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DINA EMERSON
PPRM DONOR & SUPPORTER

Donor Spotlight: Dina Emerson

In the heart of Las Vegas, Nevada, a city renowned for its vibrant energy and allure, resides a PPRM donor whose talent as a performer and singer echoes the spirit of this desert oasis.

For Dina Emerson, a long-time supporter, donor, and former patient of Planned Parenthood of the Rocky Mountains (PPRM), it was Las Vegas’s one-of-a-kind entertainment opportunities that first brought her here, more than two decades ago.

“I’m really lucky because my work is my passion. I’m a professional singer and I have worked for many years with Cirque du Soleil, which is what brought me to Las Vegas 23 years ago,” Dina explains. “It was supposed to be a temporary job but ultimately led to permanent jobs. And then I just ended up finding my home here.”

From her professional endeavors to her love for dystopian fiction novels, live music, and cooking, passion is a throughline in Dina’s life. Dina’s career translates directly to her philanthropy and involvement with PPRM: “I feel extremely passionate that nobody should be forced to continue with a pregnancy against their will. That is a basic human right.”

And while access to abortion care is at the forefront of Dina’s philanthropic decisions, she is continuously inspired by the vast array of services PPRM continues to offer our patients and community members.

“The education work [of PPRM] also fills in the gaps that are often missing for students,” Dina says. “STI care and treatment is also really important. Being able to go somewhere that is non-judgmental and financially accessible is key.”

That non-judgmental, welcoming, and patient-centered care is one of the first memories Dina has of the greater Planned Parenthood community. As a young person growing up in Southern California, she remembers one of her first visits to her local Planned Parenthood health center when seeking birth control for the first time.

“This is a little detail, but when I got to the exam room, I noticed the staff had warmed up the stirrups with oven mitts so that they weren’t cold when I put my feet on them,” Dina recalls. “That small gesture left me thinking ‘wow, they really are trying to care for people here.’ I felt cared for, and I felt respected.”

From patients seeking compassionate health care like Dina, to students embarking on their sex education journey, and everyone in between, PPRM empowers people to make informed choices about their sexual and reproductive health by providing high quality health services, comprehensive sex education, and strategic advocacy.



Access for everyone: PPRM's Abortion Care Expansion

PPRM serves a vast geographically and culturally diverse region, including vibrant Las Vegas, the San Luis Valley of Colorado, the Indigenous Pueblos throughout New Mexico, the Northern plains of Wyoming, and more. In addition, we now sit at the geographic crux of the reproductive health care crisis in the U.S. and have been recognized nationwide as a safe-haven for patients traveling long distances and a respite from rural health care deserts. Over the last year, we experienced record numbers of patients flooding in from Texas, Oklahoma, and other neighboring states as they seek life-saving abortion care.

Since the Supreme Court decision that overturned *Roe v. Wade*, abortion remains legal in only 26 states – meaning those remaining health care providers have absorbed the national volume of abortion patients. In the last 18 months, PPRM alone has seen a 30% increase in abortion patients post-Roe. That equates to an additional 350 abortion care patients a month.

To meet this critical moment and ensure that all of our patients can access timely abortion care, we have increased our health center hours, expanded our footprint for telehealth services, and invested in patient navigation support and training for our clinical staff.

Thanks to these efforts, our patients' current wait time for a procedural abortion care appointment is about 14 days – a significant improvement from the 28-day wait time we were seeing during the post-Roe peak. For patients who can elect to have a medication abortion, our current wait time for an appointment is about 11 days.

Our patients come first – no matter what. We have taken great strides to ensure that our health center staff are prepared to meet people who have traveled long distances and jumped through logistical hoops to get to us.

One recent patient who traveled to us from out of state to receive care said, "I have experienced hardship and I have dreams and I've doubted our political system. How could health care be something considered 'easy to access' in so many states but not in mine? With two kids at home as a single mom, I didn't want to disrupt my life, but I've never been more secure in a decision: I wanted an abortion."

We are dedicated to making abortion care accessible to all of our patients, regardless of whether they live in our region or are traveling to us from out of state. As we look ahead to 2024 and beyond, we plan to continue expanding access to abortion care even more in the PPRM region.





ADVOCACY AND ACTION

Colorado

We gather at the state capitol, awaiting the Governor's approval of our proposed bills – when pen hits paper. The reality is, our work doesn't stop when bills are passed. We celebrate and then get back to it, working to make these wins into community gains.

PPRM and our partners at Colorado Organization for Latina Opportunity and Reproductive Rights (COLOR) and the Colorado Children's Campaign collaborated alongside state agencies, such as Health First Colorado (Colorado's Medicaid Program) to translate two big policy wins into thousands of first-time Medicaid enrollees. Through this implementation work, we've expanded family planning benefits for undocumented Coloradans for the first time, as well as for Coloradans whose incomes are just above the Medicaid income eligibility limit – over 133% but under 260% of the [federal poverty level \(FPL\)](#). That means that families of four living on an income between \$40,000 and \$78,000 will now have access to expanded family planning benefits like birth control.

Southern Nevada

During Pride month and every month, PPRM is proud to show our commitment to the rights and health of the LGBTQ+ community. We show up in all of our communities to celebrate the strength, resilience, and power of the LGBTQ+ movement.

In Southern Nevada we hosted an array of events in celebration of the LGBTQ+ community in Las Vegas, Henderson, and, for the first time ever, the rural town of Pahrump. From education to advocacy opportunities, our teams made important community connections.

With support from donors like you, we can continue expanding our community engagement efforts alongside incredible partners like Henderson Equality Center, Pahrump PRIDE, and Fifth Sun Project.



New Mexico

While New Mexico is considered a safe haven for abortion and reproductive health care access, the negative impact of crisis pregnancy centers (CPCs) are on the rise. These anti-abortion pregnancy centers are designed to dissuade and shame patients from accessing reproductive and sexual health care, especially abortion care. While CPCs are harmful to patients and intentionally spread misinformation, we acknowledge they do fill the gap of providing necessities, such as baby supplies (cribs, wipes, and diapers), for expecting and new parents.

To combat the misinformation CPCs can breed and support the newest members of our community and their families, PPRM hosted a Community Baby Shower in Albuquerque. This free event bridged the gap in care to provide new and expecting parents with supplies and resources they need, from organizations they can trust. We held this event in collaboration with our community partners, the New Mexico Doula Association, Southwest Women's Law Center, WIC/SNAP of New Mexico, and PPRM's Native Community Health Network (NCHN).

Wyoming

"The drive from Denver to Cheyenne is just over an hour. But I can't help but to reflect on the stark differences between Colorado and Wyoming and what it means to cross that border as a person seeking access to quality reproductive and sexual health care," shares Adrienne Mansanares, PPRM's CEO, as she made her way to Cheyenne in support of PPRM's partner, Equality Wyoming's, Allies & Advocacy Ball in June.

This event brought together progressive supporters from across the region, serving as a pivotal community mobilization effort. In a time where hateful attacks against LGBTQ+ families are at an all-time high, this event solidified the importance of PPRM partnerships.

Growing in partnership with organizations like Equality Wyoming is a crucial step in strengthening PPRM's impact in Wyoming and we will continue to strengthen and build relationships with trusted partners in this great state.

Pictured left: Campaign Organizers tabling at the PPRM booth at a pride event in Southern Nevada.



Responsible Sex Education (RSEI) team photo

STRIVE-ing for Excellence

After the chaos of the back to school season, students are finally in their groove, balancing heavy schedules with after school programs. As educators, students, and parents across the region settle into the new school year, we join our Responsible Sex Education Institute (RSEI) in looking back on last school year's educational programming.

After high demand from parents and partners, our educators eagerly re-entered classrooms this past year with the mission to equip students of all ages with compassionate and quality sex education. In Colorado, we reached 10,926 participants across public and private schools, community organizations and nonprofits, and universities.

One partner stands out: STRIVE Prep Schools. Founded in 2006, STRIVE Prep is a charter school system in Denver, Colorado for elementary to high school grades founded on the belief that "every child deserves a high-quality education right where they live". We completed sex education curriculum across all middle and high school classes at STRIVE Prep this past school year.

This was a huge endeavor for our team that took detailed coordination and dedication to ensure all

students received quality and compassionate sex education on a wide range of topics including: Sexual Orientation, Gender Identity, and Equity; Healthy Relationships; Contraception; Anatomy; Navigating Sexual Behaviors; and Sex & Tech.

Thanks to teachers and parents, word-of-mouth recommendations spread about our programming and STRIVE invited our educators back to teach at all their locations. This past year we reached 242 STRIVE students with engaging and accurate sex ed.

Comprehensive sex education and the skills to build healthy relationships with others and oneself are vital in a child's development through all ages. The American Academy of Pediatrics lists developing a healthy sexuality through comprehensive sex education as a "core developmental milestone for child and adolescent health" (2021).

Our programming does this and more by meeting students where they are and fostering a safe and inclusive space with their peers to learn about their bodies, ask questions, and dispel myths that often perpetuate stigma around bodies, puberty, and sexual and gender identities.



EVENTS

Breakfast of Champions

PPRM's largest annual event, Breakfast of Champions, took place at the Santa Fe Convention Center in New Mexico on April 27. We honored Catherine Oppenheimer with the Changing Lives Award for her \$1 million gift in support of PPRM patients, heard a rousing keynote from reproductive justice activist, abortion storyteller, and writer, Renee Bracey Sherman, and were honored with a story from former patient, DakotaRei. By the end of the event, donors had given over \$156,000 to PPRM's programs and services.

Boulder Breakfast

We gathered again for breakfast, this time in Colorado at the Boulder Jewish Community Center for Boulder Breakfast on June 28. Here we honored the CU Buffs for Repro Rights with the Excellence in Service Award for their on-campus organizing and activism. We also heard from PPRM's manager of patient navigation, who shared some of her experiences navigating patients' travel and other needs, highlighting all that patients must go through to get the care they deserve. The Boulder Breakfast community of donors raised nearly \$65,000 for patients and services.

The Rosé Resistance

Planned Parenthood Votes Colorado (PPVC) also hosted a lively event on June 4 at Raíces Brewing Company in Denver. During The Rosé Resistance we heard from the President & CEO Adrienne Mansanares, PPVC staff members Claudia Perez and Jack Teter, and volunteer and activist Mary Jane Maestas who shared her first-hand experience testifying during the legislative session. Local band Blankslate energized the crowd throughout the evening as we raised nearly \$35,000 for PPVC's work!

Pictured top: President & CEO Adrienne Mansanares, storyteller DakotaRei, and speaker Renee Bracey Sherman at Breakfast of Champions.

Pictured middle: Representatives of the CU Buffs for Repro Rights accept their award on stage at Boulder Breakfast.

Pictured bottom: The packed crowd listens intently to our speakers at The Rosé Resistance.





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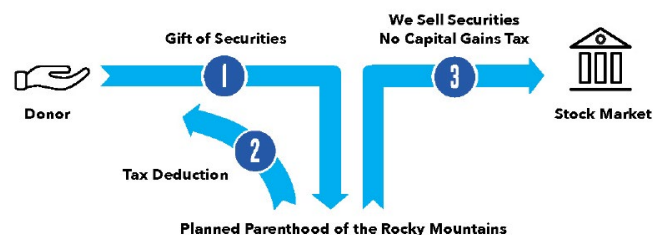
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