

Letter from Executive Director  
Karyn Skultety, PhD

## Dear Openhouse Family, Friends and Community,

It is with great sadness that I am writing to let you know I have made the decision to step down from my role as the Executive Director of Openhouse. My family and I have decided that we will be moving to Colorado, and my last day as Executive Director will be May 31, 2021.

In many ways, this is the most difficult decision I have ever made. I have loved and cherished the opportunity to serve LGBTQ+ seniors as the Executive Director of Openhouse. I have been honored to work alongside and witness the accomplishments of our staff. They have shown me and our city, over and over again, how dedication and heart-centered work can truly change the world. I have been fortunate to have been supported by a Board of Directors who have done what few boards manage to do: to hold and ensure organizational priorities are met, while truly stepping up to hold me, both as a leader and a person. And of course, I have been overwhelmed by the love and lessons that have been offered by the LGBTQ+ seniors who every day make our communities stronger. Truly, I have loved this job and feel so lucky for how the Openhouse family has become part of my chosen family.

While my love of Openhouse and connection to our community make this a difficult decision, the need to prioritize who I am outside of being an Executive Director and my family makes the decision clear. I love being your Executive Director. I also love - and am called at this time by - the person I am outside of my work: a wife, mother, daughter, sister and LGBTQ+ chosen family member.

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## FEBRUARY 2021

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*“Truly, I have loved this job and feel so lucky for how the Openhouse family has become part of my chosen family.”*

# Announcements

## Tell Us About Your COVID-19 Experience!

The San Francisco LGBTQ Aging Research Partnership (LGBTQ-ARP) is gathering information from older LGBTQ+ adults (age 50+) living in the Bay Area about health challenges and access to health services and programs during the COVID-19 pandemic. This information will help to better understand the current unmet needs of older LGBTQ+ adults and work to develop solutions.

Take our brief survey by February 21 at <http://lgbtqseniorsurvey.com>

To complete the survey by phone, leave a message at (415) 935-3978. We will call you back to complete the survey by phone!

*The LGBTQ-ARP is funded by the San Francisco Department of Disability and Aging Services, Horizons Foundation and the Bob Ross Foundation.*

## Need Help with Food Support, Grocery Shopping, or Other Errands?

During these difficult times, our caring, compassionate volunteers are standing by to help you get what you need:

- Weekly Home Delivered Grocery program for those who cook
- Guidance to other food assistance programs in San Francisco
- Help buying groceries, pet food, medications, and other supplies

If you or someone you know could benefit from these services, contact Kevin at [koneal@openhousesf.org](mailto:koneal@openhousesf.org) or (628) 263-3262



## MISCI creative engagement program



Program begins February 20



The MISCI Creative Engagement Program is looking for community members interested in developing **a creative project with younger people over the course of 3 months**. This version of the program will keep everyone safe during the pandemic by holding the program over the phone or, if you prefer, video chat.

Openhouse is partnered with UCSF Global Brain Health Institute to offer this program and to study its impact on participants' health and well-being. No background in the arts is necessary, only a willingness to connect and create with younger people!

To learn more, contact Penn at  
(415) 969-6907 or [pweldon@openhousesf.org](mailto:pweldon@openhousesf.org)

# New Programs

## Dr. Louise Aronson Talks COVID-19 and LGBTQ Older Adults

Tuesday, February 23, 2-3:30PM

Co-sponsored with Shanti Project

Dr. Louise Aronson, leading geriatrician, professor of medicine at UCSF, and author of the Pulitzer Prize Finalist *Elderhood*, will be bringing her expertise to the Openhouse community through a series of talks!



The first talk will focus on COVID-19 and the older adult community. Come learn about the ins and outs of this pandemic and get some of your questions answered.

We'd love to hear from you! What are some health-related topics you'd be interested in learning about? Some examples include: mobility and fall prevention, medication management, and emergency preparedness.

Register with Ariel at [ariel@openhouse-sf.org](mailto:ariel@openhouse-sf.org) or (415) 503-4180.

## Self-Compassion and Belonging

Wednesdays, 1-2:30PM, February 17 through April 7

How do we create belonging while we are physically isolated? Physical isolation, due to COVID-19 or not, can be stressful and can erode our optimism, energy, and enjoyment of life. The good news is resiliency (the ability to renew ourselves during and after challenging times) is a skill that can be learned and practiced.



Join new and old friends in a supportive space to share your experiences of isolation and belonging. We'll discuss what keeps you going and restores a sense of meaning and purpose, and learn some new tools for creating resiliency. Facilitator, Molly Reno, a somatic life coach and Emotional Brain Training Provider, has been leading Self Compassion support groups at Openhouse since 2012.

This is a drop-in group.

Questions? Contact Ariel at [ariel@openhouse-sf.org](mailto:ariel@openhouse-sf.org), (415) 503-4180

**Register** to Faire at [faire@openhouse-sf.org](mailto:faire@openhouse-sf.org), (415) 699-2244

# Upcoming Programs

## Beginning Japanese

Mondays, 3:30-5PM, March 1 through May 24

Openhouse is happy to announce that Dan Stewart, our resident instructor of Japanese, will be presenting a series of beginner level classes via Zoom.

Dan brings to his craft a rich background of having lived in Japan, along with his teaching position at Cabrillo College. In addition to teaching the language, he will incorporate insights into the history and culture of Japan. Dan's expertise in the Japanese language and his lighthearted approach to the subject matter have ranked his classes among the most popular here at Openhouse.

**Register** with Armando at [armando@openhouse-sf.org](mailto:armando@openhouse-sf.org) or (415) 728-0194.



## Cooking Matters: flavorful healthy cooking comes to Openhouse

Thursdays, 11AM-12:30PM

Classes offered in 4-week sessions

In partnership with 18 Reasons, a non-profit community cooking school, Openhouse welcomes you to join a series of cooking classes from the comfort of your home. Each class will deal with simple flavorful food with an extra added "healthy" touch. Two days before each class, you will receive a recipe along with the necessary ingredients delivered to your home, all free of charge.

Classes are held every Thursday and are offered in 4-week sessions. Once you have chosen a session, we ask that you agree to attend all four sessions. Please note that attendance will be limited to 15 participants.

Sign up for one of the following sessions:

- Thursdays, March 18 - April 8
- Thursdays, April 22 - May 13
- Thursdays, May 27 - June 17

**Register** with Armando at [armando@openhouse-sf.org](mailto:armando@openhouse-sf.org) or (415) 728-0194.





# Have some fun!

## Art at Openhouse

Saturdays, February 6, 13, and 20  
1-3:15PM

Join to explore new ideas, and build positive relationships with your peers. These are not craft activities, but instead focus on skill-building — ranging from color and composition to perspective and background. This class will explore a variety of mediums and is open to all skill levels. Supplies are provided, and there will be a waiting list.

Instructed by Hugh Leeman, an artist whose work acts as a form of social commentary. To find out more go to [hughleeman.com](http://hughleeman.com)

**Register** with Penn at (415) 535-2769 or [pweldon@openhousesf.org](mailto:pweldon@openhousesf.org)



## Virtual visit to Muttville!

Wednesday, February 17  
2:30-3:30PM

Love dogs and want to feel some pure doggie-related joy? Join us for a monthly virtual visit to Muttville where we will watch the senior dogs gallivant around the headquarters, learn the stories of the dogs who are there, and spend some time enjoying the company of our community and some doggie companions.

Register with Ariel at [ariel@openhouse-sf.org](mailto:ariel@openhouse-sf.org) or (415) 503-4180.



## Places Please! LGBTQ+ plays and playwrights



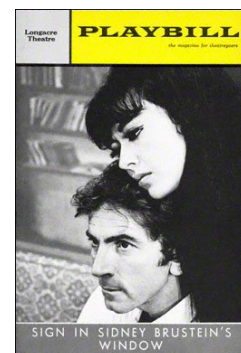
Mondays, 12-1:30PM  
April 5 through May 24

This exciting workshop will explore early, pre-Stonewall LGBTQ+ plays and playwrights, which bring to life the very beginnings of the enormous LGBTQ+ contribution to the American theatre. We will read and discuss each play and there will be an opportunity for actors and would-be actors to read aloud portions of the plays, bringing them alive for the group.

No experience is necessary for Places Please! except an interest in LGBTQ+ theatre. Please note that attendance will be limited to 10 participants.

This workshop will be presented by Jess Miller, RDT EdD. Jess is an Openhouse alumni and a Registered Drama Therapist, a proud theatre person/activist who looks forward to “raising the curtain” on LGBTQ+ theatre with the Openhouse community.

**Register** with Armando at [armando@openhouse-sf.org](mailto:armando@openhouse-sf.org) or (415) 728-01946.



SUN	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
	<p>1</p> <p>Men's Drop-In Support Group, 2 – 3:30PM RSVP req'd: X322</p> <p>"Trans Resilience" TGNC Support Group 5:30 – 7:30PM, (415) 535-0927 for info</p>	<p>2</p> <p>Zoom Help Hour 2 – 3:30PM, Reg req'd: X322</p> <p>Gay Gray Writers, 4 – 6PM, Group Now Open, Reg req'd: X322</p>	<p>3</p> <p>"In the Life": Supporting LGBTQ POC 11AM – 12:30PM, RSVP req'd: X322</p> <p>Clearing House: Cluttering Support, 12:30 – 2PM RSVP req'd: X315</p> <p>Intermediate Spanish, 3 – 4:30PM Reg req'd: X305</p>	<p>4</p> <p>Drop-In Meditation, 11 – 11:45AM Reg req'd: X322</p> <p>Openhouse/On Lok PACE Workshop 3:30 – 5PM, Reg req'd: (415) 535-0927</p> <p>Living with Uncertainty in COVID-19 4 – 5:30PM, Reg req'd: X322</p>	<p>5</p> <p>Living with Loss: Drop-in Grief Support 1 – 2:30PM, Reg req'd: X322</p> <p>Yiddish, 3 – 4:30PM Reg req'd: X305</p>	<p>6</p> <p>Queer Elder Writing Workshop 12:30 – 2:30PM Closed group</p> <p>Art for Elders 1 – 3PM, Reg req'd: (415) 535-2765</p>
7	<p>8</p> <p>Men's Drop-In Support Group, 2 – 3:30PM RSVP req'd: X322</p> <p>"Trans Resilience" TGNC Support Group 5:30 – 7:30PM, (415) 535-0927 for info</p>	<p>9</p> <p>Dance Aerobics, 1 – 1:30PM RSVP req'd: X322</p>	<p>10</p> <p>"In the Life": Supporting LGBTQ POC 11AM – 12:30PM, RSVP req'd: X322</p> <p>Intermediate Spanish, 3 – 4:30PM Reg req'd: X305</p>	<p>11</p> <p>Food Matters, 11AM – 12:30PM, Session Full. Reg req'd: X305</p> <p>Drop-In Meditation, 11 – 11:45AM, Reg req'd: X322</p> <p>Housing Workshop, 2 – 3:30PM RSVP req'd: X310</p> <p>Living with Uncertainty in COVID-19 4 – 5:30PM, Reg req'd: X322</p>	<p>12 Happy Lunar New Year!</p> <p>Yiddish, 3 – 4:30PM Reg req'd: X305</p>	<p>13</p> <p>Queer Elder Writing Workshop 12:30 – 2:30PM Closed group</p> <p>Art for Elders 1 – 3PM, Reg req'd: (415) 535-2765</p>
14	<p>15 President's Day - Openhouse Closed</p>	<p>16</p> <p>Dance Aerobics, 1 – 1:30PM RSVP req'd: X322</p> <p>Zoom Help Hour 2 – 3:30PM, Reg req'd: X322</p> <p>Gay Gray Writers, 4 – 6PM, Group Now Open, Reg req'd: X322</p>	<p>17</p> <p>"In the Life": Supporting LGBTQ POC 11AM – 12:30PM, RSVP req'd: X322</p> <p>Clearing House: Cluttering Support, 12:30 – 2PM RSVP req'd: X315</p> <p>Virtual Visit to Muttville, 2:30 – 3:30PM, RSVP req'd: X315</p> <p>Intermediate Spanish, 3 – 4:30PM Reg req'd: X305</p>	<p>18</p> <p>Food Matters, 11AM – 12:30PM, Session Full. Reg req'd: X305</p> <p>Drop-In Meditation, 11 – 11:45AM Reg req'd: X322</p> <p>Openhouse/On Lok PACE Workshop 3:30 – 5PM, Reg req'd: (415) 535-0927</p> <p>Living with Uncertainty in COVID-19 4 – 5:30PM, Reg req'd: X322</p>	<p>19</p> <p>Living with Loss: Drop-in Grief Support 1 – 2:30PM, Reg req'd: X322</p> <p>Yiddish, 3 – 4:30PM Reg req'd: X305</p>	<p>20</p> <p>Queer Elder Writing Workshop 12:30 – 2:30PM Closed group</p> <p>Art for Elders 1 – 3PM, Reg req'd: (415) 535-2765</p>
21	<p>22</p> <p>Men's Drop-In Support Group, 2 – 3:30PM RSVP req'd: X322</p> <p>"Trans Resilience" TGNC Support Group 5:30 – 7:30PM, (415) 535-0927 for info</p>	<p>23</p> <p>Dance Aerobics, 1 – 1:30PM RSVP req'd: X322</p> <p>Health Talk with Dr Louise Aronson, 2 – 3:30PM, Reg req'd: X315</p> <p>Housing Workshop 2 – 3:30PM RSVP req'd: X310</p>	<p>24</p> <p>"In the Life": Supporting LGBTQ POC 11AM – 12:30PM, RSVP req'd: X322</p> <p>Intermediate Spanish, 3 – 4:30PM Reg req'd: X305</p> <p>LGBTQ Caregivers of those w/ Dementia Support Group, 6 – 7:30PM, Reg req'd: X315</p>	<p>25</p> <p>Food Matters, 11AM – 12:30PM, Session Full. Reg req'd: X305</p> <p>Drop-In Meditation, 11 – 11:45AM Reg req'd: X322</p> <p>Living with Uncertainty in COVID-19 4 – 5:30PM, Reg req'd: X322</p>	<p>26</p> <p>Yiddish, 3 – 4:30PM Reg req'd: X305</p>	<p>27</p> <p>Queer Elder Writing Workshop 12:30 – 2:30PM Closed group</p> <p>Art for Elders 1 – 3PM, Reg req'd: (415) 535-2765</p>
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# Mind and Body Wellness

## Virtual Dance Aerobics with Donna Persona!

Tuesdays, February 9 through March 16, 1-1:30PM

Let's get moving and grooving. Join us for a fun, safe way to bring movement and joy into our lives. Each 30-minute session will be a series of warm ups, stretches, movements, and great music that will tap into the dancing queen inside all of us. No experience is necessary and the class can be done seated or standing.

Donna Persona, instructor, is a community member and volunteer at Openhouse. Donna is a drag queen performer and loves dance and all things theater. Her background includes ballet and modern dance. Donna has a certificate of Dance Aerobic Instruction and is looking forward to bringing her experience and energy to the greater Openhouse community.

**Register** with Faire at [faire@openhousesf.org](mailto:faire@openhousesf.org) or (415) 699-2244  
Questions? Contact Ariel, [ariel@openhouse-sf.org](mailto:ariel@openhouse-sf.org) or (415) 503-4180



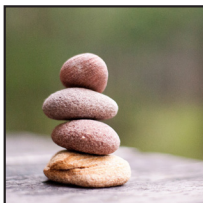
Photo by Marco Roso,  
Dis Magazine

## Virtual Meditation

Every Thursday, 11-11:45 AM

Mindfulness meditation is an easily learned practice that can help us cope and be more physically and mentally resilient in a time when we are living with increased uncertainty and uneasiness. With this practice, we invite you to give your mind a break and create more space.

Register with Faire at (415) 699-2244 or [faire@openhousesf.org](mailto:faire@openhousesf.org)



## Virtual Tai Chi for Balance and Arthritis



Every Friday, 11AM-12PM  
March 12 through April 30

Learn this simplified form of Tai Chi specifically designed for older adults with Openhouse instructor, Patty Woods. This 8-week course is aimed at alleviating arthritic joint stiffness and improving balance. The course will take place on Zoom and is open to all levels of Tai Chi experience.

Instructor, Patty Woods, is a long time Tai Chi practitioner and a graduate of the Tai Chi for Health's Tai Chi for Arthritis and Fall Prevention training.

Register with Faire at (415) 699-2244, [faire@openhousesf.org](mailto:faire@openhousesf.org)

# Program Highlights

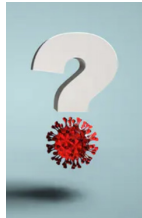
## Living with Uncertainty in the Times of COVID-19

Every Thursday 4-5:30PM

Join us for a new 12-week session as we continue to listen, converse and offer support during the unprecedented uncertainty we are facing. We humans possess natural capacities in assisting one another in carrying on. With each other, we can get through these times.

Facilitator: Den Reno, PhD. This is a drop-in group and you must RSVP to join.

**Register** with Faire at (415) 699-2244 or [faire@openhousesf.org](mailto:faire@openhousesf.org)



## Friendly Visitor Program during COVID-19

Opportunities to connect socially in person may have changed for now, however, friendships can be cultivated in other ways. We encourage folks to give us a call to learn more about being matched up with Friendly Callers of all ages for social calls. LGBTQ elders have lifetimes of experience, perspective and know-how especially during challenging times.

To learn more, contact Penn at (415) 535-2769 or [pweldon@openhousesf.org](mailto:pweldon@openhousesf.org)

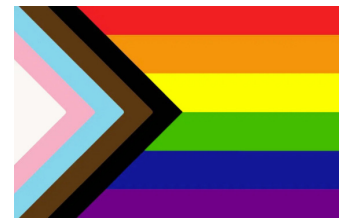
## In the Life: Supporting LGBTQ POC

Every Wednesday, 11AM-12:30PM

Join us for a discussion group for LGBTQ people of color. Prejudice, bias, and bureaucracy make government systems almost impossible to cope with every day especially during a pandemic; it's a struggle. Come share your tips, strategies, and support with others in a confidential and positive environment. We will learn together how to get what we want from community resources, support services, and government benefits.

Myles Dixon, facilitator, is gay-identified, African American and has a Master's in Health Systems Administration.

**Register** with Faire at (415) 699-2244 or [faire@openhousesf.org](mailto:faire@openhousesf.org)





# Looking for support?



## **Clearing House: Drop-In Clutter Support Group**

Wednesdays, February 3 and 17, 12:30-2PM

Openhouse and the Mental Health Association of San Francisco welcome you to a support group for all LGBTQ community members age 55+ who "struggle with stuff." The group is a non-judgmental, confidential, and supportive space where you can share your struggles and strategies with other LGBTQ folks.

**Register** with Ariel at [ariel@openhouse-sf.org](mailto:ariel@openhouse-sf.org) or (415) 503-4180



## **LGBTQ Caregivers of those with Dementia Support Group**

in partnership with the Alzheimer's Association

Wednesday, February 24, 6-7:30 PM

We welcome diverse LGBTQ caregivers to this monthly free drop-in support group. Caring for someone with dementia, whether mild or severe, is important and challenging work and inspires many questions about how to deal with what is. Join us as we continue to connect virtually through Zoom.

**Register** with Ariel at [ariel@openhouse-sf.org](mailto:ariel@openhouse-sf.org) or (415) 503-4180



## **Living with Loss: Virtual Drop-In Grief Support Group**

Fridays, February 4 and 18, 1-2:30PM

Are you feeling sad? There are a variety of losses that we experience and many of us are feeling new and more acute forms of loss during COVID-19. Some of these experiences include loss that relates to isolation and loneliness, losing those we love, or maybe even the loss of the life we had before the pandemic. Loss and grief come in many forms. Join Openhouse and VITAS Healthcare for a drop-in grief support group where we can find community and support each other through these experiences in a safe and welcoming environment. This group is co-facilitated by Dale Poland and Jane Litman.

**Register** with Faire at [faire@openhousesf.org](mailto:faire@openhousesf.org) or (415) 699-2244.

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COVID-19 has forced all of us to ask questions about ourselves, our families and our lives. My family and I are privileged in so many ways, and we have managed to maintain that perspective, even amidst the daunting challenges of the past year. Nevertheless, I have been shaped by this pandemic. I have watched my kids struggle. I have gone through a COVID-19 scare with a family member, which highlighted my role as a caregiver to my parents as they age. These experiences have shown me the need to prioritize my family at this moment. I am called to focus my time, energy and effort on supporting us as we embark on an adventure to Colorado, the state I grew up in.



While I feel great sadness about the prospect of saying goodbye, I also feel great pride as I think about what the coming months will bring. I am so proud of what WE have accomplished over the past four years. Openhouse has a long history of resilience, creativity, and innovation that I was lucky to walk into. In 2017, we brought into life the dream of our Founders, Dr. Marcy Adelman and Jeanette Gurevitch, when we opened the city's first LGBTQ-welcoming senior housing at 55 Laguna, with our partners at Mercy Housing. Over the past three years, we have opened our second building and expanded services to reach thousands of people in a single year. We are nearing completion of a LGBTQ+ Senior Community Center at 75 Laguna that is truly like no other. During a deadly global pandemic, we stepped up and provided what our community needed to not just

stay alive, but to feel connected in the midst of an impossible situation.

I am awed by the strength Openhouse possesses as an organization, and could not be more excited by the promising future that lies ahead. The Openhouse Board is ready to begin a search for the new Executive Director, while working with me to ensure a supportive and thoughtful transition for our staff, partners, supporters and community members. I am confident the innovative solutions we developed together to meet the unprecedented challenges of this pandemic will further ensure Openhouse housing and programming will continue to serve as a model for LGBTQ+ aging. I look forward to welcoming a new leader to Openhouse and will always champion the work of this incredible organization.

As sad as it will be for all of us to say goodbye, I take solace in the knowledge that you will support me and my family in this difficult decision. Thank you from the bottom of my heart for allowing me the opportunity to be a part of Openhouse.

All my best,

Karyn



**FEBRUARY 2021**

## Remembering Ken Jones (1951-2021)

This Black History Month, Openhouse celebrates the life of cherished San Francisco-based activist Ken Jones. The arc of Jones' community work and organizing spanned decades, and centered around desegregating the LGBTQIA+ community, AIDS activism, addressing racial profiling, and police brutality. A hero of the Bay Area LGBTQIA+ community and beyond, Jones described his dedication to his community as a constant meditation; he once said of his lifelong activism: "It's like work in a garden, it's never done." As the community grieves the loss of Ken Jones, we are left grateful, humbled, and inspired by the wisdom he shared and the example he set for what it means to truly show up for our community.



Photo via [kenjonessf.com](http://kenjonessf.com)

*"Legislation, proclamations, and executive orders do not change people's hearts. We change people's hearts — not through any Herculean interventions — but when we are present, when we are authentic, and when we are transparent."*