian responded that we would appreciate any amount they would be willing to give.

Lisa is working with Lou Bart from the YMCA for an anniversary event regarding what happened last summer.

Lisa made a motion to accept the committee reports, Jenna seconded. Motion carried.

Old Business:

Springfield Pridefest- There was a great turnout for the event 23,000 to 27,000 people attended. Increased number of young people, as well as families with young kids this year. CORAL gave out a lot of tote bags, jelly bracelets, buttons, and fliers for the Pride Game with the Lucky Horseshoes.

BLM Car Procession- Rob Weis attended the event they had about 40 cars show up.

AgeLinc Anniversary Event- Brian reported that CORAL had a good turnout for the event, held at the Crown Plaza in the Ruby Room. John Spears, a grant writer for AgeLinc, and his partner sat with CORAL and it would be great if we could have them join CORAL for more events in the future.

Fifth Street Annual Meeting- The event took place May 29th at Erin's Pavilion at Southwind Park. Brian reported that board member, David Yankee's husband, Michael, was recognized for his contributions to providing much needed materials and home goods to the residences that Fifth Street supports for transitional living. Brian's, board president, husband, Rob Weis, was elected the new president of Fifth Street.

Pride & Faith ALUUC- The event, co-sponsored by CORAL and O&A United, took place May 30th at ALUCC to bring together the faith and LGBTQ communities to address faith in the Pride month. The panel speakers were Jon Borman, Tim Haworth, and Shatriya Smith, each providing a different perspective on the topic. After the panelists spoke, there was a Q&A session with the attendees.

Jacksonville Pridefest- Brian reported CORAL attended for the first time Jacksonville Pridefest's second Pride on June 1st at Twisted Tree Music Hall in Jacksonville. The event had double the number of vendors as last year but still had only seven present, most of which CORAL knew. The venue is great for

a Pridefest with space for inside and outside activities. At the end of the event, a conversation was held with Blaize Stewart, the organizer, who asked if we could spread the word for next year's event as he is hoping it will grow.

Pride Night- Brian reported that CORAL's third Pride Night with the Lucky Horseshoes may have been a success for CORAL but, sadly, the Shoes lost that evening. It was well attended by CORAL members though as we had a good turnout in the bleachers that night as the rain subsided and it cooled off. Brian told a story of one of the beer servers walking over to the CORAL table and requesting a Pride flag. She stated that when she was in college at Blackburn in Carlinville in 1973, she had a good friend come out to her that she had remained friends with. She wanted to take a picture of herself waving the flag and send it to her in Chicago. This is the reason CORAL does what it does – making an impact on those around us to extend their acceptance of others.

Logan County Pride- CORAL, once again, was present for another Logan County Pridefest. While Sam Downes may have thought they could have done better, it had double the vendors and attendees than last year and appeared to be a great success. The one thing Brian noticed more than ever was the attendees seemed much more comfortable wearing their identities opening and comfortably than years past and that was great to see.

Martha Miller Book Signing- She had a great turnout for the event. She sold between 25-30 books.

CORAL Sweatshirts- Brian states we will revisit the topic in the fall.

Annual Reports- Annual reports were turned into Brian (see attached).

Pride Picnic- The following items will be brought by: Lee- Broccoli Salad and tea, Lori- potato salad, Brian- Chicken, Art and Terry- Cole Slaw, Lisa- Ice and Water, Amanda- Lemonade

Broadgauge Pridefest- Brian reported that CORAL will be attending Broadgauge's Pridefest on the second floor of the restaurant from 8:00 p.m. to 11:00 p.m. on June 22nd. Adam Galassi is the coordinator of the event and has told us that we can set up any time before 8:00. Set up will be at 7:15pm.

SAA Paint the Street- will be held on July 29, 2024 from 11am to 7pm CORAL will participate and do a 6"x 6" square. Brian requested assistance with creating a design for our space for the event. SAA will provide the paint and paintbrushes so that will be covered by them.

New Business

PrideLinc Presentation- Brian stated that Scott Linde of PrideLinc reached out to him to see if CORAL could do a presentation to the group sometime in July on a Thursday afternoon. Brian thought conducting the membership orientation might be a good idea with them as Scott could think of only one attendee that is part of CORAL at this time.

OUTsafe Directive- The project with AgeLinc is almost complete and the meetings will be ending soon.

ByLaws Committee Meeting- Brian requested that the Bylaws committee have a meeting to evaluate and update the entire bylaws. There has been only one change made to them since they were created in 2020 and much has happened with CORAL since that time that we need to address. Candice and Lisa will join the committee. Brian will set up a meeting to be held in July.

Rural Harmony- Brian requested someone take over the position that he has held with the advisory board for the past several years as his term will be coming to an end in the near future. Lisa has stated she would like to join the board and Rex stated he would like to be considered if Lisa can't.

LevitAMP Concert- Brian reported that CORAL will be guest hosting the concert on July 18th which will feature the People Brothers Band, which is rhythm and blues.

ACLU Springfield Race Riot of 1908 Community Meeting- Brian reported the ACLU will be having a community meeting, open to everyone, on June 10th, this Monday, from 6:00 to 7:30 p.m. at the Union Baptist Church, located at 1405 E Monroe Street.

Habitat Raise the Roof Event with Jim Leech. Jim reported that Habitat's Raise the Roof event is coming up on November 1st. Sponsorship levels are as follows: Audience- \$1,000.00, Game Show- \$750.00, Brought to you by- \$500.00, Participation- \$300.00, Friend of- \$100.00. Rex made a motion to do a \$500.00 sponsorship, Jim proposed amending the sponsorship to \$750.00. Lori seconded the motion. Motion carried.

Trivia Night in Williamsville- July 12, 2024 at 6pm. Logan Pride would like to share it. Lisa will check.

APL food bank- Lisa made a proposal that CORAL give \$200.00 to the APL food bank, Jenna seconded. Motion carried

Decatur Pride People and Pet Food Drive- will be held July 13, 2024 at the Walmart on the north end of Decatur in the parking lot at 10:30am. Event will also be held on September 14, 2024 at the same location and time.

Harry made a motion to adjourn, Rex seconded. Motion carried. Adjourned at 5:26pm

Annual Reports:

The Ritz... Together Building Community March 25, 2023

By Bert Morton

The Coalition of Rainbow Alliances hosted its eighth annual gala fundraiser at the Crowne Plaza Hotel. The event attracted sponsorship from 33 businesses and organizations, and was supported by 75 advertisers.

The committee of eleven CORAL members was guided by Co-chairs April Poole and Bert Morton, and began planning and preparation six months before the event. Music for dining and dancing was provided by John Owens of Fun Factory DJs. Event Photographer was Grace Tierney. Table Centerpieces and Stage Decorations were created and provided by Pole Barn Chic. During the evening, partygoers met and socialized around a giant puzzle of colorful diamonds created with pieces from each guest.

After dinner, introductions were made and several thank-yous were made to CORAL's partners. Certificates of Appreciation were presented to Heartland MCC for its years of support for CORAL's programs and activities, and The Acorn Equality Fund, for its generosity with grants to Coral and continuing Scholarship program for LGBTQIA students and allies. PFLAG parent and CORAL friend from its inception, David Clodfelter was honored for his work with CORAL's projects, and his documentation of CORAL history through his photographs.

During ceremonies, the Ruth Ellis Extraordinary Service Award was presented to Illinois Governor J.B. Pritzker and accepted for the Governor by State of Illinois Department of Human Rights Director, James Bennett. CORAL's annual Community Service Awards were bestowed upon Penny Powell, for her accomplishments as Executive Director of Fifth Street Renaissance and honored John Kerstein, for his 40-year support of the LGBTQIA community and his philanthropy to multiple organizations, including CORAL.

Ritz 2023 set a new record, with 45 tables and 345 persons attending.

The Ritz... Celebrating Every Journey March 23, 2024

By Bert Morton

The Coalition of Rainbow Alliances hosted its ninth annual gala fundraiser at the Crowne Plaza Hotel. The event attracted sponsorship from 40 businesses and organizations, and was supported by 78 advertisers.

The committee of fourteen CORAL members was guided by Co-chairs Lori Carlsen, April Poole and Bert Morton, and began planning and preparation six months before the event. Music for dining and dancing was provided Steve Burwell of DJ For Sale. Event Photographer was Jeremie Bailey Photography. Table Centerpieces were created by the committee members from materials provided by Pole Barn Chic. During the evening, partygoers met and socialized around a giant Luggage Cart that was decorated with travel stickers which were personalized by each guest.

After dinner, introductions were made and a program featuring a local event that made national headlines was presented. The Springfield YMCA was recognized for its continuing strong stance supporting access to its facilities and activities to everyone. Certificates of Appreciation were presented to the seven founding member churches of Open and Affirming United for their work to unite the Springfield faith community to publicly support the LGBTQIA+ community.

During the program, CORAL's annual Community Service Awards were bestowed upon Candice Clotfelter and Christina Newton for their courage and their strong, but gracious response to the attempt to intimidate them, simply for their presence at the YMCA. Brian Sylvester was honored for his years of service to the Coalition of Rainbow Alliances and the organizational skills that benefit the many groups he has helped to work together.

Ritz 2024 set a new record, with 52 tables and 408 persons attending.

Jaycee's Holiday Parade

By Candice Clotfelter

On Dec 2nd 2023 CORAL walked in the Jaycees Holiday Lights Parade. We were in the next to last spot just in front of Santa. 6 of us walked in the parade carrying the CORAL banner. We walked west on Jefferson, South on 5th St to Monroe, and East on Monroe to 6th St. We tossed candy to the crowds along the way. Bert Morton, April Poole, Rob Weis, Rex Schadow, Gary Moore and Candice Clotfelter walked representing CORAL.

Blue Cross/Blue Shield Food Drive

By April Poole

CORAL partnered with Blue Cross/Blue Shield of Illinois to provide 200 produce boxes to the Springfield Community on Saturday, August 5, 2023. During the food drive, we recounted the boxes and discovered that BC/BS provided 300 boxes.

This event was held at Caritas Bingo Hall as we partnered with Ward 4 Alderman Larry Rockford. The Rockford family and friends provided help keeping the cars in line and moving forward. This location was chosen due to the closeness to Wards 3 through Wards 5. Alderwoman Lakeisha Purchase also participated and delivered several produce boxes to senior shut-ins within her ward.

Trivia Nights

By April Poole

Crime Stoppers Trivia Night

CORAL purchased a table at the Springfield Crime Stopper's Trivia Night on Saturday, January 27, 2024. The event was held at the BOS Center and is the largest trivia night held throughout the nation. The cost was \$150 and those CORAL members who participated paid \$15 each to play. CORAL members had a great time and was doing well until the 8th round and then fell to the bottom 10 teams. This fundraiser for Crimestoppers of Sangamon and Menard Counties is their biggest fundraiser to provide funds to obtain anonymous tips about crimes from the community.

Parkway Christian Church Trivia Night

CORAL purchased a table at the Parkway Christian Church Trivia Night fundraiser on Friday, March 15. The cost of the table was \$60 with CORAL members paying \$10 each to play. The theme of the trivia night was St. Patrick's Day. CORAL had the next to smallest team but placed second out of 16 teams. The CORAL members had a great time and reminded other attendees of the upcoming Ritz, Pride Night and Pride Picnic.

Jr. Blues Hockey Night

By April Poole

CORAL attended the Springfield Junior Blues hockey game at Nelson Center on Saturday, February 24. Five CORAL members brought family and friends to the games. Approximately 8 to 10 people attended the game. Those members and guests enjoyed learning about hockey and how fast the game is played. The Jr Blues won the game.

Phoenix Center Harm Reduction Kits

By Jenna Broom

Harm Reduction Kits

August 22, 2023

Phoenix Center

10 members helped assemble harm reduction kits for community use.

Springfield Jaycees Celebrity Bartending

By Jenna Broom

Springfield Jaycees Celebrity Bartending

September 17, 2023

Clique

Two members helped bartend for tips and 10-12 members socialized and enjoyed a Sunday Funday!

APL

By Lisa Cotton

We went in Sept. there were 9 people that attended including 2 new people. We got a lot done for them. As a reminder everyone to save plastic jugs, paper towel cardboard tubes, toilet paper tubes and caps from medicine bottles. You can drop these off anytime if you don't want to keep them to next event.

In April we went again to APL to volunteer. We got a lot done since we had not been there since Sept.

We are averaging about 10 people for these events.

Logan County Pridefest

By Lisa Cotton

This was the first time having their Pridefest downtown in the square. There was a great turn out for vendors (which had double from the previous year). There were more people attending then last year. People liked having more space to walk around.

CORAL Picnic

By Lisa Cotton

There was about 75 people in attendance. Everyone had a goodtime, we received a lot of positive feedback. Rob stated that 5th Street Renaissance thanks everyone for helping assemble safe sex kits for them.

Thanksgiving Dinner

By Lisa Cotton

Was well attended, the weather helped. We had around 75 people show up. There was plenty of food. Lots of turkey, ham, and many different desserts. We did collect can goods to be donated. Everyone had a goodtime.

LevitAMP Concert with the Kings and the Associates

By Brian Sylvester

CORAL guest hosted the LevitAMP concert featuring the Kings and the Associates on July 13, 2023 from 6:00 to 9:00 p.m. at the Y-block of downtown Springfield. As this was the same day as the visit with the Freedom Caucus and their rally against the YMCA for their support of Trans-members, CORAL chose to make the event a supportive activity for those wishing to show respect towards the Trans-community.

The evening drew a record crowd of 1,800 attendees for the night and WAND Channel 20 was there to interview Brian Sylvester, Candice Clotfelter, and Christina Newton on the counter views of the protest that was held earlier.

Out of Darkness Walk with AFSP

By Brian Sylvester

For the second year, CORAL walked with others in support of the American Foundation for Suicide Prevention at the UIS Campus at 2:00 p.m. on October 14th. CORAL had seven members join the walk in support of suicide prevention.

Jacksonville Pridefest

By Brian Sylvester

CORAL was happy to join Jacksonville Pride for their second annual Pridefest on June 1st 2024 from Noon to 5:00 p.m. CORAL made a sponsorship donation of \$500.00 in support of their efforts, which Jacksonville Pride donates all funds to a worthy LGBTQ organization each year. For 2024, all funds were being given to Equality Illinois.

There were seven other vendors at the event with three food trucks. Blaize Stewart, the organizer, was happy to see CORAL there and requested that we spread the news for future Pridefests at the venue as he is hoping to see the event grow over the upcoming years.

Campout for Homeless Veterans, November 4th, 2023

By Rob Weis

CORAL provided a gold star sponsorship through a generous donation of \$500.00 and a quid pro quo arrangement from the 2023 Ritz. The arrangement included;

- Two campout sites, or one site and sponsored site for a Fifth Street Program Campout site which were not used.
- Your name, or business logo printed in all promotional material and various social media (website, Facebook).
- At the event, your name or business logo will be included on the event banner.
- You or your organization will be mentioned as a key supporter by name through public remarks at the event.
- Signage at the campsite recognizing your specific generosity.

Additionally, members of CORAL stayed to spend quality time with the campers and show their support.

2023 Juneteenth Report

By Lori Carlsen

On June 17th, 2023 CORAL participated in the Juneteenth Parade. We decorated Lori's truck. We had 8 to 10 members that walked in the parade passing out candy along the way. The parade concluded at Comer Cox Park where CORAL members enjoyed the food and festivities prior to going to our Pride Picnic. We received numerous thanks for our continued support of this important event, and plan on continuing to participate in the yearly event to show our partnership and support.

World AIDS Day Memorial Ceremony, 4:00 PM, December 1st, 2023

By Rob Weis

An initial meeting was held in mid-September. Planning committee included Teresa Silva from Phoenix Center, Rob Weis from Fifth Street Renaissance/Sara Center and CORAL, Penny Powell from Fifth Street

Renaissance/SARA Center, Bobbi Dykema from Church of the Brethren, Rex Shadow from CORAL, and April Poole from CORAL.

Event started 3:00 PM Friday, December 1st at the steps of the Abraham Lincoln Statue in front of the capitol. Roughly, 30+ people attended. The key note speaker was Dr. Sameer Vohra, Director of [Illinois Department of Public Health](#).

Other speakers included Brian Sylvester, president of CORAL; Penny Powell, executive director of Fifth Street Renaissance; and Teresa Silva of the Phoenix Center.

All of the organizations represented volunteer to support the HIV/AIDS community or provide services such as risk reduction, housing, testing, and access to care for those impacted by HIV.

Poor People's Campaign

By Rob Weis

At 11:00 AM, March 2nd, members of CORAL participated in Springfield's Poor People's Campaign march to the capitol. Members of CORAL joined 300+ individuals who convened on the Y block to march to the capitol steps. Anti-gay and Pro-Trump protestors were also present who were kept at bay by Springfield Police. Underneath the Lincoln Statue, remarks from notable dignitaries covered important perspectives on the impact of poverty on the greater community.

Agelinc 3rd Annual Mardi Gras

By Lee Korty

Agelinc held its 3rd annual Mardi Gras on February 17, 2024, at the Crown Plaza in Springfield, Illinois. CORAL was a Gold Sponsor and had purchased 2 tables (16 persons). The event lasted from 6 PM until 10 PM with dancing following a Cajun dinner and a presentation of services provided for and in conjunction with other organizations. There were roughly 400 persons that attended the event.

Acorn Equality Annual Scholarship Breakfast

By Lee Korty

Acorn Equality had its annual Scholarship breakfast at the Paradise Hotel in Peoria, Illinois on December 2, 2023. CORAL had two tables (16 persons) at the event. \$60,500 was donated to the scholarship fund for 2024. A total of \$37,000 in scholarships were awarded to 25 recipients from across the downstate area. The following towns were recognized: Dunlap, Scales Mount, Columbia, Moline, Elmwood, Downs, O'Fallon, Barry, Freeport, Herrin, Tremont, Peoria, Edwardsville, Pekin, Rantoul, Knox College, UIS, ISU, Bradley University, and Collinsville.

Reports not provided:

Decatur Pridefest
Pridefest 2024
Pride Night 2023
Pride Night 2024