

Interview with Volunteer Spotlight of the Month – Al Raymond

- Name
 - Al Raymond
- Where did you grow up / where do you live now?
 - Al grew up in Stamford, Connecticut and has lived in Westchester for 55 years and Croton on the Hudson for the past 31 years!
- Where do you currently work/where did you work?
 - Al used to do a lot of “Clerical work”. He worked at the Christian Herald for 11 years in which he said “it was a very welcoming environment”. Al said he has been retired for “over 21 years”.
- Experience in Volunteering/ Volunteering with The LOFT:
 - Al started volunteering with The LOFT in 1992! He has been volunteering for 25 years come this December. Al has “done it all” at The LOFT.
 - “I did the [Peer Facilitator] training in Spring of 1993”. Since then, Al has “filled in for a few different groups”. Over the past 25 years Al has filled in at the thrift shop, led various groups, helped with the library, and even has held a position on The LOFT’s board! “I was on The LOFT’s board for a year and a half”. After he was on the board, Al continued to be a very active volunteer.
 - Al also has participated in gaymes night. The canasta group started up a few months ago and Al has been part of it.
 - Al “joined the Unitarian Universalist Church, one of the most LGBT accepting groups in the country, in 1996”. He has made “very good friends” from this church and also The LOFT. Sometimes his friends from The LOFT attend his church and sometimes his church members attend LOFT events!
 - We at The LOFT thank Al for his years of volunteering!
- Would he rather go on vacation in the mountains or near a beach?
 - Al would have preferred the mountains earlier on but “since 2001 I’ve gone to Fire Island so I would choose the beach now”.
- Favorite Book and Show?
 - Al’s favorite movie is “Double Indemnity” (1944).
 - Al’s favorite TV show is “Everybody Loves Raymond” (1996-2005).



- Words to Live By?
 - “I hate to see food go to waste but I also hate seeing it go to my waist”.
- LGBT History
 - “There were cruel and unjust laws in every state and the federal government that criminalized even private consensual gay sex between two loving partners”. Al said that being out in your workplace, or anywhere, could cause you to lose your job or be thrown in jail for having sex, especially in the McCarthy era. “It was a sad time”.
 - “Most states repealed those laws one by one starting in 1961, and the US Supreme Court struck down the few remaining state and federal laws (including those that applied to the armed forces in 2003”.
 - Al said that he thinks getting rid of those laws was the first step in the progress we’ve made in the last 50 years, including same-sex marriage everywhere in the US. “I am glad I’ve lived to see the amazing changes from the bad old days when we were all potential criminals”.