

Senior Spirit

THE JOY OF AGING: A WARM WELCOME TO INCOMING ETHOS CEO

Behind most people who enjoy successful careers, you can usually spot the influence of a mentor. Loren Singer is no exception. Her primary role model was her grandmother—a woman who, in many ways, paved the path for Singer to become the CEO of Ethos, a Jamaica Plain elder services agency renowned for its leadership in LGBTQ+ senior care and advocacy.

Singer grew up in a multigenerational household. Her grandmother lived with the family throughout Singer's entire childhood, eventually living to be 100. "She was amazing," Singer recalls. "She was independent, she got up

every day, showered and cooked her own meals. I adored her." Born in New York City in 1892, her grandmother even rode a horse through Manhattan! Decades later, while visiting Toronto, Singer spotted a drawing of an older woman that reminded her so intensely of her grandmother that she bought and framed it. It has hung above her desk as a constant source of inspiration ever since.

That same zest for life cultivated Singer's lifelong interest in aging. Though she initially planned to study gerontology, her career trajectory led her to work with individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities.



Loren Singer at City of Boston's Age Strong and Mayor Michelle Wu's LGBTQIA2S+ Pride Luncheon at Venezia on June 16, 2026. PHOTO Isabel Leon/Mayor's Office

Still, she harbored a deep desire to give back to her own LGBTQ+ community, alongside an ultimate goal of leading a community-based nonprofit.

"I became familiar with Ethos when I moved to Boston in 2002," Singer explains. "As

an LGBTQ person, I think you look at aging differently. I was really impressed with the groundbreaking work they were doing in LGBTQ aging." While her immediate focus remained on her existing career, turning 60 last year prompted a moment



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of reflection—and a calling to give back.

Right on cue, the stars aligned. Singer came across a job posting announcing that Ethos was searching for a new CEO. Having followed their mission for nearly two decades, she knew the timing was right. Once she met with the board and senior staff, they quickly realized she was the exact leader they had been looking for.

That leadership arrives at a vital moment. “Today our community is being attacked in ways I never thought we would see,” Singer says. “The question of survival for LGBTQ people seems more real to me than it ever has. I am just so thankful to live in Massachusetts because this state understands our issues and the critical need for services and support.”

As CEO, Singer is responsible for safeguarding Ethos’s broad, agency-wide mission while actively championing the staff on the front lines of LGBTQ+

senior care. Much of the groundbreaking programming created at Ethos was paused during the pandemic to focus on immediate crisis relief. Now, Singer is focused on restoring those services to the heights achieved during former CEO Dale Mitchell’s tenure.

Central to her vision is shifting the narrative around growing older. “I think there is a lot of joy in aging that isn’t really spoken about,” she notes. “Yes, there are challenges like isolation or physical changes, but there is also so much joy. At Ethos, we are really trying to rewrite that story and lead with the joy.” To build on that momentum, she is forging strong partnerships across the city, including work with The Pryde, the Age Strong Commission and the Mayor’s Office of LGBTQ Advancement. Reflecting on June’s Pride Luncheon for LGBTQ+ Seniors that Ethos co-sponsors with those organizations, Singer remarks, “There was so much joy in that room. People were

excited to be coming together in community—it was priceless.”

That mission hits close to home. Singer currently cares for her 91-year-old mother, who still lives independently in Sudbury—a town not historically known as an LGBTQ+ hub. Recently, her mother proudly showed her a newsletter from the local senior center advertising its own LGBTQ+ programs. “I knew right away that it was because of the ripple effect of the work Ethos began,” Singer says. “To know I am leading the organization that was the birthplace of that movement means everything to me.”

When Singer stepped into a demanding CEO role at age 60, some friends were surprised, expecting her to slow down. Her response was simple: “I have a lot more work to do, and I can’t think of a better time to be a nonprofit CEO. We need to make sure organizations like Ethos continue into the future

so this inclusive work can endure.”

If she ever needed confirmation that she was on the right path, a moment during her very first staff meeting sealed it. Glancing at a wall of framed sketches of older adults in the main conference room, Singer stopped mid-sentence. Hanging right in the center was the exact same drawing she had purchased in Toronto 30 years earlier—the spitting image of her grandmother. There was no doubt left: she had landed precisely where she was meant to be, and she knew who guided her there. ■

Bob Linscott is the Wellness Manager for The City of Boston’s Age Strong Commission, where he coordinates and facilitates wellness programs for older adults across the city. He is also on the faculty at Brown University, where he teaches Mindfulness Based Stress Reduction. More: robert.linscott@boston.gov.

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