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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Drag Story Hour Program Cancellation Due to Violence from Right-Wing Protesters

(Reno, Nevada - July 25, 2024) – It is with profound disappointment that we confirm the cancellation of the beloved Drag Story Hour program at Washoe County Libraries. Despite a stated commitment to fostering inclusivity and celebrating diversity within our community by Washoe County Libraries, the Workplace Violence Committee is recommending the cancelation of the program due to concerns for the safety of library staff over the behavior of a small group of conservative, right-wing protesters who injured a library employee and disturbed parents and children as they entered facilities for the storytimes. Violence is abhorrent and we do not condone behavior which puts our public servants at risk. From our perspective as the program has been canceled, the protesters have been rewarded for their bad behavior.

The Drag Story Hour program was established as a celebration of diversity, inclusion, and LGBTQIA+ representation within our community. Designed to promote acceptance and understanding, it features drag performers reading age-appropriate stories to children and their parents in a welcoming environment that encourages literacy and promotes acceptance of all individuals, including those who identify as LGBTQIA+.

As an LGBTQIA+ center dedicated to serving our community, Our Center is deeply disheartened to see our partnership with Washoe County Libraries undermined by those who seek to spread intolerance and division. Drag Story Hour was intended to promote understanding and compassion, yet it has become a battleground for those who oppose the very principles of equality and diversity.

"We stand firm in our commitment to diversity, inclusion, and the fundamental rights of every individual," stated Stacey Spain, Executive Director of Our Center. "The Drag Story Hour program exemplified these values, and it is deeply disappointing that outside influences have necessitated its cancellation. We will continue to explore alternative ways to promote understanding and celebrate diversity in our community."

Our Center expresses our gratitude to the community members and Washoe County Library staff who have supported the Drag Story Hour program and affirm their dedication to providing programming that reflects the diversity of northern Nevada.

We call upon County officials to reconsider their stance and take proactive measures to protect all community events from harassment and intimidation. The LGBTQIA+ community deserves to feel safe and supported in our own neighborhoods, and it is the responsibility of local authorities to ensure that this safety is upheld and not just pushed out of view. Could we produce a Drag

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Story Hour at Our Center? Of course we could, but Separate Is Not Equal. LGBTQIA+ programming should be provided equal access to our public spaces and forums.

We want to express our deepest gratitude to all those who have supported Drag Story Hour and our efforts to create a more inclusive society. Your support has been invaluable, and we remain hopeful that together, we can overcome these challenges and continue to make progress towards a more just and equitable future for all.

For media inquiries or further information, please contact Stacey Spain at 775 624-3720 or stacey@ourcenterreno.org.

Our Center provides northern Nevada's LGBTQIA2S+ community with access to advocacy, support, educational programs, services and resources. Our mission focuses on programming in support of our youth, senior and trans communities. Our Center routinely hosts community organizations for meetings at their 1745 South Wells Avenue Reno facility.

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