



Supporting the LGBTQ+ Elder Initiative at the William Way Community Center

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COMMUNITY PARTNER

The William Way Community Center (WWCC) provides LGBTQ+ affirming resources and care including social programming, advocacy, health care referrals, and community archives for the Philadelphia metro area.

BACKGROUND/CONTEXT

The WWCC houses the Elder Initiative (EI), a housing equity and social engagement focused program serving community members 65 years or older. This program aims to provide support for aging LGBTQ+ community members including storytelling and oral history projects, programming for members that face barriers to social engagement, nutritional services, and supportive housing through the John C. Anderson Apartments (JCAA).

TEAM'S EXPERIENCE

This experience allowed me to work in a variety of capacities including both individual and group focused work. It also allowed me to gain an understanding for the myriad of resources that exist at the local, state, and national level to support the needs of LGBTQ+ older adults.

ACCOMPLISHMENTS/ CHALLENGES/ JOYS

- Supporting the EI Food and Nutrition Program
- Facilitating an art/zine making workshop at the JCAA
- Learning about LGBTQ+ affirming housing and meeting with local housing organizations and working groups

REFLECTION

Working at the WWCC this summer provided me with an invaluable insight into the joys and challenges of servicing a diverse population at the intersection of aging and LGBTQ+ identity. While my work at this site encompassed many projects, I was most inspired by the legacy projects housed through the EI which aim to preserve oral histories of older LGBTQ+ community members and celebrating the shared struggles and triumphs of these individuals and groups through a variety of creative means. I hope to imbue my future social work practice with these practices and have gained an increasing appreciation for the potential of art and social practice to support community health.