



Coalition of Rainbow Alliances Monthly Meeting December 14, 2025

Members Present and on Zoom

Brian Sylvester President	Zoom	Lori Carlsen	Zoom
Lisa Cotton, Vice President	Zoom	Jim Barr	Zoom
Sheila Morris Treasurer	Zoom	Robb Weis	Zoom
Francine Turner Secretary	Zoom		
Rex Schadow Board Member	Zoom		
Lamar Walls Board Member	Zoom		
April Poole	Zoom		
Bob Immel	Zoom		

Meeting called to order at 4:05 pm

Approval of minutes from November 09,2025 Francine made a motion to accept the minutes, Lisa seconded the motion. Motion carried.

Treasurers Report- Sheila gave a verbal report. Lisa made a **motion** to accept and file for audit, Rex seconded. Motion carried.

Committee Reports

Membership Committee: Brian reported that we received one volunteer form and a conversation was held with the person. Conversations were also held with Liv and outreach to Leo and David.

Also, the board member handbook has some final touches being made and will be placed on the website hopefully by year end.

Communications Committee: Brian reported the Facebook page and group had 33 posts for the month with average viewership of 1,300. The most popular posts were the announcement of CORAL's award at the Phoenix Center Gayla with 797, the World AIDS Day announcement with 601, and the Thanksgiving Dinner

announcement with 301. There was a total of 18 new members bringing the overall total to 2,072.

The website had 274 site visits and 92 post views this month. We're still seeing most of the traffic coming direct, meaning they are using the website's address to access it, with Google coming in closely behind. The calendar and events are the most popular pages for this month. As a warning, we're seeing an uptick in traffic from the Asian countries (Singapore and China) which is out of norm. While it is not believed they can do anything with the site, they could be looking for individuals to scam through the site so please be careful if you receive any correspondence that mentions CORAL.

Activities Committee: Lisa reported that the costs and venue are being researched for a future activity at this time.

Finance Committee: Sheila reported that 3 invoices have been returned. One from Judith Barringer, one from the Illinois Department of, one from Legacy Cleaners. Lori asked Sheila to send the returned invoices to her.

Partners/Supporters Committee: Brian reported that we have received multiple thank you cards in the past month for our involvement and participation with events. Habitat for Humanity sent a thank you for our participation in their trivia event and SAA sent a thank you for our sponsorship and participation with their Art Synergy but also asked if we had any suggestions for who they might work with in next year's event. Thus far, I recommended Penny Powell of Fifth Street but are there any other nominees that we might suggest to them? Caroline Austin and Susan Phillips were recommended as possible community leader nominees.

UIS Good as Gold has begun to accept nominations for their event, which will be held on April 20th of next year and nominations are due by February 14th. Lisa will nominate CORAL for the organization award. If you think of any individuals who would be a good nominee for the lifetime award, recent years award, and youth award; let us know and Brian can email the nomination form for completion.

Lisa reported that she talked to Teresa from the Phoenix Center about collaborating on an event together.

Ritz Committee: The award winners have been chosen. 5th Street Renaissance has been invoiced. Some tables have been based on a reciprocal agreement. Three tables have been sold to Michael Johnson (1), Lee Corey (2). The Illinois Times has a contract for advertising. Darcy's Pint will be a business card. Bob Immel has purchased a half page ad with Polly Popkins for the Independent Coalition of Our Neighborhoods aka (ICON).

Someone will contact a representative for Governor Pritzker to possibly participate at Ritz Gala. Television stations WCIS and WAND will be contacted for possible news segments on the Ritz.

Brian will contact photographer Grace Tierney, who the Ritz has used in the past.

Jim will handle the information tables for the 501 C3 organizations and Lisa nailed down our declarations.

The same DJ (Jeremiah) that was used for last year's Ritz and the Barn Dance has been contacted to work on the 2026 Ritz dance.

April mentioned that Bernetta Adewine will be purchasing a Ritz table for MCC and sending final head counts in soon. Bernetta's granddaughter will be purchasing advertising for the event. Three tables will be purchased total for MCC.

Phoenix Center will purchase a one-page ad.

PDF trifolds and table seating files will be placed on Coral website for printing out.

Lisa motioned to accept the committee reports and Lori seconded the motion.

Old Business:

Wrap-Ups:

Thanksgiving Dinner: Brian stated that even though we had a bit of a 'hiccup' with the event, he thought it went very well. For those who were not there early, it appears that the event was scheduled for Sunday instead of Saturday and the building was not open or ready. Thankfully, one of the caretakers saw several people attempting to enter the pavilion and helped with getting into the building and setting up more tables. While Brian very much appreciates the assistance for

what appears to have been CORAL's error, there also needs to be some conversation held on the current conditions of the venue.

Upon entering the building, it was discovered that the ceiling in the kitchen area had collapsed due to water damage and had not been cleaned up well. The water fountains in the hallway between the bathrooms had a steady stream of water leaking out onto the floor creating some issues with foot traffic in that area of the building. And, thankfully cleaned up before most attendees arrived, there also were what appeared to be rodent droppings in the corners of the main dining area. Brian stated that in years past, Springfield Parks & Rec would send a satisfaction survey after the event but none has been received this year so far or comments would be made to suggest improvements. Brian would like to discuss the possibility of looking at new venues for future dinners.

April discussed the possibility of using First Presbyterian Church, which has been used in the past. Also, Chatham United Methodist Church, which has a full commercial kitchen, big dining room and plenty of parking.

World AIDS Day: Brian stated that the event was co-sponsored by CORAL, Phoenix Center, Fifth Street, PrideLinc, and United O&A and held at First Christian Church. While the evening was not conducive to a great turnout due to the snowy weather, there were several CORAL members present and it was very well done by those who took the podium.

First Christian Church is very close to becoming an open and affirming church and is joining the United O&A, which is why he reached out to CORAL and said they would be willing to assist with this event.

Jaycee's Parade of Lights: Brian reported that CORAL's participation in the parade was disappointing as he could only get one person to commit to be there that evening so he made the judgement call to have anyone who decided to be there to walk with Fifth Street as they, too, were having some issues with getting enough people to walk that evening. He wanted to thank Candice and April for being there that night and helping with the disbursement of candy with Fifth Street.

However, the event brought up an issue that CORAL has had in the past with these types of events that Brian wanted to discuss. CORAL is invited to many events and functions throughout the year, many of which are definitely worthy of its presence, but we then struggle to obtain members willing to be there at that time. In the future, as we discuss and decide whether CORAL will participate with upcoming events and functions, an additional question will be posed as to who is willing to assist and be present on that date. Too often, there are a select few who are always being called upon to take on these tasks and do all the work. This needs to be better spread out amongst our members so that not a small group is carrying all the weight. Brian would like to hear suggestions on how this is addressed. One alternative may be to donate money instead of walking in the event.

Transgender Day of Remembrance: Brian reported the event was co-sponsored by Phoenix Center and LLCC GSA at Lincoln Land College this year. They had a good turnout for the event and they also served refreshments after. It was nice seeing Shelly Vaughn, a past board member of CORAL, who assisted with the set up of the event for LLCC.

LGBTQ/HIV Recovery Support Group: Brian reported that we're having some participation issues with the support group and asked that anyone who knows of individuals living with HIV reach out to them to make them aware the group exists and is there for them.

Acorn Breakfast: The event was well attended and raised \$48,000 in donations for educational scholarships to students. Bert and Lee purchased two tables in the name of CORAL. An Acorn Mystery Dinner will be scheduled in April.

Coffee with a Cop: Lisa reported that the event had a good turnout. In addition to a number of police officers, Coral members Bert, Lee, Lori, Candice, April, Brendan and Bob attended. There was good networking going on that should allow for more dialogue and transparency to help the police know what is happening in the community.

New Business:

Lunar New Year's Event: Brian reported that Lingling Liu reached out to him about sponsoring their annual Lunar New Year Celebration event this year. The sponsorship levels are as follows:

Peony - \$2,000.00
Lotus - \$1,000.00
Cherry Blossom - \$500.00
Orchid - \$250.00
Bamboo - \$100.00
Chrysanthemum - \$50.00

A **motion** was made by Lori to accept the \$250 support level and seconded by Lisa.

The information was:

The Lunar New Year Planning Committee in Springfield invites you to support and participate in the 2026 Lunar New Year Celebration, a cultural event that brings together families, community members, and local organizations to honor one of Asia's most cherished traditions.

Now entering its second year, Springfield's Lunar New Year Celebration is opening sponsorship opportunities to the community for the first time. This event highlights and uplifts the cultural diversity that makes Springfield a vibrant and inclusive place to call home.

This immersive experience will feature:

- Live traditional performances such as lion dance
- A tea ceremony and interactive cultural booths
- Family friendly activities including crafts and scavenger hunts
- Authentic cuisine from local Asian food vendors
- A designated sensory friendly space to support inclusivity

Event Details

Saturday, February 7, 2026

Kidzeum of Health and Science, 412 E. Adams Street, Springfield, IL

6 PM to 8 PM

Martin Luther King Breakfast: Brian reported that Bernadette Gordon has reached out to him about CORAL's participation with the breakfast this year. Last year, we placed an ad in their program and had two tables. The event will be held **January 19th** at the Crowne Plaza. Pricing for tables of 10 is \$400.00. Ads are as follows:

Full page - \$175.00 (B/W) \$350.00 (Color)

Half page - \$125.00 (B/W) \$250.00 (Color)

Quarter - \$75.00 (B/W) \$150.00 (Color)

Card - \$50.00 (B/W) \$100 (Color)

CORAL will be sponsoring at table for this event. If 5th Street Renaissance buys half a table, then CORAL may sponsor the other half of another table.

Motion made by Lori to purchase a half page color ad and sponsor one and a half tables.

Motion was seconded by Rex.

Community Engagement Session: Brian reported that Lisa was contacted by Molly Lamb, who is working for the City of Springfield to address racism by creating a group tentatively called the "Community and Police Partnership." Fifteen different local organizations, including CORAL, have been invited to join this group and will be meeting for the first time on January 24th at the BOS Center at 8:30 a.m. for a conversation on how this partnership group will develop. The discussion will include how policing impacts the community and how to enhance communication, trust, and collaboration. This will be a private meeting for only those who have been invited and key individuals have already been either contacted and/or selected to represent CORAL and the LGBTQ community for this conversation.

Julie Koon: Brian relayed the sad news that Julie Koon lost her battle to cancer on 11/25/25. For those who may not know of Julie, she was a board member at large with CORAL several years ago and was the lead member to commence the history videos and the creation of the membership committee.

Grace Lutheran Church Presentation: Brian reported that JB George reached out to him about holding an educational conversation with their study group to discuss CORAL and what we do. He will be presenting to them on January 18th at 10:30 a.m.

Announcements:

5th Street Renaissance: Rob thanked CORAL members for participating in the popcorn fundraiser and the Camp Out for Veterans.

5th Street Renaissance: Penny Powell's Surprise Drive Thru fundraiser is to be held on Friday, Dec 26th from 4p-6p. Sponsorships are \$250.00. Volunteer opportunities are available to work half hour shifts to help collect food and furniture donations. Checks may be given for donations.

April made a **motion** CORAL to contribute \$250 sponsorship level and Rex seconded it.

Black History Ball: February 21 - 5th Street Renaissance and Coral may go in on table together.

Phoenix Trivia Night 2026: CORAL is not sponsoring a table but Lisa has registered to have one, tickets can be bought thru Lisa.

Acknowledgment: A special thanks to Olive Kennedy for being the CORAL representative to deliver holiday meals to the Phoenix Center this year.

End of Meeting:

Lisa Cotton made a **motion** to adjourn, it was seconded by Rex Schadow.

