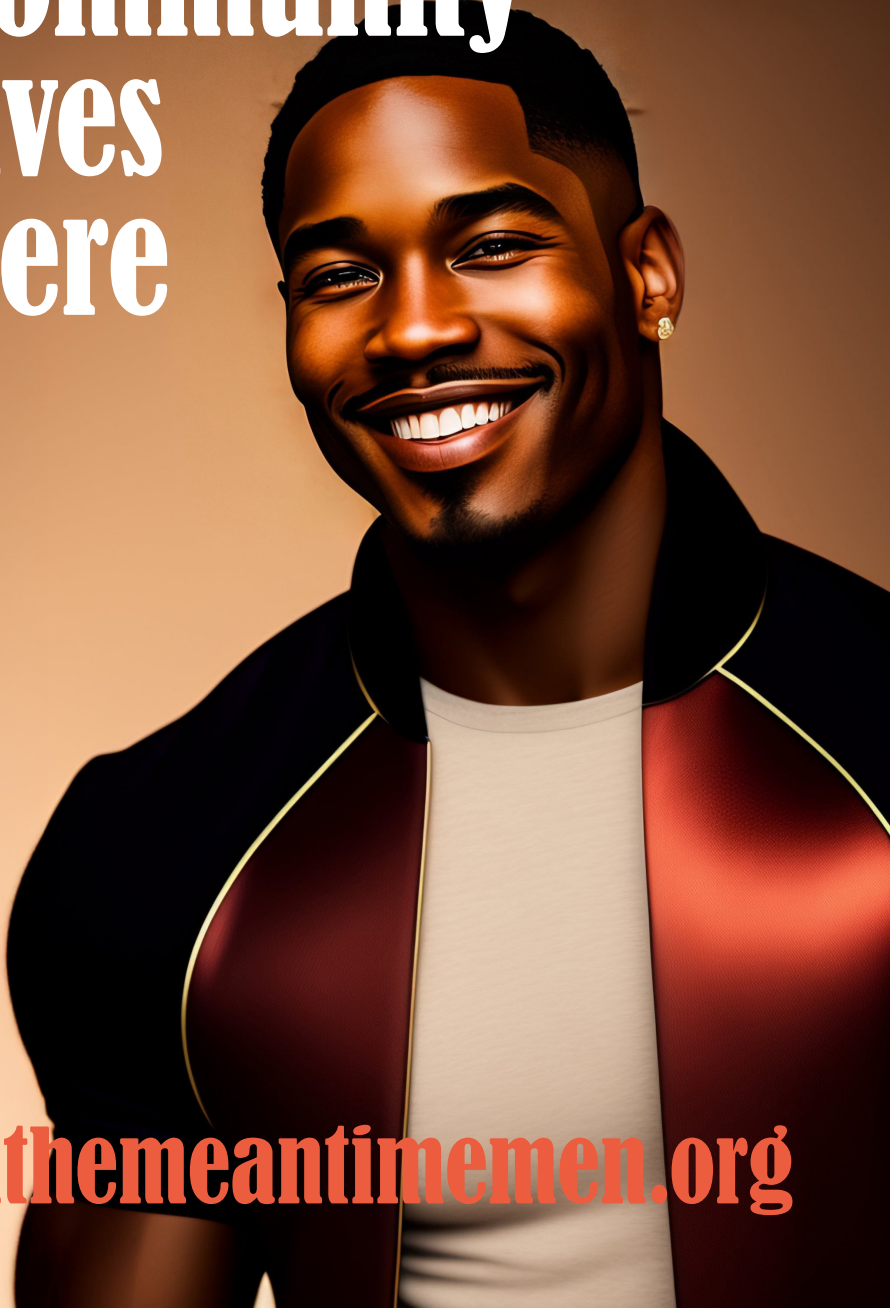


# MESSAGE

Winter 2025



**In the Meantime  
Community  
lives  
here**



**[inthemeantimemen.org](http://inthemeantimemen.org)**

# CONTENTS

---

## 4 MESSAGE 2.0

By Jeffrey C. King

## 6 DRG IN DTLA

By Dorothy Randall Gray

## 8 CHICKEN 5 WAYS

5 More Easy Chicken Recipe Ideas  
By The Lifestyle Maven

## 15 THE HIGH STRESS LIFE

How Exercise and Building Muscle  
Can Help You Cope  
By Coach Skip

## 20 BROTHERS OF THE DESERT

Supporting the Health and Wellness  
of Black Gay Men  
By Tim Vincent

---

**EDITOR AND PUBLISHER:** Jeffrey C. King

**PHOTOGRAPHY:** Steven Williams

**GRAPHICS ASSISTANT:** Alan Bell

**ON THE COVER:** Dorothy Randall Gray

---

Message is published quarterly by In The Meantime Men's Group, Inc., 2146 W. Adams Blvd., Los Angeles, CA 90018-2039. Mailing address: P.O. Box 29861, Los Angeles, CA 90029-0861, 323-733-4868, [inthemeantimemen@aol.com](mailto:inthemeantimemen@aol.com), [www.inthemeantimemen.org](http://www.inthemeantimemen.org), Facebook @ inthemeantimemen

© 2025 In The Meantime Men's Group, Inc. All rights reserved.

Views and opinions expressed in this publication are not necessarily those of ITMT. Publication of the name or photograph of a person does not indicate the sexual orientation or HIV status of the person or necessarily constitute an endorsement of ITMT or its policies. Message is designed for educational purposes only and is not engaged in rendering medical advice or professional services. Some photographs in this publication use professional models.



*Jeffrey C. King is Founder and Executive Director of In The Meantime Men's Group.*





# MESSAGE 2.0

**BY JEFFREY C. KING**

For the past 25 years In The Meantime has delivered MESSAGE Magazine, print and digital quarterly publication to our local and national communities. As we enter a new and exciting era of change, we are thrilled to launch MESSAGE 2.0 Digital LIFESTYLE Magazine.

Our goal is to inspire, uplift, educate and amplify the visibility of the Black, Black LGBTQ+ and the broader LGBTQ+ communities both local, national and international.

Moving beyond the print copies we are excited to usher in our new LIFESTYLE focused Digital Publication. MESSAGE 2.0 is set to expand our digital and social media foot print. We will reach millions in the US and abroad. We welcome your ideas and written contributions for years to come. So, join us on this incredible literary journey elevating art, culture, and LIFESTYLE. In The Meantime, enjoy this wave of joy and creativity.

Welcome to MESSAGE 2.0!

# DRG IN DTLA

BY DOROTHY RANDALL GRAY

I bathe in the eastern sunrise, exercise my passion for sky gazing through curtainless windows, and listen to the quiet on weekend mornings. Before rising I lay still, give thanks, say prayers, and allow my mind to manifest poetry, workshops, lesson plans, art projects, new ideas, conversations to have and lists to make. This before phone and texts and computer and housework vie to have their way with me. This sacred horizontality before the day and my body become as vertical as the world can seem. This is how I begin my day in DTLA.



Chickens and roosters peck at seeds in cages at a high end eatery two blocks away, a local store offers sausages of rattlesnake, rabbit, venison or buffalo—a sure sign this could only be LA. There is a rhythm in DTLA that sometimes feels like New York City, one reason I enjoy it here. The night streets fill with people strolling, sitting outside with ice cream cones, and overflowing the trendy new restaurants. After an accident left me carless for three years I was very thankful for the wealth of public transportation this neighborhood offered. Now, with new nearby train





stations, I can easily get from the Arts District to Santa Monica, USC, and Baldwin Hills for the Pan African Film Festival. The other reason for enjoyment: I am 5 minutes from Union Station and the FlyAway bus that goes directly to LAX. I no longer have to pick up people from the airport!

Venturing to the spacious Hauser & Wirth, ICALEA or the area's numerous galleries feeds me with fresh inspiration for my own artwork—printmaking, handmade books, weaving, and embellishing a chair with brass masks and symbols of an ancient African language. Adding to the inspiration is my visit to Black owned Anaphora Arts, an organization that invites writers and artists to its readings and exhibits at its DTLA duplex. The Savanna Rooftop event space, Joyce's southern cuisine, Wax On Hi Fi, High Tide, Hilltop Coffee and Kitchen also Black businesses joining the neighborhood.

Another of my favorite DTLA spaces is the enchanting The Last Bookstore, 22,000 square feet, the largest in California and the most unusual. In addition to new, used and vintage books, it boasts a vinyl record collection, artist work studios and shops, labyrinthian layout, a walk-through tunnel made entirely of books and so much more.

I meet friends for Sunday brunch at Urth Caffe, but on my own I slide into the Bread Lounge for their Meltitude of Tuna, a sandwich so good it's the first place my sister goes when arriving from Atlanta. It's only a few blocks to the amazing color, chaos and clatter of nearby Japantown and Chinatown, and a bit further to the historic Grand Central Market.

And when I am through with all the being and doing distractions, I head back to the night silence below Alameda, watch passing trains in the distance, and work on the poem that came to me with the morning sun.

---

*Dorothy Randall Gray is an artist, activist, poet, master teacher, and the author of the best-selling book Soul Between the Lines (Avon Books, 1998).*





# CHICKEN 5 WAYS

## 5 MORE EASY CHICKEN RECIPE IDEAS

**BY THE LIFESTYLE MAVEN**

Chicken is a staple of many dinner tables, and it is easy to fall into a rut with the same recipes every day. If you are looking for tasty recipes to add to your list of normal daily recipes, here are some new chicken recipes. With these healthy recipes, you'll always serve delicious chicken dinners with all of the innovation and none of the hassle. Enjoy!



## GRILLED CHICKEN AND SPINACH QUESADILLAS

### INGREDIENTS

2- to 2 ½ -pound rotisserie chicken, shredded  
1 diced avocado  
½ cup store-bought fresh salsa  
¼ cup sour cream  
4 cups of baby spinach  
1½ cups grated Monterey Jack cheese  
4 large flour tortillas



### DIRECTIONS

Heat grill. In a large bowl, mix the chicken, cheese and spinach.

Divide equally; put the mixture on one half of each tortilla. Wrap the other half to cover.

Grill the quesadillas to melt the cheese 3 to 4 minutes per side until the tortillas become crisp.

Serve quesadillas with sour cream, salsa, and avocado.

## PAN-ROASTED CHICKEN WITH GREEN BEANS AND LEMON-GARLIC

### INGREDIENTS

6 tablespoons of extra virgin olive oil  
2 lemons, one thinly sliced, 1 juiced  
¾ pounds trimmed green beans  
8 small red potatoes,  
4 chicken breasts with bones and skin  
4 cloves garlic, crushed  
1 teaspoon of kosher salt  
½teaspoon fresh ground black pepper



### DIRECTIONS

Heat the oven to 450°F. Coat a big baking dish or cast-iron skillet with one tablespoon of the olive-oil. Prepare the sliced lemon in one layer in the base of the dish or skillet.

In a big bowl, mix the leftover oil, lemon juice, garlic, salt, and pepper; put in the

green beans and toss to coat. Making use of a slotted spoon or tongs, take out the green beans and place them over the lemon slices. Add the potatoes to the olive-oil mix and toss to coat. Using a slotted spoon or tongs, place the potatoes along the inside edge of the plate or skillet over the green beans. Put the chicken in the same bowl with the olive-oil blend and coat carefully. Put the chicken, skin-side up, in the dish or skillet. Pour some of the left over olive-oil mix over the chicken.

Roast for fifty minutes. Take out the chicken from the dish or skillet. Put the beans and potatoes back into oven for ten minutes or more until the potatoes are soft. Arrange a chicken breast on all 4 serving plates; apportion the green beans and potatoes evenly. Serve warm.

## CHICKEN AND CASHEWS IN LETTUCE WRAPS

### INGREDIENTS

3 tablespoons of soy sauce  
3 tablespoons of honey  
2 tablespoons of canola oil  
1½ pounds boneless, skinless chicken breast,  
Black pepper and two cloves of chopped garlic  
1 tablespoon of grated ginger  
1 bunch of trimmed and sliced scallions  
18-oz can sliced and drained water chestnuts  
¼ cup roasted unsalted cashews  
One small head of lettuce leaves



### DIRECTIONS

Mix the soy sauce with honey in one small bowl. Put aside.

Heat the oil in a sizable skillet over medium-high temperature.

Season the chicken with ½ teaspoon pepper then cook, stirring once in a while, until it starts to brown, about three minutes.

Lower heat to medium and mix in the garlic and ginger

Add the scallions and cook for one minute.

Stir in the water chestnuts, half the soy sauce mix. Keep on cooking until the chicken is completely cooked, take off the heat and add the cashews.

Divide the lettuce leaves among plates and spoon the chicken on top. Serve with the remaining soy sauce mixture for drizzling.

## CHICKEN WITH GOAT CHEESE VINAIGRETTE

### INGREDIENTS

1 cup of orzo  
1 tablespoon of olive oil  
¼ cup chopped fresh flat-leaf parsley  
¼ teaspoon crushed red pepper  
2-oz goat cheese, crumbled (½ cup)  
4 six-ounce boneless, skinless chicken breasts butterflied (split horizontally)  
Kosher salt and black pepper to taste

### DIRECTIONS

Cook the orzo according to directions.

In a small bowl, mix ⅓ cup of olive oil, crushed red pepper and the parsley then fold in the goat cheese.

Season the chicken with ½ teaspoon salt and ¼ teaspoon pepper in a sizeable skillet; heat the left over tablespoon of oil over medium-high heat. Cook the chicken 2 to 3 minutes per side. Serve with the orzo and goat cheese vinaigrette.

## ROSEMARY, GARLIC AND LEMON CHICKEN

### INGREDIENTS

2 tablespoons of oil (olive oil)  
2 teaspoons of fresh rosemary  
chopped and one 4-inch sprig  
2 cloves finely chopped garlic  
Zest from ½ grated lemon  
½ teaspoons kosher salt  
½ teaspoon of black pepper  
1 lemon, halved

1 3½- to 4-pound chicken, giblets



### DIRECTIONS

Regulate oven rack to lowest place, Heat oven to 450° F Blend one tablespoon of the oil, garlic, chopped rosemary lemon zest, ½ teaspoon salt, and ¼ teaspoon pepper in a small bowl.

Use your fingertips to cautiously release the skin from the breasts, thighs, and drumsticks. Distribute the blend gradually under the skin. Rub the remaining tablespoon of oil over the skin. Spread with ½ teaspoon of the left over salt and ½ teaspoon pepper. Put the lemon halves, rosemary sprig, and remaining ½ teaspoon salt inside the cavity.

Place a rack in a sizable ovenproof skillet or small roasting pan. Put the chicken

in the pan. Tuck the wings beneath the chicken. Roast for twenty minutes. Add one cup water and roast until the chicken is completely cooked and the thigh meat registers 180° F on a meat thermometer, about forty minutes more.

Use a spatula to loosen the chicken. With a wad of paper towels in all hands, move to a chopping board. Let it rest for a minimum of 15 minutes before carving.

## TREVOR JAMES

is a touch and cuddle therapist, intimacy coach, masseur, and sacred intimate based in Hollywood, Los Angeles. With a deep understanding of the power of connection, Trevor helps men navigate challenges around intimacy, sexuality, and spirituality. His compassionate and professional approach creates a safe space for clients to explore their needs, heal emotional wounds, and rediscover their authentic selves. Offering services such as massage therapy, cuddle therapy, and sacred intimacy, Trevor integrates

body-centered practices with emotional and spiritual insights to foster growth and transformation. His mission is to help clients feel seen, heard, and empowered to build meaningful relationships—with themselves and others.

When he's not working with clients, Trevor enjoys traveling, exploring the performing arts, and creating content to destigmatize professional intimacy services.

213.588.4242

[www.trevorjamesla.com](http://www.trevorjamesla.com)





Free STD Screening & Treatment,  
HIV Testing & Linkage to HIV Care



*Extended Hours*



**2146 W ADAMS BLVD**

Mon, Wed, Thu, Fri: 12pm-8pm

Sat: 9:30am-5:30pm

[free\*\*STD\*\*check.org](http://freeSTDcheck.org)



PUBLIC HEALTH  
DIVISION



EVERY SUNDAY 10AM

**YOU ARE**  
*Welcome!*

ZEPHYR THEATRE | 7456 MELROSE AVE

*Pastor*  
**SAMMIE**

*Vision*  
**CHURCH**  
LOS ANGELES

A close-up photograph of a very muscular arm flexing its bicep. The skin is tanned, and the muscle definition is extremely pronounced, showing deep grooves and veins. The arm is bent at the elbow, with the hand clenched into a fist.

# THE HIGH-STRESS LIFE

## HOW EXERCISE AND BUILDING MUSCLE CAN HELP YOU COPE

I am Coach Skip! As a fitness professional and social media influencer, I'm no stranger to the pressures of modern life. We're constantly bombarded with stressors, from work deadlines to social media comparisons, and it's easy to feel like we're drowning in a sea of anxiety. But today, I want to talk about the impact of stress on our physical and mental health, and how exercise and building muscle can be a game-changer in managing stress.

## THE EFFECTS OF STRESS ON OUR BODIES

Stress is a natural response to perceived threats, and our bodies are designed to react to it. Stress is also ANYTHING positive or negative that we must adjust to. So technically, although hitting the lottery is, or should be a positive thing, our bodies respond with the same amount of stress as if we were getting robbed! FASCINATING huh? When we're stressed, our body releases cortisol, a hormone that prepares us to either fight or flee. This response is meant to be short-term, but in today's fast-paced world, it's often chronic. Chronic stress can lead to a host of physical and mental health issues, including:

**Weight Gain:** Cortisol promotes fat storage around the midsection, leading to weight gain.

**Sleep Disturbances:** Stress can disrupt our sleep patterns, making it difficult to fall asleep, stay asleep, or get quality sleep.

**Mood Swings:** Chronic stress can lead to irritability, anxiety, and depression.

**Weakened Immune System:** Stress can suppress our immune system.

**Muscle Tension:** Stress can cause muscle tension, leading to headaches, back pain, and other musculoskeletal issues.

**Digestive Issues:** Stress can cause digestive issues such as irritable bowel syndrome (IBS), acid reflux, and stomach ulcers.

**Hormonal Imbalance:** Chronic stress can disrupt our hormonal balance, leading to issues such as thyroid problems, adrenal fatigue, and hormonal imbalances.

**Cardiovascular Disease:** Chronic stress can increase our risk of cardiovascular disease, including high blood pressure, heart disease, and stroke.

## THE EFFECTS OF STRESS ON OUR MINDS

Stress can also have a profound impact on our mental health, including:

**Anxiety and Depression:** Chronic stress can contribute to the development of anxiety and depression.

**Memory and Concentration Issues:** Stress can impair our ability to focus and remember information.

**Mood Swings:** Stress can lead to mood swings, irritability, and emotional reactivity.

**Lack of Motivation:** Chronic stress can drain our motivation and energy, making it difficult to tackle daily tasks.

**Social Withdrawal:** Stress can lead to social withdrawal, making it difficult to connect with others and maintain relationships.



**Increased Risk of Addiction:** Chronic stress can increase our risk of addiction, including substance abuse and addiction to digital devices.

## THE POWER OF EXERCISE IN MANAGING STRESS

Exercise is a natural stress-reliever that can help mitigate the negative effects of stress on our bodies and minds. Here are some ways exercise can help:

**Endorphins:** Exercise releases endorphins, also known as “feel-good” hormones, which can help reduce stress and anxiety.

**Reduced Cortisol:** Regular exercise can help reduce cortisol levels, promoting a sense of calm and relaxation.

**Improved Sleep:** Exercise can help regulate our sleep patterns, leading to better rest and recovery.

**Mood Boost:** Exercise can improve our mood and reduce symptoms of depression and anxiety.

**Increased Self-Esteem:** Exercise can boost our self-esteem and confidence, helping us feel more capable of handling stress.

**Reduced Inflammation:** Exercise can reduce inflammation, which is a common symptom of chronic stress.

**Improved Digestion:** Exercise can improve digestion and reduce symptoms of IBS and other digestive issues.

## BUILDING MUSCLE: THE ULTIMATE STRESS-RELIEVER

Building muscle is a powerful way to reduce stress and improve overall health. Here are some benefits of building muscle:

**Increased Self-Esteem:** Building muscle can boost our self-esteem and confidence, helping us feel more capable of handling stress.

**Reduced Anxiety:** Resistance training can help reduce anxiety and stress by releasing tension and promoting relaxation.

**Improved Mood:** Building muscle can improve our mood and reduce symptoms of depression and anxiety.

**Better Sleep:** Resistance training can help regulate our sleep patterns, leading to better rest and recovery.

**Increased Energy:** Building muscle can increase our energy levels, making it easier to tackle daily tasks and handle stress.

**Improved Immune Function:** Building muscle can improve our immune function, reducing our risk of illness and infection.

Reduced Inflammation: Building muscle can reduce inflammation, which is a common symptom of chronic stress.

## TIPS FOR MANAGING STRESS AND BUILDING MUSCLE

**Start Small:** Begin with short, manageable workouts and gradually increase intensity and duration. Going for a long walk daily is a great place to start taking care of your health!

### MAREO MUKES

is a 58-year-old personal fitness and nutrition coach with over a decade of experience in the industry. Based in West Hollywood, California, he serves as a personal fitness coach at Equinox, where he is dedicated to helping clients achieve their fitness goals. Mareo is also the CEO of COACH(ee), a platform that connects clients with personal trainers. He is a certified functional strength coach, focusing on building strength and wellness for his clients. Active on social media, Mareo shares fitness



content on platforms like TikTok, where he operates under the handle @skipfit50s, and YouTube, where he provides guidance to men and women over 50 seeking to improve their health and fitness. His journey has been marked by resilience, including a return to heavy weightlifting six months post-hip surgery at the age of 55. Mareo's commitment to fitness and wellness continues to inspire and motivate individuals striving for healthier lifestyles.

Questions, comments, and/or suggestions? Please contact him at Skipfit9@gmail.com or HMU on IG @MareoMukes  
[www.trevorjamesla.com](http://www.trevorjamesla.com)

# Poetic Melody

Eau De Parfum

Flirtatious Rhythmic Romance



**balmori balmori**

New York ~ Atlanta ~ Italy

**LeDRAPE: A ROMANTIC POETIC ROMANCE**

**HERITAGE | MODERN | INNOVATIVE**

It's a unique fragrance that resonates like a poetic melody, blending notes that move effortlessly in a flirtatious dance—inviting every wearer to embody their confidence, allure, and irresistible magnetism.

Created by Balmori, an artisan olfactory perfumery independently founded by Otis and Timothy Daniels Knight, LeDRAPE balances heritage and modernity in this beautiful olfactive creation of harmony and balance.

Housing blends of passion fruits, exotic florals, and sensual woods, it offers an intimate presence—a must-have accessory for the lover of fine perfumery.

Discover more at [balmoribalmori.com](https://balmoribalmori.com)

# **BROTHERS OF THE DESERT**

## **SUPPORTING THE HEALTH AND WELLNESS OF BLACK GAY MEN**

**BY TIM VINCENT**

Brothers of the Desert is a non-profit organization with a mission to support Black gay men and allies through education, advocacy, social networking, volunteerism, philanthropy, and mentorship. Our purpose is to change the dynamics that produce isolation, disconnection, and inequities among Black gay men living in the Coachella Valley, (Palm Springs and surrounding desert cities).



The seeds of our group were planted in 2017 in response to feelings of isolation and disconnection by a small group of Black gay men. We met and wanted to create a more supportive environment for us to thrive. After planning and thoughtful engagements with other Black gay men in the community, Brothers of the Desert was formally incorporated as a non-profit organization in 2020. We are a membership-based, volunteer led organization with over 75 members.

## OUR HIGHLIGHTS

We recognized quickly that we had the capacity to do a lot more to make changes in the community. Since we organized, we have dedicated more than \$ 20,000 in scholarships to Black and LGBTQ+ students. We recently created our own Brothers of the Desert scholarship to be awarded to a Black gay male student in 2025. We produce an annual Wellness Summit, which emphasizes holistic health and community engagement that attracts over 200 people each year. BOD also connects with the community through advocacy work on rights and education in Black communities, a monthly discussion group series, called Barbershop, a quarterly social event, Brothers Got Talent, and a monthly newsletter called Drumbeat. We created a member support program to help our brothers in need of assistance. We hold an annual gala commemorating our history and to raise funds to continue these programs and services each New Year's Eve.

## ABOUT OUR WELLNESS SUMMIT

For the past five years Brothers of the Desert has held an annual one-day Wellness Summit. We will present our 6th annual summit on Saturday, March 22, from 9 a.m.-4 p.m. in Palm Springs at The Riviera Hotel. The purpose is to





provide connection, education, and opportunities to hear from nationally recognized thought leaders on how to support our community and ourselves. The summits are interactive, entertaining, and thought provoking.

Join us to hear inspiring keynote presentations and participate in innovative workshops on, such topics as spirituality, relationships, mental health, aging considerations, racism, physical health, intergenerational communication, healthy sex, and creative expression. Everyone is welcome to attend.

The presenters for 2025 will feature, author George M Johnson, David Malebranche, MD, Bishop OC Allen, film director, Nathan Hale-Williams, and more. Registration is required. We provide lunch and light breakfast. A \$25 donation is suggested and any amount given is appreciated.

Registration is required.  
Register at: <http://bodwellnesssummit2025.eventbrite.com>

Quotes from past participants:  
“The positive energy was uplifting”  
“I felt a sense of brotherhood through shared experiences”  
“After attending the summit, I felt a sense of validation and affirmation to be me.”

For more information about our organization, go to: [www.brothersofthedesert.org](http://www.brothersofthedesert.org)



---

*Tim Vincent is the President of the Board of Directors for Brothers of the Desert. He has been working in the field of HIV and other health-related issues for over 30 years in direct service and as an educator. Tim was recently awarded the James Baldwin Legacy Award for his advocacy and service to the Black SGL/Gay men's community. FB/Instagram @Brothersofthedesert*





Ending the Criminalization of HIV, Homelessness, and Our LGBTQIA Identities.

# CONFERENCE

**JUNE 25-29, 2025**

The NAESM National Leadership Conference on Health Disparities and Social Justice is the nation's premier gathering created by and for Black gay, bisexual, queer, and same-gender-loving men, and other MSM. Initially focused on HIV, it now tackles broader health disparities, addressing social determinants and human rights. This year's conference will spotlight Ending the Criminalization of HIV, Homelessness, and Our LGBTQIA Identities.

**SHERATON GATEWAY LOS ANGELES HOTEL**  
**6101 W CENTURY BLVD. LOS ANGELES, CA 90045**  
**(310) 642-1111**

<https://naesminc.org/leadership-conference/registration/>