



## **Coalition of Rainbow Alliances Monthly Meeting August 10,2025**

### **Members Present (Zoom)**

Brian Sylvester President  
Lisa Cotton, Vice President  
Sheila Morris Treasurer  
Lori Carlsen Secretary  
David Yankee Board Member  
Rex Schadow Board Member  
Jim Barr  
Brendan Brown (AgeLinc)

Candice Clotfelter  
Lou Monk  
Harry Carlsen  
Sam Forrestier  
Francis Turner  
Mike Johnson  
Brad Moss

Meeting called to order at 4:01 pm

Approval of minutes from July 13,2025 Lisa made a motion to accept the minutes, Rex seconded the motion. Motion carried.

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

### **Committee Reports**

**Membership-** Brian spoke with three Facebook followers this month: Asif stated that his work offers time off for volunteer opportunities and was hoping CORAL might be a source for him to take advantage of it. Marcus is hoping to get more involved in the future. Houston is interested but is concentrating his efforts on another area currently and may seek CORAL's assistance for that soon.

**Social Media-** Brian reported that there were three blogs this month – one was for the Paint the Street event and two “What’s Happening?” articles. The latter may become a regular posting in the months to follow. The Facebook group had 29 posts, the page had 15 posts as did Instagram. The most popular posts for the month the “What’s Happening” post with 645, the Barn Dance announcement with 302, and the Ally appreciation post with 200. We have 12 new followers for

the group page, bringing the total to 943 and 9 new followers for the page bringing the total to 1,051. The webpage had 206 visitors this month with 24 of them coming in from Missouri (Thank you Lou & Francine). The most popular medium has been direct and Facebook, but we saw a 51 come in via Google and there were 11 referrals from the Phoenix Center as well.

**Activities-** Lisa reported she is currently working on some events. Candice will be doing an activity at the APL making enrichment puzzles for the dogs and cats.

**Finance-** Sheila reported Dells Popcorn Shop will be working with CORAL. They will provide popcorn that will need to be picked up in Zion. Lisa will pick it up every 2 weeks for 2 months. Dells will provide CORAL with the tax information etc.

**Partners & Supporters-** Brian reported that CORAL was contacted by Sarah Mellor, of The Immigration Project, in Normal, Illinois about their preparations for Welcome Week on September 12th through the 21st . They would like CORAL to co-host an educational event with an attorney who will be discussing LGBTQ immigration, such as causes and trends, the effects of the current administration, naturalization options, and the challenges faced by those going through the process. They are not asking for any funding for this event but would like CORAL to reach out to their membership base for involvement.

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

### **Old Business/Event Wrap-Ups:**

**Lucky Horseshoes Community Night-** was rained out.

**Getting to Zero-** Brian thanked Rex and Lisa for joining him at the Phoenix Center on August 4th to hear Meg McElroy speak about the Getting to Zero project. Brian was happy that he got to meet Antonio Elizondo from the Pritzker Family Foundation who came down from Chicago for the Summer tour and got another opportunity to discuss the work that CORAL is doing with PrideLinc with the HIV support groups.

**Urban LGBTQ at Replay-** Brian stated that he did not attend the event but his husband, Rob, did. They did have a good turnout for it and Houston Beverly, who put the event together, was pleased with his first outing. While the event had previously been planned to act as a fundraiser for the future Black Pridefest,

Houston has stepped down from that function and will continue to plan LGBTQ events specifically for the BIPOC community moving forward.

**PrideLinc HIV Support Group-** Brian reminded members that CORAL will be co-hosting the PrideLinc HIV support groups the third Tuesday of every month beginning September 16th at AgeLinc from 6:00 to 7:00 p.m. Rex and Brian will be joining Brendan in conducting these groups. The meetings have been announced not only by AgeLinc but by CORAL as well.

**SAA Art Synergy-**Brian reported that he and the artist, Donet, spent several hours this past Saturday selecting the glass for each of the 125 pieces that will represent the stain glass that will be auctioned off at the Art Synergy event. Brian also stated that he had an opportunity to see how the pieces are cut and buffed before being foiled to complete the final product. The piece will have more color than he had previously thought as it will include glass in hues of champaign, teal, purples, and blues; along with several clear and translucent patterns and textures. Brian said that Donet shared with him that her artwork in last year's auction went for \$1,650.00 so she is hoping for a higher price outcome in this year's auction. For those interested in attending the event, the tickets are \$75.00 and you can obtain them online currently.

**Decatur Pridefest-** Jim reported the event will be held on September 13, 2025 from 11am to 6pm at Fairview Park in Decatur. It will be a family friendly event. There will be an Adult Drag Show after the conclusion of Pridefest at the park. Sheila has taken care of the forms.

**Heritage Behavioral Health-** Jim reported they will be having a Rock & Run event on September 7, 2025 in Rochester Illinois.

**Farm Progress Show-** Jim reported the show will be held on August 26<sup>th</sup>-28<sup>th</sup> at Richland College in Decatur.

**Row for Dough-** Rex stated that he and Sam participated, the event was 3-4 hours long. CORAL was mentioned throughout the day.

### **New Business**

**Springfield Pridefest-** Brian gave an update on the latest of the new group, Springfield Pridefest. In last month's meeting, he stated that it had been decided that this group would be taking over the Pridefest event in Springfield and would be reaching out to other groups in the area to provide assistance with it in the upcoming years. However, there has begun to be some pushback with the

Phoenix Center on this and it may remain under them instead. Brian will try to stay on top of this for future reports.

**Equality Illinois Community Advisory Board-** Brian reported that he was contacted by Mike Ziri of Equality Illinois about becoming a member of the Community Advisory Group. This is an advisory group that helps with their policy positions and initiatives for the work they will pursue. If anyone is interested in being considered for this group, there is an online application that can be completed to express your interest.

**SIU School of Medicine-AWIMS-** Brian stated that he was contacted by Erica Austin of SIU School of Medicine about their upcoming 3<sup>rd</sup> annual “Colors of Health” Fashion Show, led by the Alliance of Women in Science & Medicine. AWIMS is a dedicated network committed to advancing gender equity and empowering women in science and medicine, both within SIU and the communities we serve.

Colors of Health is a vibrant and creative event designed to raise awareness about critical health topics such as cancer, mental health, gun violence, and more. Each year, they select and honor a community organization for its impactful work and donate all event proceeds to support their mission and they are thrilled to announce that this year’s honoree is the Springfield Coalition of Rainbow Alliances (CORAL), in recognition of your unwavering commitment to uplifting and advocating for the LGBTQ+ community in Central Illinois.

This year’s show is shaping up to be our most exciting yet! We are delighted to feature a dynamic opening and intermission performance by Mahogany Knight and Friends, with Mahogany Knight also serving as our fabulous M.C. for the evening. The event will be held on September 5th at the Hoogland with the reception beginning at 5:00 and the show at 6:00. Tickets are \$20.00 and can be purchased with the QR code online or at the following:

[www.highmarksce.com/siumed/Registration/activityRegistrationSignin?plannerID=3031](http://www.highmarksce.com/siumed/Registration/activityRegistrationSignin?plannerID=3031)

**APL-** Candice will be overseeing the activity on September 20, 2025 from 9am to 12pm, making feeding enrichment puzzles for the dogs and cats.

**CORAL Barn Dance-** Lisa reported there will be 3 sponsorship levels:

\$500.00- Owner of CORAL the Ranch- includes: Name on the Banner, and 5 free tickets.

\$400.00- Ranch Foreperson- includes: Name on the Banner, and 4 free tickets.

\$300.00- Cow Herder- includes: Name on the Banner, and 3 free tickets.

Tickets will be available online. Cost of tickets will be \$30.00 each, and there is a surcharge for paying online.

Rex made a motion to adjourn, Lisa seconded, Motion carried, meeting adjourned at 4:50 pm.