The Colorado Health Foundation™

Wisdom and Wonder: Weaving Generations Together for a Healthier Future?



Lately,?I’ve?been thinking a lot about how movements endure. Many of us came into this work believing that if we organized hard enough, built enough partnerships, and stayed committed long enough, we would eventually arrive at a place where the fight was won. Over time,?I’ve?come to understand something different. Every generation inherits challenges?they?did not?create?and

opportunities?they?could not have predicted. Progress is rarely linear, and the work continues because people choose to carry it forward together. That reflection inspired this year's Colorado Health Symposium theme:?***Wisdom and Wonder: Weaving Generations Together for a Healthier Future.***?

We often talk about passing the baton from one generation to the next. What strikes me now is that the exchange is not instantaneous. For a brief stretch, people move together. Knowledge is shared. Relationships deepen. Trust is built. One generation offers lessons earned through experience,?while another brings fresh ideas, energy, and ways of seeing the world. The future is shaped in that space between them.?

That is the moment many of us find?ourselves in?today.?

Across Colorado and the country, communities are navigating uncertainty, division, attacks on long-fought-for progress, and growing pressure on the organizations and leaders working closest to the issues. At the same time, I see extraordinary creativity, courage, and leadership?emerging?every day. I see people organizing in new ways, building unlikely partnerships, challenging old assumptions, and imagining possibilities that?previous?generations may not have considered.?

Wisdom and wonder are both needed for the work ahead.?

Wisdom reminds us that lasting change is built through relationships, persistence, and trust. Wonder keeps us open to?new ideas, new leaders, and new possibilities. Together, they help us honor what has come before while?remaining?willing to create what comes next.?

Those themes will be woven throughout this year's Symposium.?**Chase Strangio**, a leading civil rights attorney and advocate for transgender justice, and?**Loretta Ross**, an acclaimed activist, educator, and pioneer of the reproductive justice

movement, will help us explore identity, belonging, and how we navigate difference without losing sight of our shared humanity.?**Rev. Dr. William Barber II**, nationally recognized moral leader and co-chair of the Poor People's Campaign, will challenge us to think deeply about collective responsibility, moral leadership, and the long arc of justice work.**?Priya Parker**, author of?*The Art of Gathering*?and an expert?on building meaningful?connection?and community, will invite us to consider how gathering with intention can help sustain people, organizations, and movements over time.??

Alongside these mainstage conversations, participants will engage in workshops, Flash Talks, Poster Sessions, performances, wellness offerings, and countless opportunities to learn from one another. Some of the most valuable moments will happen between sessions, over meals, and in conversations that remind us we are not carrying this work alone.?

Those moments matter because lasting change has always moved at the speed of trust. The strongest movements are built through relationships that help us weather?difficult times, celebrate victories, share burdens, and continue moving forward together.?

I also believe that joy?has?an important role?to play?in that work. In challenging times, it can be easy to become consumed by anger, frustration, or fear. While those emotions are real and understandable, they cannot be the only things we carry. Connection, laughter, music, storytelling, and community?are all sources of joy.?Joy helps sustain us.?It?reminds?us?of?what we are working toward and why the work matters in the first place.?Expect and allow joy as we gather together.?

Overall, I hope that this year's Symposium leaves people feeling energized, connected, and grounded in the knowledge that they are part of something larger than themselves.?

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Blog

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BY

Karen McNeil-Miller