



Contestant: Chris Conner
Drag Mom: Star Kirkland

Chris Conner is Director of Homelessness Systems Strategy for the City of Denver’s Department of Housing Stability. In his role, he helps lead city investments in community-based organizations working to resolve homelessness experiences throughout the city.



Although many people around town are familiar with Chris, he highlights his wife, Melanie Asmar, as the one everyone knows stating, “people may have encountered my wife, through her reporting on Denver Public Schools for Chalkbeat and previous reporting for Westword. Or maybe through her tap-dance revue with other dancers in Lakewood Community Recreation’s tap program.”

Chris is also a father of two children: a 7-year-old son and 5-year-old daughter, and an adopted cat named Captain Gorton Fishsticks (named after his kids’ favorite frozen food). “My son is all-in on kindness and surprises me with his generosity and care for the bigger world,” adds Chris. “I typically describe my daughter as the toughest one in our family. If there was a strange knock at the door at 2:00am I might send her to answer it. She is fierce and determined but also has a wonderful gentle side that comes through with animals. She wants to be an animal doctor—probably to crocodiles.”

What inspired you to volunteer your time for the “Drag Eye” event?

On the professional side of my life there are clear inequities in youth homelessness for LGBTQ2S+ youth. Long ago, when I was a Street Outreach Case Manager at Urban Peak, these were very evident and I spent a bit of time bringing support at Rainbow Alley. I understand that folks in the crowd may already be familiar with the experiences of homelessness, but recent studies suggest up to 40% of youth in homelessness would identify as LGBTQ2S+, and LGBTQ youth are 120% more likely to experience homelessness than other youth. This doesn’t represent a deficiency in any of these kids, but rather a broader context of bullying, dispossession, and trauma in so many institutions that could otherwise support them: families, health, schools, faith, commerce/employment, etc.

On the personal side, I’ve spent a lot of time with my nose in a book on gender theory-- Judith Butler’s stuff and the rest. I’ve been lucky and have benefited from strong, authentic friendships through all the letters of the LGBTQ2S+ alphabet and these friendships happily expect allyship. And, at a different level, I’ve had my own experiences of bullying around sexuality/gender that (even as a straight guy) touched upon the core of my fullest, and best self. In a more affirmative way, my daughter is a big fan of Kitty Girl from RuPaul and we dance along to that routine frequently.

Finally, I'm inspired toward the mission of Matthew Shepherd Foundation and have known and been inspired by Lushus as a colleague at the city. I made a point to let her know my eagerness to help – I hope it's a great opportunity for the Foundation and it's a wonderful opportunity for me.

Personal Motto: “Be A Good Person.”

Happy Hour Drink: I've been sober for several years so it's mostly been water and LaCroix for me. But, as a parent, I can still CRUSH a juice box.