

MESSAGE

Spring 2026



**IN THE MEANTIME
PRESENTS**



**BACK
TOGETHER
AGAIN**



for the Sages

QUARTERLY SOCIAL EVENTS

FOR BLACK MEN 40+

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THE POWER OF TEN

STEADY, GROUNDED, AND GROWING

BY JEFFREY C. KING

In The Meantime, steady as she goes. 2026 is off to the races. This marathon requires strategy, strength, and a commitment to an established intention set more than 28 years ago.

The winds of change are stronger than ever before, and the only thing that is certain is God's Favor. IN THE MEANTIME, we hold fast to our intention to serve community to the best of our ability and to partner with like energy. It is said that water seeks its own level. No truer words have been spoken, as we continue to seek our center for this new adventure called 2026.

I can't resist a little numerology. When we look at the numbers 2026, $2+0+2+6=10$:

The number 10 holds profound spiritual significance, serving as a beacon for personal development and manifestation. It symbolizes the interplay between completion and new beginnings, underscoring the cyclical nature of existence. So, if we take this a step further, the number 10 is $1+0=1$.

Unity and wholeness: In spiritual contexts, the number 10 embodies unity, combining the energies of 1 (new beginnings) and 0 (infinite potential). This combination represents a complete picture, encouraging individuals to align their mind, body, and spirit.

So, here we are In The Meantime, grounding our 2026 theme, "Deeply Rooted," and actualizing our holistic wellness mission. Standing on the shoulders of our elders and connecting with our ancestors to call forth a season of radical POSITIVE transformation.

The beginning of a thing does not always reflect the end product or outcome. The early fire of this season will result in refinement, clarity, simplicity, and a true leveling, resulting in healing and miracles unimagined.

In The Meantime, we're not done yet. We're just starting to warm up.

Jeffrey C. King is a Community Social Architect and Founder of In The Meantime Men's Group, Inc.





GREG'S STORY

BY JEFFREY C. KING

More than 39 years ago, Gregory Hill was diagnosed with HIV. It was 1987—the year his life would change forever.

At the height of the epidemic, Greg became involved with Minority AIDS Project LA's buddy program designed to support people living with HIV/AIDS. It was during this time that his buddy suggested that Greg get tested for HIV. Greg recalls his buddy saying, "Before I leave here, you are going to get tested."

Greg felt that his chances were high of contracting the virus, even though he was involved in a long-term relationship. He and his partner were married before marriage equality was a thing. They were also supported by a network of couples who were in long-term relationships. It was seven years into their relationship when they were both diagnosed with AIDS. Greg's life partner, Ralf, died in 1993, only two months after they were married.

"In a strange way, our diagnosis seemed to strengthen our relationship. We both were in this fight together. We made a conscious decision to sink or swim. We chose to swim. We chose to live."

"Many men in our community were overdosing on AZT, and so I decided to reduce my dosage in half. I believe this has contributed to me being alive today."

As Greg's HIV advanced, he was admitted to the hospital twice with cryptococcal meningitis—each time for three months. He was treated with high dosages of medication. Although HIV was and is still highly stigmatized, Greg never experienced the gross mistreatment that many others were subjected to.

"I am here because of my faith in God and a strong support network. I am now living in my purpose. Today, I'm 73 years old, and I am cancer-free for 10 years. For many years, I struggled in silence and shame regarding literacy, and today my life is changing, and I am helping others with this issue. I have been able to provide support to my community by telling my story about being HIV-positive and helping others through the stigma associated with literacy and prostate cancer."

Jeffrey C. King is a Community Social Architect and Founder of In The Meantime Men's Group, Inc.

BRIDGING KNOWLEDGE SYSTEMS

LEADERSHIP, AI GOVERNANCE, AND THE
EDUCATION OF THE CHEETAH GENERATION

BY JILL M. HUMPHRIES, PH.D.



Being a successful Black LGBT or same-gender-loving person in America is not defined by age or a single moment of achievement, but by a lifelong commitment to growth, authenticity, and service. As a lifelong learner with more than 30 years of teaching experience in higher education across the United States and Africa, I understand success as the ability to evolve while remaining grounded in community responsibility. It means leading with integrity at the intersections of race, identity, and knowledge, while creating pathways for others to thrive.

Over the course of my career, I have witnessed how education can empower individuals and transform institutions. At the same time, I have seen how structural inequities shape whose knowledge is valued and whose futures are imagined. These experiences, alongside navigating my own identity as a Black LGBT scholar and educator, deepened my commitment to higher education as a site of both resistance and innovation.

Returning to school at this stage of my life reflects not a reinvention, but an intentional upskilling—a decision to remain intellectually agile in an era defined by rapid technological change.

My current focus on AI governance, technological sovereignty, and ethical policy emerges directly from this commitment. I am dedicated to preparing what I call the “Cheetah Generation”—African and African-descended learners who must move swiftly and strategically within systems

shaped by artificial intelligence. By deepening my expertise through continued education, I aim to equip students with the critical tools to question, shape, and govern technologies that increasingly influence civic life, education, and global development.

The experiences that shaped my decision to pursue further education—international teaching collaborations, community-based scholarship, and advocacy work rooted in social justice—now guide my career goals. I seek to build bridges between academic research, policy practice, and community knowledge systems so that emerging technologies reflect ethical values grounded in equity and cultural awareness. Leadership, in this context, means mentoring future scholars and practitioners who will carry this work forward long after my own career concludes.

Ultimately, success as a Black LGBT lifelong learner means embracing the responsibility of legacy. It is about transforming personal experience into collective empowerment, using education as a vehicle for justice, and ensuring that future generations inherit not only knowledge but the courage and tools to shape a more inclusive technological future.

Each quarter, ITMT supports deserving LGBTQ+ Los Angelenos with the King-Bremond Scholarship as they pursue academic or trade-focused higher education. The preceding essay was written by this quarter's scholarship recipient. Students who would like to be considered for future scholarships should visit inthemeantimemen.org, download the application, and contact In The Meantime at 323-733-4868 for further instructions.

BY JEFFREY C. KING

I AM



SOMEBODY!



As a student attending Carver Middle School on the Eastside of Los Angeles in the late 60s and early 70s, I was a curious kid coming into my own. This was the era of gangs rising, Converse All Star sneakers, and gold chains. We sported afros with afro picks and leather jackets. We caught the end of platform shoes and polyester pants. Teachers were allowed to swat students (discipline us with paddle boards), and teachers knew their students' parents. I was Student Body President and attended advanced classes with a small group of students called "gifted." That label was always odd to me.

One of my best friends at Carver was Miss Charlotte Coleman, a middle-aged white woman who was the mother of a biracial child. She was the school librarian. I would spend countless hours after school volunteering in the library. She made the best homemade chocolate cookies ever.

One day she told me about the I AM SOMEBODY Essay Contest and suggested that I enter it. I was apprehensive, but after sharing with my mother, I stayed after school to write an award-winning essay with the support of Miss Coleman. I WON, and my name was mentioned on local TV. I had arrived. My family was extremely proud of me, and so were my instructors and classmates.

Although young at the time, I felt a great sense of pride, a deep sense of self-worth, and a connection to something that was bigger than, yet included, me. It was the essence of the Rev. Jackson's speech/poem that motivated my words, my hopes, and my dreams to be more and to be better.

Rev. Jesse Jackson said:

"I am Somebody! I am Somebody! I may be poor, but I am Somebody. I may be young, but I am Somebody. I may be on welfare, but I am Somebody. I may be small, but I am Somebody. I may have made mistakes, but I am Somebody. My clothes are different, my face is different, my hair is different, but I am Somebody. I am Black, Brown, or white. I speak a different language, but I must be respected, protected, never rejected. I am God's child!"

Today, I stand convicted that the life and sacrifice of Rev. Jesse Jackson and others who stood for justice and equality also stood for a little Black kid like me to become the Jeffrey King I am today. I AM SOMEBODY.

Jeffrey C. King is a Community Social Architect and Founder of In The Meantime Men's Group, Inc.



2026

THE BATTLE AGAINST AIDS IS NOT OVER

BY MICHAEL WEINSTEIN

Every year on December 1, we celebrate World AIDS Day. AIDS has been such a nightmare that it seems strange to be celebrating. Despite the legacy of pain and grief, there is so much progress to be celebrated.

When I speak to younger people about the bad old days of people with AIDS dropping like flies, the constant hospital visits, way too many memorials for young people, it feels like my father talking about the Great Depression. That was then, this is now. Can I have some money to buy a toy without hearing all those old stories about how poor you were growing up?

The current treatment of HIV is a medical marvel. We have gone from AZT, which didn't work in the long run and had horrible side effects, to one pill once a day with few side effects and a high threshold for resistance. When the "cocktail" came out in 1996, our patients had to navigate taking medicine with or without food, couldn't miss a dose, and it caused all kinds of problems. Today, you can get an injection every two months, and you don't have to take a pill every day.

That all sounds very rosy, but the

total picture is more complicated. Five hundred thousand people living with HIV in this country are not in routine care. HIV infection rates have only gone down slightly and are still rising among men of color. Sustaining HIV access and funding is still a battle.

Right now, in Florida, 16,000 people stand to be thrown off the AIDS Drug Assistance Program. Subsidies for the Affordable Care Act have been slashed, and insurance premiums are skyrocketing. The safety net is not safe. Maintaining these programs depends completely on ongoing, aggressive advocacy. Globally, there are more than 10 million people who do not have access to treatment.

HIV/AIDS mostly affects people who are considered expendable—gay men, trans women, the poor, drug users, etc. The stigma and shame often keep people from advocating on their own behalf. However, the AIDS movement has always prevailed in the end. So, as long as I am at the helm of AHF, the largest AIDS organization in the world, we will continue fighting like hell for what is right.

Michael Weinstein is president of the AIDS Healthcare Foundation.

NEVER BUILT FOR SILENCE

BLACK LESBIAN ARTISTS & SURVIVAL

BY DOROTHY RANDALL GRAY

Under the current administration, over 300,000 Black women have lost their jobs. Targets on the backs of Black women have also been painted on the hearts of thousands affected by devastating funding cuts in many arts and cultural resources. In these contentious times, how has art sustained and supported Black lesbian creatives?

“Art invites us to open/receive and consider hard truths, beautiful possibilities, and deep down Knowings. Art helps us pause, and in pausing, we can bask in the Spirit and take in more fully what our Souls are saying to us. Art is the road/the way/the always been how we can expand enough to See and make way for Freedom.” —*Sharon Bridgforth*

“I paint healing trees while praying for peace and healing, and then I pass the healing trees on to those that are in need.” —*Jean Weisinger*

“When I put words and color on a page, I am free—I belong to the galaxy I create. Art grants us a unique, healing alchemy. Together, we are stars dancing in a dark sky, forming constellations in this divine

company. I am deeply grateful for us all—reflectors of light who live on, forever.” —*Imani Tolliver*

“In these contentious times, my art is the one place where I can shape the world instead of just reacting to it. It lets me tell the truth without pulling punches, keeps me grounded, and reminds me my voice still cuts through the noise. Speaking up has always been my signature. I’ve never been built for silence.”

—*Deven Bouchet*

“I can color my way into UN-imagined possibilities and provision.”

—*Iyatunde Folayan*

“Art is food—it is medicine, it is life. It’s a mirror into oneself. In these contentious times, art can support

and sustain us by nourishing and strengthening the spirit, offer us a place to reflect, connect, recharge, and provide moments of joy along the way.” —*Jan Nicholson*

“Readers are looking for guidance and support. My intention is for my writing to be meaningful, substantial, and enlightening, especially during this time.” —*Daphne Germaine*

“Art and the act of creation allow for the imagining of different outcomes, very much needed now on a virtually daily basis. Art can provide not only a temporary escape (a brief respite from doom scrolling, for example) but also motivation to will into existence a whole new world that is more sustaining and rooted in love instead of hate. Art makes this belief possible!” —*Barbara Wallace*

“My art can support my mental clarity, physical grounding, and spiritual connection by repeatedly affirming my gift of creativity and collaboration. This gift/tool allows me to remember my shared humanity and my worthiness of peace, love, and safety.” —*Ava Square*

“In contentious times, my creative work is like a life jacket that allows me to stay afloat. It keeps me connected to my vulnerability, my heart and fortifies my faith in humanity.” —*Cynthia Ruffin*

“Art is always where I can transform pain, anger, and even despair into a cogent expression of beauty. The power of that act has saved my life, and I hope it can bring a spark of power, hope, and resolve that we will get through.”
—*Eve Sandler*

The art that compels us and the writing that writes us are antidotes for the chaos that surrounds us. Black lesbians create because we can, we must, and because we have to remind the world of its possibilities, and of Lucille Clifton’s poem, “Every day/something has tried to kill me/and has failed.”

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).



STEVEN'S STORY

BY JEFFREY C. KING



Steven Henry started our interview by searching the journal of his now deceased partner to confirm the actual date. It was March 31, 1986, when Steven's partner was diagnosed with AIDS. His partner died in 1987. After a series of routine tests, Steven was confirmed positive for the virus and has been living with HIV for 37+ years.

When Steven's partner died, AZT was being studied. Researchers



were administering the actual medication and a placebo randomly. Steven's partner never received AZT, but rather, he got the placebo.

While Steven's drug addiction continued to fuel his denial and fear, he was ultimately diagnosed with HIV at the 5P21 Los Angeles County HIV Clinic.

Steven vividly recalls witnessing people covered in KS lesions and wasting away while standing in the hallways. Providers wore masks and protective gear. Friends were being thrown out of their homes and apartments. People were cashing out their insurance policies and running up their credit cards. Men were fearful of being found out as the stigma surrounding HIV began to grow.

"Intimacy changed because there were no rules about how to navigate it. In certain sexual spaces, there was a 'don't ask, don't tell' unspoken protocol. People continued to engage

in unprotected sex. Given everything that was going on, people seemed to navigate the unknown the best they could. It wasn't like a light switch that you could turn off and on. There was a lot of misinformation, and the fear continued to grow."

When diagnosed, Steven was connected with the same doctors and friends who surrounded his partner. They all came together to help support his treatment and ultimately, to help save his life. Steven got sober in the 90s, during a time when HIV stigma was running high. Medications and treatments were improving. Steven enrolled in a number of HIV studies and even branched out to explore homeopathic/holistic alternatives.

"It was God's grace and the doctors in my life. Sex became negotiated over time, and safe sex practices became a part of my lifestyle. Medication had become a major part of my life. As my doctors learned more, they did more and requested more from me. I am amazed that today I am more focused on living and aging rather than dying. I am no longer navigating with shame. I'm not living with the idea of being less than worthy of love. I stand on an equal plane with every man, and my choices are not based on, 'Will someone love me?' I don't worry about a person's status when I approach dating."

Fighting back the tears, Steven and I closed out the interview. Steven shared with me his partner's final words. He said: "Steven, this could be My Last Great Adventure."

Jeffrey C. King is a Community Social Architect and Founder of In The Meantime Men's Group, Inc.



**The Los Angeles
Black AIDS Monument,
Pouring Into Each Other
is a constant reminder that
All Black Lives Matter**

Commissioned by the
Black AIDS Monument Committee

Sculpted by Nijel Lloyd Binns
Installed June 27, 2021

2146 W. Adams Blvd.
Los Angeles, California 90018
For hours: 323-733-4868
[www. BlackAIDSMonument.org](http://www.BlackAIDSMonument.org)
(Website live February 2022)





READY TO PLAY?

freeSTDcheck.org

AHF WELLNESS CENTER

2146 West Adams Blvd
(855) 783-2434



AHF

In The Meantime Men .org

In The Meantime Men's Group, Inc. is purposed to enrich, empower, and extend the lives of intergenerational black men, respectful of sexual orientation, through social, educational, health and wellness programs and services.

Programs and Services

Daily

Mental Health

Telehealth psychotherapy
Peer counseling

Sexual Health

HIV Counseling and Testing
Linkage to STI Screening
Linkage to PrEP, PEP
Linkage to Care
Case Management/
Linkage Services

Weekly

Every Tuesday
BROTHERS REACHING BROTHERS,
Intergenerational social networking and discussion group,

Monthly

MYLIFE 2.0, Social networking and discussion group. Ages 18-39

Quarterly

LOS ANGELES BLACK MEN'S TASK FORCE,
Intergenerational meeting FOR THE SAGES,
Social networking discussion group, and social events

Annual Activations

February

National BLACK HIV/AIDS Awareness Day

June/July

Juneteenth/Black LGBTQ+ Pride Celebration

August

Black Gay Men's Wellness Month

September




Umoja Retreat

December

World AIDS Day Anniversary Celebration



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