

MESSAGE

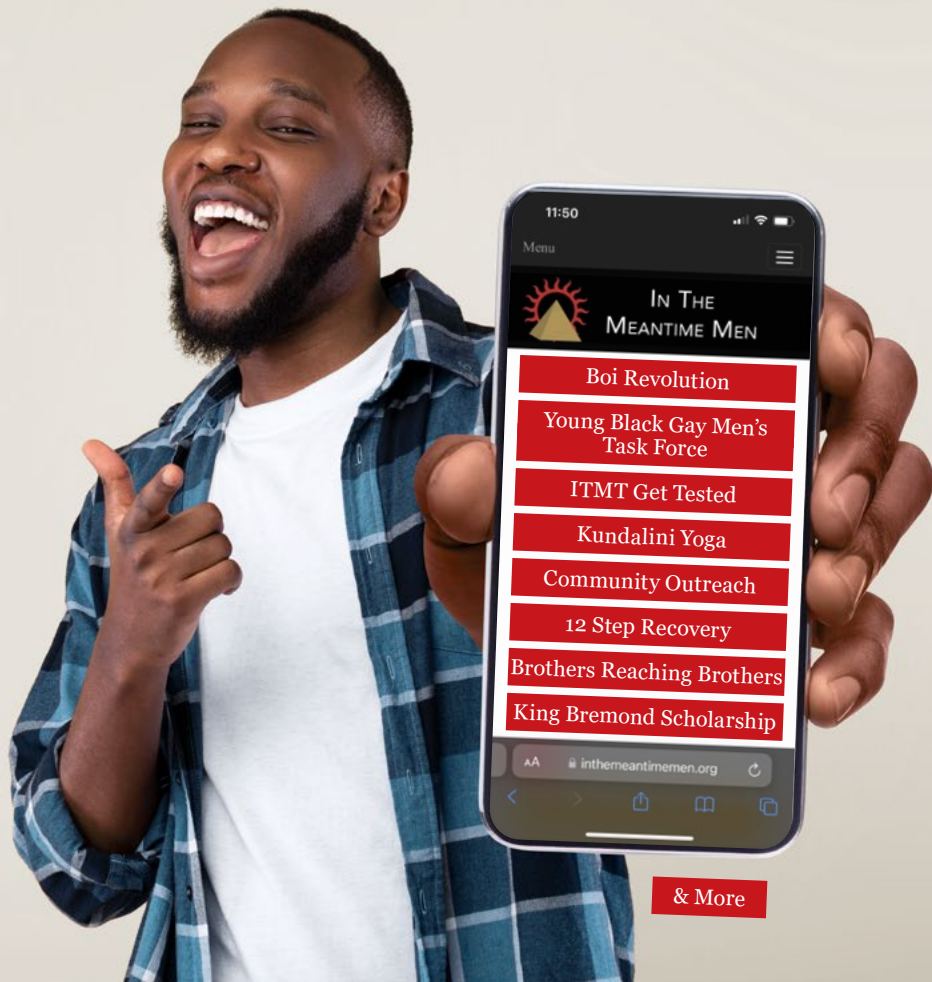
Summer 2022



We got you @ In The Meantime

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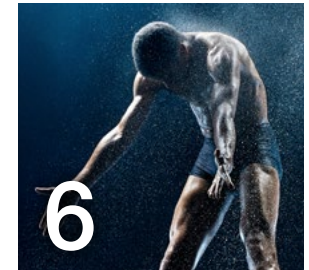
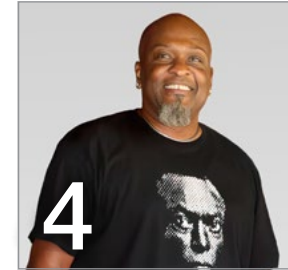
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The Price of Our Freedom

We Rise in Celebration While Giving Thanks to Our Ancestors

By Jeffrey C. King

We the Black LGBTQ+ community have been punched down upon for far too long. We have endured the wrath of those who would judge and care not to understand our journey. Many of our freedom fighters have become exhausted working to deconstruct the false narratives consistently created to demonize, disenfranchise, and marginalize us, the Black LGBTQ+ people. We have been backed into the corner margins of our society and left with two choices centered on not only surviving, but also thriving and living our greatest now and forever after, to live or die.

We cannot afford to dim our lights or to shelter our true and authentic selves. We must, rather, stand boldly and proclaim from the mountain top that we are queer and we are here. In fact, we have always been here, and the world is a better place because we *more than* exist. We contribute and build.

It is during this Pride season that we pause to celebrate those who have come before us in the essence of the Sankofa while stepping sure-footed into a new paradigm that extends

far beyond our pronouns. Yes, it is important what they call us, but it is even more important what we call ourselves.

The price of our freedom has been the loss of life and liberty, thus we must never forget where we have come from. Our progress cannot exist without forward movement and the intellectual energy required to turn the pages. In doing so, we can never allow ourselves to be held hostage by the past and present traumas inflicted on us by abusive physical and emotional weapons. We are here because we have chosen to live and because our ancestors and elders fought and endured unbearable hardships to create the safe houses for the thousands of proud Black LGBTQ+ descendants who have arrived to this appointed place in this critical historical vortex. Let us give thanks.

We have a vibrant community, and we are able to believe because our ancestors believed. We can and will continue to ignite our united superpowers to build a community that develops, supports, and heals its own. We can and will continue to

operate and co-create in tandem with our allies and the broader intersections of our existence. Critical thinking and solution-focused strategies must be employed where everyone is included, affirmed, and celebrated.

We the Queers continue to operate on multiple levels, varied plains, and within the margins of this broader world order, letting them know that we are Team Human sent here to love even when we are not loved in return. Today we celebrate the brave humanitarians who love us, including all of our

differences as we have all sought to find our common bond.

Let us continue to show up as brilliant, beautiful creatives while contributing at the highest levels of our society, manning our own narratives, and living our own truths. Let our truths be self-evident, first and foremost, as we bend the arrow of justice closer to pure equity in equality. Let the saints and sages, the elders, adults, and children rise up, Amen. Happy Black LGBTQ+ Pride!

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



Black Gay Men's Wellness Month

When We See Ourselves

By Jeffrey C. King



Black Gay Men's Wellness Month was created in August 2014 by In The Meantime Men's Group, Inc. to bring attention to the importance of Black gay men's health and to empower Black gay men to take charge of their own well-being through sustained healthy lifestyle choices.

This month-long men's health and wellness awareness campaign calls for individuals, organizations, and policy makers to direct their collective attention and resources to Black gay men's disease prevention, while encouraging early detection and treatment of health-related issues.

We live in a complex society where Black gay men are being called

and challenged to stand up to issues including racism, homophobia, stigma, and HIV while managing our mental, emotional, spiritual, and physical well-being. Black Gay Men's Wellness Month is a focal point to help

reinvigorate our movement to develop and sustain healthier communities.

This year's Black Gay Men's Wellness Month theme is "When We See Ourselves," and it is inspired by the expressed needs of men that we encounter locally and nationally seeking to write and direct the narratives of their lives.

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

■ TUESDAY, AUGUST 2, 2022

When We See Ourselves

This intensive exploration into Black queer male identity will center on a genuine and honest dialogue that will examine Black trans male identities at the intersection of being Black, trans, male, and living in America in 2022. A distinguished panel of Black transgender men will help unpack what it all means and how it impacts their individual and collective wellness outcomes.

■ TUESDAY, AUGUST 9, 2022

Condoms, COVID, HIV, STIs, Homophobia, Oh My...

This dynamic panel presentation will explore Black gay men's mental and emotional wellness. An intergenerational panel of Black gay men will share how they continue to thrive while facing the compound pressures placed upon them by society. This open dialogue will examine the challenges Black gay men face with dating, loving, and developing healthy, productive relationships.

■ SUNDAY, AUGUST 14, 2022, 6-10 P.M.

Opening Reception: Drag-ish: All White Party

Co-Hosted by For The Sages.

Free community event. All are welcome to attend.

Redline, DTLA, 131 E. 6th St., Los Angeles, CA 90014.

Featuring an Old School Drag Show.

Complimentary drinks and hors d'oeuvres.

■ TUESDAY, AUGUST 16, 2022

Brothers, Our Sex Is Good, 2022

For over 40 years Black gay men have lived under the microscope of the public healthcare system, largely due to the HIV epidemic and the disproportionate impact of the virus on Black gay men. A panel of Black gay men living with HIV will share their journey to wholeness and their quest to achieve a sense of normalcy in a society that has punched down on them throughout history. This intergenerational panel of Black men will discuss their journey from infection to the evolution and new paradigm of HIV prevention, treatment, and care.

■ TUESDAY, AUGUST 23, 2022

Age Is More Than Just a Number

In many cultures, elders are revered and celebrated and thus they live out their senior years feeling affirmed, loved, and supported. A panel comprised of members from the For The Sages social network will share the joys and pains of growing older in Black, Black LGBTQ+ and the broader LGBTQ+ communities. This panel of well-tooled Black gay men will share their formulas for attaining longevity, maintaining their zest for life, and living in their purpose.

■ TUESDAY, AUGUST 30, 2022

What's the Truth about Young Black Gay Men in 2022?

This facilitated panel of young Black gay men ages 18-29 will provide a glimpse into the world they navigate on a daily basis. During this interactive session, panelists and audience participants will gain a better understanding of what is true about and for young Black gay men. Participants will be challenged to identify progressive strategies to reach younger men and to provide for them what is needed to help them thrive.

[I AM]

The I AM Project, a black-and-white photo exhibit, is the brainchild of Jeffrey King and noted photographer Greg McNeal. The I AM Project is intended to capture, display, and preserve the history of the Los Angeles Black LGBTQ+ community. This collective of iconic figures weaves together a vibrant tapestry of brilliance, creativity, artistry, political, social justice influence, passion, philanthropy, and all out Black Joy. ITMT is excited to induct Fila Masters Portman, Valerie Spencer, and Charles McWells into this year's hall of honor that now adorns the walls of the historic Carl Bean House, home of In The Meantime.



[Fila Masters Portman]

I AM a trans woman of color serving the South Los Angeles and Watts community for more than 22 years.

I AM committed to ensuring that our community receives the healthcare and social services we deserve.

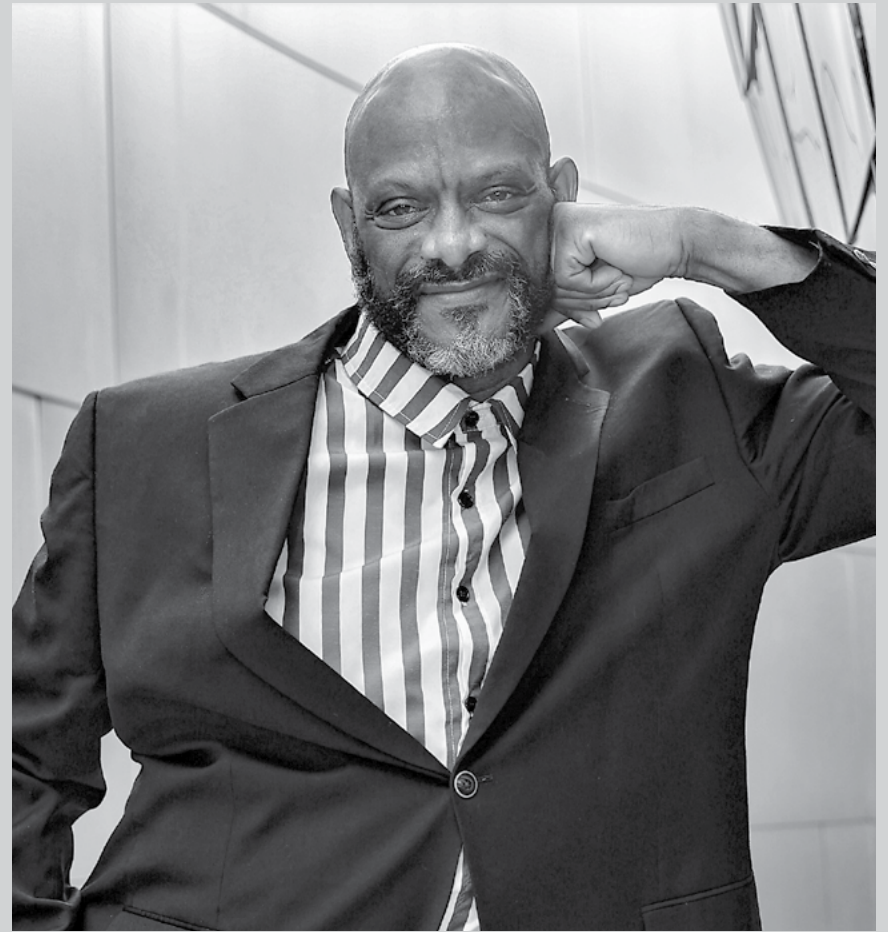


[Rev. Valerie Spencer]

I AM a healer.

I AM a fierce knower of truth who uses her life as an instrument for social change. Guided by Spirit, I hold counsel, speak, and lead from a space of clarity and internal freedom.

Ashé



[Charles McWells]

I AM... more than five sentences can convey, but here goes...

I AM a recovering addict, recovering homosexual, recovering Christian, recovering AIDS patient, recovering fill-in-the-blank.

I AM a thinker (?), a listener, a dreamer, a writer, a speaker, a lover (!), a critic who's critique is the arrow aimed higher.

I AM an artist, an activist, a co-conspirator in the fight against (fill the blank).

I AM more than I was yesterday, less than I'll be tomorrow, and all that I need to be today.

A Letter to My Son

By Claudia Spears

I thank my God for you every time I think of you and every time I pray for you, Stephen, and Carla. The privilege of being your mother has been the joy of my life. The three of you are always in my heart, for you have given me the gift of mothering, nurturing, teaching, and growing.

Kevin, thank you for being our family guru, knowledgeable in so many areas of today's world. As you traveled around the world, you brought back your experiences and shared the bounty with all of us. Thank you for 43 years of watching your intelligence leap from early education to university. We watched you at work and always serious in your career as a musician's promoter, public relations specialist, activist, mentor, community advocate. We watched you grow to maturity and become a legend in your own time.

You loved and were loved. You walked with authority. I was never into labels for you my son, and for no one else in our diaspora. My memories of you are golden! Kevin, to me you are and were our Black same-gender-loving, sensitive, compassionate, generous, artistic, long-suffering, spiritual son, given to my soulmate and to me. We loved you from the very first moments of our committed love. We cherish your memory, Kevin. God gave you to us and we gave you back to him. Rest in peace my beloved son, and we will see you in the light.

Peace, Power, Prayers,
Passion, and Blessings!
Ashé

Mom

*ITMT Mother's Day event,
left to right, Claudia
Spears, Joni Arlain,
Georgie Oliver and Breyon
Clemmons.*



A Letter to My Son

By Georgie Oliver

I wanted to start this letter to you with Dear Son. That's the standard greeting, but this letter is much more than that. I wanted you to know that I love you. I have always loved you.

When I would dream of you, you would always be a little boy, even when you became an adult, a man. I often wonder why this was so, until one day I figured it out: You will always be my baby, and you will always be that little boy to me.

Being a teen mom, I didn't have instruction, no set of tools, but I knew one thing, I loved you, you were so beautiful to me, and you were mine! I love you like that.

The first six months of your life I wouldn't let anyone touch you outside of my mother and father and a few of my siblings. You slept on my stomach every night; I had to have you close to me. I had to feel your breath, your smell, your moans, your cry. I needed to know your heartbeat. I love you like that.

If I was blind, I could feel you out, because I know your heartbeat. I know your breath of life.

When you were a kid, I used to love to see you play. You had such a high-pitch voice, a lot of kinetic energy, and you were always joyful, always making the best out of anything. You loved your Big Wheel, so it wasn't a surprise to me when you got your car at 15. I would take you everywhere with me, so you could experience the world with me. You were about 7 or 8 when it became SOOO clear to me what I had.

I guess I kind of woke up to the fact that you were a Black boy, and there is no amount of beauty and talent that could stop them from fearing you.

No amount of intellect or degrees will stop them from their fear-driven hate towards you. I thought it was just from them, and then I saw it from within ourselves, and I pause, I shudder to think. How could this be?! That was my reason for moving to Connecticut, running from it right into it. You are still beautiful and talented, so noble, everybody wanted some of you. To be you, whatever God that created you, they want to feel it, they just cannot be it, this color Black. The weight of it is too heavy for them.

I tried to tell you about the Ancient One. The I Am, Our God, The Creator, The Source, The Only One. I wanted you to know this truth, that being Black is the thread that holds the fabric of life together. I wanted to tell you that God already knew you. I kneel with my ancestors before him in prayer for you. There were many days that turned into years over, I love you like that. He knows your heartbeat, too. I tried to convey to you that you have this connection to him because of your hue to Blackness. Oh, how I prayed for you, and he answered.

I knew that I would have to mold you in a particular way, and it wasn't going to be nice, it wasn't going to feel good all time. It was going to be simple, yet complicated and complex. There are many layers of energy to discern, and I needed to teach you to recognize them. You needed to know why a rock is not just a rock to us; it's more than what we see. You needed to know how to honor your space. Yeah, I love you like that.

You intuitively knew something about being you, a Black man; but you didn't understand its language.

Madera taught me these things of the spirits, and that I must listen in silence. Then and only then could I hear what the lord was saying to me. She taught me how to listen early in the morning when sleep itself was sleep. She said that I could hear what was being said in silence if I would but listen when God is speaking to me. I tried to show you these sacred truths. I love you like that.

Being Black, you would have to work for it, no handout here. I knew that life wouldn't be kind to you all the time, so I tried to teach you how to embrace you, that your Blackness precedes you. I tried to teach you what that looks like and how to handle that, as well as the value of a career and to always explore your creativeness. Being employed gives you a sense of accountability and responsibility. It's the friend to stability.

I wrote a letter to God about you and called it "The Sin of a Mother." That sin for me was that I did not convey the magnificence of having a relationship with Him like my mother and her mother gave me, that I didn't tell you that he would understand you. It's the same relationship I have with him. I wish I had spent more time talking with you about the goodness and wonderment of God, what grace and mercy looks like. Our ancestors stood on these principles of faith we hold so dear today. I love you like that.

I just wanted you to know that when it's all said and done, at the end of the day, and the rubber has met road, I gave it my all. Not one tear drop was wasted, because I love you like that.

Remember this when you look into the eyes of your son. You are a Black man, and you are a spiritual truth. I love you like that.

Mom

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



2146 W ADAMS BLVD

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

Sat: 9:30am-5:30pm

freeSTDcheck.org



PUBLIC HEALTH
DIVISION

Our Queer Lives, Doing It for the Culture

Community came together Sunday, June 19, 2022, at the intersection of Black LGBTQ+ Pride, Juneteenth, and Father's Day. More than 200 guests received an Insti-COVID test thanks to our selfless volunteers.

In A Moment's Notice Catering Services took dining to the next level! So Lynn and his amazing staff provided excellent service. Sampson McCormick, comedian, actor, and producer served up a layered, Black, intelligent, funny as hell 45-minute set. The legendary Jewel Thais Williams addressed the crowd of adoring fans and family. The Beatitude Bishop Zachary G. Jones of the Unity Fellowship of Christ Church prayed over the open audience.

We closed out the evening with a fierce vogue contest commentated and narrated by Icon Devine Gorgeous Gucci and the Legendary Enyce Gorgeous Gucci. DJ Ben is the best DJ ever!

Today we celebrate the exceptional staff of In The Meantime for their commitment to excellence. AMAAD, Ronald Jackson, and the Club House showed up and showed out! Charles McWells, Valerie Spencer, and Fila Masters Portman were inducted into the I AM Project black and white photo exhibit. *We're not done yet! In fact, we're just getting started!*





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

Home of In The Meantime
2146 W. Adams
Los Angeles, CA 90018

For hours: 323-733-4868
www.BlackAIDSMonument.org




WE ARE
Black, brave, gay, brilliant, sexy, healthy,
spiritual, deserving, and discerning.

WE ARE
of a certain age, desire to be more,
and to live our best lives.

WE ARE FOR THE SAGES



FOR THE SAGES

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