

California Men's Gatherings

The invitation to our Fall 115th Gathering – October 9-12, 2026

This gathering's theme:

What is California Men's Gatherings and what is a "Gathering" all about?

California Men's Gatherings (CMG) is a non-profit, all-volunteer group that produces local events and extended weekend retreats called "Gatherings." Held three times a year at summer camps in northern and southern California, each Gathering brings together men for fun activities and serious personal development work. They are ideal places to try new things, be a kid again, make new friends, reconnect with old friends, and grow as people. The Gatherings provide a safe, supportive, empowering environment for building community, healing past wounds, challenging old limitations, taking new risks, expanding consciousness, and exploring fresh new ways of looking at life.

The primary purpose of the CMG is to challenge men to rethink their role in society, to liberate men from oppressive misconceptions of what it means to be a man, and to educate men in healthy, responsible, generative ways of embracing adult masculinity.

Read this invitation for info and weekend details,
then click the Orange button at the very end to register

"Community Sharing Friendship"

Real Fun. Real Friends. Real Community.

Friendship is the basis of community. And it can be difficult to create and maintain basic relations.

This weekend is all about how to cultivate meaningful relationships intentionally. We will be working on past and future relationships. What have we learned about friendship and what we want to do in the future, as well as what kind of friends we want to be. Perhaps some of you are considering inviting a friend to join you. You are welcome to do so.

We invite all attendees to offer workshops that bring THEM joy and might well bring you some, they may coincide with the theme or are completely outside of it! You can offer a workshop on anything or convene a "conversation" on a topic of interest to YOU and see if others want to talk about that. They usually do!

Additionally, we will have "Camp Activities". We're bringing back the Ropes Challenge Course which you can sign up for [for FREE, space is limited to 20] and overcome fears of just about anything doing that. There will also be a staff-led hike, archery and canoeing.



Our Facilitator for this weekend is a CMG veteran! He's a multi-Gathering attendee that many of you know. **Damian Goldvarg Ph.D., MCC,** has thirty years of experience in providing leadership development services including: executive assessment and coaching, facilitation, leadership training, strategic planning, and team building. Originally from Argentina, he has worked with individuals and organizations in over fifty countries, including the Americas, Europe, Africa, and Asia, offering services in English, Spanish, and Portuguese. He is a Master Certified Coach and received his Ph.D. in Organizational Psychology from Alliant University in California. He is an accredited coach supervisor (ESIA) and facilitates certifications in professional coaching, mentor coaching, and coaching supervision. He was the 2013-2014 ICF global president. Damian is the author of five coaching books, four of them in Spanish.

He will host two interactive sessions inviting participants to explore the meaning of friendship,

belonging, and connection in the lives of gay men. Through reflection, storytelling, small-group dialogue, and experiential activities, participants will examine the experiences and patterns that shape how they build and sustain friendships. The sessions will also address vulnerability, trust, loneliness, mutual support, and the challenges that can complicate relationships within gay communities. Participants will leave with greater clarity about the friendships they want to cultivate and practical commitments for creating deeper, more authentic connections.

Whether you're coming for heart-centered dialogue, flirtatious eye-contact over dinner, sacred stillness in the woods, or a sweaty dance floor full of possibility, this weekend is designed to help us cultivate relationships intentionally, and as a **collective**.

Through workshops, play, and shared ritual, we'll co-create a space that's joyful, sexy, soul-fed, and deeply alive. Let's gather not *just* to **feel good**, but to **feel the joy that comes from being together**—and remember the power of being together.

What will I find at this gathering?

A slightly shortened "Friday night to Monday Breakfast" Gathering [4pm arrival - 10 am depart].



- ♂ Workshops hosted by anyone with an idea
- ♂ Socials to meet old and new friends
- ♂ Open time for a little peace and quiet
- ♂ Variety show to see/show our talents
- ♂ Outside time for hikes, leisure, and more
- ♂ Late night games and movies with snacks
- ♂ Massage room to get/give relaxation
- ♂ Late afternoon "mocktail" party in dining hall
- ♂ Ropes course for the first twenty interested
- ♂ Cuddling with warm men in the puppy pile
- ♂ A play space for the frisky boys
- ♂ A lovely wrap-up on Sunday evening to all come together



Where… and when…

Pathfinder Ranch in Mountain Center, CA is a serene and picturesque retreat across the San Jacinto Mountains from Palm Springs and just outside the scenic town of Idyllwild. The camp is known for warm hospitality, environmental awareness, and hot, freshly-cooked food.

The Gathering is held during the Indigenous People's holiday weekend.
FRI, October 9 (arrive between 4 p.m. & 5 p.m. if you can)
through MON, October 12 at 10 a.m.

All meals from Friday dinner through Monday breakfast are included.

If you can't arrive until late Friday or even Saturday, that's okay. Likewise, some may need to leave Sunday…just let us know if you leave early, so we don't worry! Better to come for much of the event than none, right? But to answer that common question, the rate *is* the same even if you can't make all of it.

RETURNEES: The next few sections with purple headers are important for first time attendees. However, it may be worthwhile for all to review, especially if it's been a while since you've joined us. We hope you will be sharing this with a friend too!

Who comes and who is welcome?

CMG'ers come from across California, other states, and even internationally. The men who attend CMG Gatherings (and our numerous local events state-wide) are a diverse group, varying in age, backgrounds, traditions, and spiritual practices. While CMG'ers are predominantly gay or bisexual men, ***all persons 18 years or older who self-identify as male are welcome***, including transgender and straight men. Most areas of Pathfinder Ranch are ADA-accessible, so we gratefully encourage and welcome all!



What happens at the Gathering?

The weekend features concurrent elective ***workshops*** on a variety of topics as well as social events (which include a variety show, a dance, heart circles, puppy piles, yoga/meditation, massage exchange, and much more). The wide choice of activities allows each man to create his own personal experience. It's a weekend to try new things, make new friends and reconnect with old friends.

For some, a Gathering is like the fun of going away to summer camp, especially for those who may not have had a chance to go as a kid, or who would like to do it all over again in a safer, more supportive space. For others, it is more about personal growth and self-exploration in our workshops and assemblies. Or maybe it's just a chance to get away from everyday life and enjoy nature. It's your Gathering!

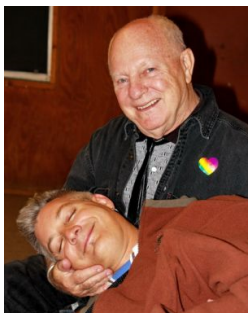
In addition, we *all* meet together four times during the weekend (besides meals) at our ***assemblies***.

The Gathering environment allows for deeper connections with other men. It is a special and safe place where men can let their guard, open their hearts, and have fun in an environment where the focus isn't on electronics, alcohol and recreational drugs (although there's a designated drinking/vaping space after 9pm).

CMG strives to create a space for all men, regardless of sexual orientation, age, race, religion, physicality, or background. We know we can find better ways to connect – more openly, more honestly, with less fear, and with a lot more fun.

We are committed to offering the opportunity for all men to learn, grow, unite, and support one another through our organization motto: "Connecting Men at the Heart."

The Buddy program



We know that it can be intimidating to come to CMG for the very first time.

The **buddy program** gives first timers someone they can reach out to if they have any questions, concerns, or just need to talk.

After you register, you will receive a **newcomer video** to help you prepare for the weekend. There will also be a **first-timer orientation** on Friday evening for you and, if you like, your buddy.

How do I get to camp? What should I bring?

Information about Pathfinder Ranch will be included in your final confirmation email. For those immediately curious, here's a link to the Ranch's website: PathfinderRanch.com.

Around two weeks before the Gathering, you will receive a "Glad You're Coming!" email with necessary information about the Gathering, including a tentative schedule of all activities, directions to Pathfinder Ranch, and a recommended list of **what to bring** (and not bring). If you have questions, please e-mail Fall@theCMG.org .

Oh, and if you need (or can offer) a ride, there's a place to say so during registration.

Will I get a camp map?



Yes. The names that the camp gives to the cabins are illogical, so we rename them simply as A through I, in a big circle. **If you haven't been to Pathfinder since 2022,** please click this link to watch a two-minute video that makes the layout very clear. Note that two small details are outdated in the video. [1] "Play Room" has been moved to the Infirmary space in Cabin I; it's no longer in B. [2] Cabin D has three meeting spaces D1, D2, & D3, not just two.

Cell Phone & Internet Service

Cellphone service may be spotty, depending on which provider you have. The camp has Wi-Fi available in some areas, but it's not super reliable. Electronic devices are certainly welcome, but please be present to the weekend, and primarily leave the rest of life out in "that other world."

Smoking Policy

Smoking is allowed ONLY on the patio behind the dining hall [a camp mandate]. The issue isn't so much your smoke; it's the potential for fire. Gummies and gum are safer ways to get nicotine or THC, if you need those.

Accommodations and meals



The dorm registration fee includes a bed in a shared, heated bunkroom, which has an indoor, communal bathroom with individual showers. Bottom bunks go quickly so registering earlier can help you snag one of them if that's important to you. And if you're willing to take a top bunk, bless your heart! That could mean one more man coming who wouldn't have been able to otherwise. Housing upgrade options are described below.

Eight meals are served from Friday dinner to Monday breakfast, with vegetarian and vegan options always available. If you want to bring more non-refrigerated for yourself, feel free! In addition, snacks are available 24/7. Want to add to our snacks? We'd love that! Regardless, you will not go hungry! :-)

You Must Be on our Actual Mailing List to Register

For our protection, CMG requires that all attendees be on our mailing list (which is free to join). Strange as it sounds, registering for the gathering doesn't put you on our mailing list for anything in the future; that's a separate CMG database.

If you're not already on our mailing list, please go immediately to www.TheCMG.org/join and sign up. It's just six fields. There is now a spot on the Reg form to indicate that you want us to do that for you, but we appreciate you handling it.

Alcohol and Marijuana Policy (as of Feb 2025)

Our policies on alcohol and marijuana changed last year. Read more about the current plans related to these at www.TheCMG.org/alcohol-marijuana . The recovery community and the normies have had no negative war stories in two years We will say more about poicies in the "Glad You're Coming!" email.

Housing Upgrade Options

For details on how to upgrade to more private accommodations (hint, they go fast!), click to thecmg.org/lodging. NOTE: If you receive returnee financial aid, you may NOT then pay for upgraded housing. If you are a First Time Attendee [this is your very first CMG Gathering AT CAMP then you CAN opt for the First-Timer Discount AND upgrade your housing. You don't have to take the discount and we thank you for your support!

The CMG Variety Show!

This is your opportunity to step out on stage and show us your talent(s), which might be singing, dance, poetry or twirling a flaming baton...? As with everything else at the Gathering, the audience is supportive, so think about fulfilling that stage dream. If you wish to perform, create your Variety Show submission form here. Otherwise, have a seat in the audience and enjoy the show! Questions? We'll ask our show coordinator, if you write us at Fall@theCMG.org . The Variety Show form is in the Confirmation email you'll receive after Registration.

Present a workshop!

Do you have a passion, gifts, wisdom, experience, or interest you'd like to share with us?



Workshops are led by all of us - the men who come to the weekend on a volunteer basis. It could be a presentation. Or a group discussion. Or an activity you want to lead. This creates a wonderful sense of discovery throughout the weekend.

Workshops can be almost anything! Consider ideas, perhaps, that are based on our theme, having fun, bringing joy, arts and crafts or completely different interests like exploring new subcultures, meditation, discussing lessons learned from a recent experience/book/class, dance, outdoor/active fun, art exploration, storytelling, fantasy, and more.

Submit a proposal at check-in or, even better, create a neat, pre-printed workshop form by clicking here. Spending time now will allow for more thoughtful, accurate descriptions, make it more legible, and allow us to plan ahead. The Workshop form will ALSO be in the Confirmation email you'll receive after registration.

You needn't feel that you must have a mastery of something to create a workshop; if you have interest enough to give something a try, no matter how basic, CMG is a great place to give it a whirl! Some of the most requested repeat workshops came from people who initially didn't feel totally sure about leading it. If you have questions, write FallInfo@theCMG.org

Lots of FUN events: The Mocktail Party - The "Wear ANYthing" Dance! - The S'mores Campfire! -The Show!

So much to do, you just can't do it all! Come dance to oldies and, if you're up for it, dress the part! Get your Saturday Night Fever or other 70s looks going to add to the fun. What sounds like fun to you? Drag? Leather? Jockstrap? Toga? A giant panda? Whatever feels fun to wear is welcome. And for those who crave some **clothing-optional** events, remember that this DANCE is fully indoors! So-o-o, while the *theme* does say to "Wear Anything," that *could* mean just a bow tie, cat paws, or go-go boots! Just remember a robe for the trip from your cabin! Except for the dance, most events are in the Dining Hall or public areas, where clothes are mandated. But, they can be "street legal" revealing, if that is your thing!

The Sing-Along Movie, or maybe an episode or two of a hot gay series?

Can't legally say what it's gonna be, but it's always fun…dependent on internet availability, sigh. Sometimes, we even go old school and play a <***GASP***> DVD! This is really "roughing" it!

The Mocktail Party

A festive get-together before dinner one night where we don't process anything or learn a darn thing…just fun together! It might be Friday night this time, before our first meal together -– a chance to meet & greet!

The Play Room

Since we don't want guys getting it on in the public cabins, we have a special place to go for this. **The Play Room** will be in the Infirmary, which will be good for what ails ya! Late night is likely to be its prime time (rumor has it that 10:45pm is a good time to cruise in), but you can hang there anytime to see who else is feeling the vibe.

Our coordination team has a lot on our plate, so if you love the idea of us having a great looking Play Room, what could you contribute? Erotic décor? Lighting? A portable glory hole? As of now, we don't have someone stepping up to help coordinate turning a camp room into something more…unseemly. The room will exist, décor or not, but if you would enjoy that role, drop a note saying so to Fallinfo@theCMG.org . Coordinator or not, if you have ideas or items to bring; you can also add your touches at the last moment! Note that the generosity of spirit is why there was a sling at the Spring Play Room.

Registration

We register through an online process *prior* to the Gathering weekend; there will be no on-site registration or "day pass" option. Registration will close on the dates/times shown on the next page, unless we sell out the Gathering sooner.

Cancellation policy

Until **September 24th at 11:59 pm**, you can apply for a refund; all will be returned, minus a $50 cancellation fee. For our policy beyond that date/time, see www.theCMG.org/cancel .

What does it cost to attend?



- **Our Early-bird rate is $350 and will apply through August 31 at 11:59pm** to encourage you to commit early!
- **Standard rate $375 will be available from September 1 12:01 am through September 24th at 11:59pm.** for those who can not commit during early-bird.
- **"Late registration" at $400 will start on September 25th and be available until we sell out;** a wait list will be taken in case somebody cancels. The camp now requires a specific headcount on Sept 25. However, we do have a camp minimum number of 60 that we must hit. We had 60 last year and we're aiming for 80 this fall. Of course, if we hit our maximum of 120 sooner, we'll close then, still taking a wait list because shit happens.

Financial Aid

RETURNEES: $100 in Financial Aid is available for any returnee for whom the rates are a personal challenge; It is our intent that every man who wants to attend be able to. As such, limited financial aid is available. Note that **Early and Standard and Late registrations fees apply to all**, so if you're applying for financial aid, we REALLY encourage you to jump on the lower early rate! NOTE: You have to PAY for your registration in the same time windows to *get* the rate that applies within them. *Before you register*, send an email request with your name, phone number, zip code to request to Registration@thecmg.org and we will get back to you quickly. Please note that requesting Financial Aid means you cannot get a room upgrade.

FIRST-TIMER ATTENDEES: We have an optional first-timer **$150 discount**, if that would help you make the decision that you could come to this gathering. This option is built into the registration form so **first timers shouldn't fill out the additional Financial Aid form above; do this is instead:** Use the code **1STCMG** if you're a first timer wanting that. If you don't need the discount, we greatly appreciate your contributing the full fee! **To use the code: On the 2nd Page, right below your total dollar amount, click the blue link that says Promo, Credit or Voucher Code and enter 1STCMG [all caps].**

NOTE: Unlike financial aid recipients, those requesting the "First-Timer Discount" CAN also request a housing upgrades.

In return for either of these grants, recipients are encouraged to volunteer a little more during the weekend than others might, as a way of giving back and supporting our efforts to include all. But ***everyone is expected to*** volunteer at the Gathering! AND, it is a great way to MEET NEW GUYS! Also, NEW THIS YEAR, we plan to have a big sheet of paper up on the wall near the "nametag table" to write THANK YOUs on. Most of our guys who donate to Financial Aid/First Timers Discounts want to be anonymous. We want YOU to be able to say "Thank you!" and want *them* to be able to read those thanks. You really can never say "Thank you!" enough!

Donations to Financial Aid

Please consider making an additional, tax-deductible contribution to the Financial Aid Fund. Your donation helps make the Gathering available and affordable to men from all walks of life. And please check out the sheet of paper on the wall where the guys will be encouraged to write "thank you" notes if they've gotten either FInancial Aid or a First Timer Discount. But ANYONE can write one and EVERYONE is encouraged to READ THEM!

Ready to sign up???

Great! It's on the next page:

Click the orange button below to head to registration for the event. It should cause a little drop down that starts with https://buytickets . Just click that link to continue.

The system doesn't "remember" anything. You don't need to have a user name or password, but you also have to fill it all out each time. You'll first go to theCMG.org [our website] to the Fall Page. From there there is [unfortunately one MORE page that there is no way to get rid of. It is built into the reg system] and THEN you can start Registration!

"Will you come join us at the cabins for some friendly revelry?"

(You may have to tell your computer to "allow" the button above to access our registration site; please do…we promise it's safe!)

I'm clicking –> HERE <– to register!!!



AI generated because the current editor is not artistic and we don't have a volunteer for graphic arts on call

We can't wait to see you there for the fun!