



Invitation for Fri Nov 24 – Mon Nov 27, 2023

A sweet Friday-Monday getaway with warm, wonderful men!

AT PATHFINDER RANCH IN MOUNTAIN CENTER, CA - JUST OUTSIDE BEAUTIFUL IDYLLWILD

Read this invitation for details, then click the button at the very end to register

What's the difference between a Gathering and a Getaway?

Not a lot! It's almost the same except that we don't select a theme or hold assemblies on Saturday and Sunday *about* that theme like we do in the Spring. Instead, we hold more of the workshops that attendees bring to deliver. A bit more laid back...and easier on the planners than Spring Gatherings!

The event starts the day after Thanksgiving and runs through Monday. We realize some people may need to leave Sunday if they cannot get Monday off (and it's still VERY worth coming, if so. We're hopeful, though, that most attendees will take that extra day off, as they did last year.



♂ 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, pool, and more

♂ Late night games and movies with snacks

♂ Massage room to get/give relaxation

♂ Themed mocktail "happy hour"

♂ Cuddle with warm men in the puppy pile

♂ The evening "Wear Anything" dance

♂ A play space for more personal encounters



Where... and when...

Pathfinder Ranch in Mountain Center, CA is a serene and picturesque retreat in Garner Valley, 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 great freshly cooked food.

The Gathering this year runs from Black Friday to Cyber Monday, so shop before or after! **FRI, NOV 24 (arrive between 3 p.m. & 5 p.m. if you can) through MON, NOV 27 in the late morning.**

If you can't arrive until later 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 wonder if you're lost in the woods! Better to come for *much* of the event than *none*, right? The cost is the same, though, even if you miss some of it.

RETURNEES: The next few sections with purple headers are more for first time attendees. Returnees can skim down to where blue headers start again.

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 hundreds of 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 those 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 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 the personal growth and self-exploration in our workshops and assemblies. It's your Gathering!

In addition, besides meals together, we all come together twice through the weekend: first, at Friday night's welcome and then at closing ceremonies Monday morning.

The environment of a Gathering allows for deeper connections with other men. It is a special and safe place where men can let down their guard, open up their heart and just have fun in an alcohol and drug free environment.

CMG reaches out to and creates a space where all men, regardless of sexual orientation, age, race, religion, or background can find different 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, connect and support one another in "Connecting Men at the Heart."

The Buddy program



We know that it can be intimidating to come for the first time. The buddy program gives first timers someone they can reach out to if they feel confused, overwhelmed, or just need to talk.

There will be a **newcomer video** (sent after you register to help you prepare for the weekend or you can watch it [here](#)) as well as an in-person **first-timer orientation** (following dinner on Friday) for you and, if you like, your buddy.

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

As the Gathering gets closer, you'll receive your "Glad You're Coming" letter. It will include necessary information about the Gathering, a draft schedule for the weekend, directions to Pathfinder Ranch, things to know about the camp, and a recommended list of what to bring (and not bring). If you have questions, please e-mail Question@thecmg.org.

For those immediately curious about the camp itself, here's a link to the Ranch's website: PathfinderRanch.com. (Ignore the awful map on their site; we'll give you a better one!)

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

Cell Phone & Internet Service

Cell phone 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. Ultimately, electronic devices are welcome, but we hope you will be present to the weekend, and primarily leave the rest of life out in 'that other world.'

Accommodations and meals



The base registration fee includes a bed in a shared, heated bunkroom with shared bathroom/showers.

For details on how to upgrade to more private accommodations (hint, they go fast!), click to thecmg.org/lodging . NOTE: If you opt for the first timer discount or receive returnee financial aid, you may not also opt for upgraded housing.

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

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...? 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](#). You can hand-write one upon arriving, if you must, but we appreciate you handing it in upon arrival instead, if you can. Not interested in performing? Okay! Have a seat in the audience and enjoy the show! If you have additional questions, contact our show coordinator at Talent@thecmg.org.

Present a workshop!



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

Workshops are led by you all - 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 variety for the event and a wonderful sense of community.

Workshops can be almost anything! Consider ideas like interests, 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 workshop form to bring by clicking here](#). Spending time now will allow for more thoughtful, accurate descriptions, make it more legible, and allow us to plan ahead more.

You needn't feel that you have to have a mastery of something to create a workshop; if you have an *interest* enough to give something a try (like a discussion group on a topic), 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: question@theCMG.org

Smoking Policy

Smoking, including medical marijuana, is allowed only on the patio behind the dining hall. The issue isn't so much your smoke; it's the potential for fire. Gummies and gum are safer!

Will I get a camp map?

Yes. The cabin names given by the camp are illogical and confusing, so we're bringing back something that worked well for the last two gatherings. We're renaming them! **A-B-C order names**, going around the mostly circular camp center, makes it way easy to figure out where you're going.

If you haven't been with us since we instituted this new camp layout, please click the image below to watch a two-minute video that should give you a great orientation to the camp layout.



The "Wear ANYthing" Dance!

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 party 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!

The Rainbow Mocktail Party

Those wearing red go to the front of the line! Nothing TOO daring (because it's where camp staff can see us) but, other than that, enjoy getting creative in whatever rainbow-related fun means to you. If you don't have rainbow wear, come in whatever colors of the rainbow you have (a red shirt, a yellow bandana, and blue sweats, for instance?) and enjoy the fun!

The Body Shop (or maybe the Devil's Den, if we have to move it to Cabin D)

Since we certainly don't want guys getting it on in the public cabins, our play zone is the place to go for some good ol' fashioned naughty fun! The "Body Shop" cabin will most likely be in Cabin B again; we'll let you know, of course, if that changes. Late night is likely to be its prime time (rumor has it that 10:45pm is a particularly good time to cruise), but you can hang there any time 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 Body Shop, 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 question@theCMG.org. Coordinator or not, if you have ideas or items to bring; you can also add your touches at the last moment!

What about COVID?

CDC recommendations at this do not warrant our verifying vaccination or requiring testing prior to coming. However, the steering committee and board strongly encourage your taking a test (home or clinic) either Thursday or Friday just in case you find yourself surprised by a positive test. The more people who take this step of consideration, the more likely we are not to have people converting upon returning home.

Registration

Registration is done online **prior** to the Gathering weekend; there will be **no on-site registration or "day pass" option**.

Registration will close at 11:59 p.m. on **Nov 13**. Why so far before the gathering? Because Pathfinder is now requiring a firm headcount from us *the next morning* so we **have** to close it then.

What does it cost to attend?

We've moved past the complicated sliding-scale structure that some of you remember to this simpler, flat-rate structure (click [here](#) if you'd like to know why):



- **Early-bird rate (\$350)** will apply **through Oct 20 at 11:59pm** to encourage you to commit early!
- **Standard rate (\$375)** will be available from **Oct 21 through Nov 13 at 11:59pm** for those who do not commit during early-bird.
- **There is NO late registration available this year!** The camp has changed its policy and we have to give them a hard number on the morning of Nov 14. That morning, we will switch into “wait-list mode” for wannabee attendees, such that if there's a cancellation, we'll work our way down that list. Please don't count on that; register in time!

Financial Aid

Financial Aid is available for those for whom the rates are still challenging; It is our intent that every man who wants to attend be able to. As such, limited financial aid is available. Note that **early vs. standard rates apply to all**, so if you're applying for financial aid, we REALLY encourage you to jump on the earliest possible rate!

First-timer attendees: We have an optional **\$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 an additional Financial Aid form**. Use the code **1STCMG** if you're a first timer wanting that. If you don't need it, we appreciate your full fee. 😊

Returnees: Limited financial aid of \$100 is available, while funds remain. Details and application at <https://thecmg.org/aid>.

NOTE: Housing upgrades are not available to those requesting **either** of these options.

In return for this grant, 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.

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.

Refund policy

Until 11:59pm on **Nov 13**, you can apply for a refund and all will be returned, minus a \$50 cancellation fee. After that, you may make a plea regarding your reason for cancelling and often, if possible, we work with you on that.

Ready to sign up???

Great! On your mark, get set, click:

I'm clicking here to register!!!

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



California
Men's Gatherings
Connecting Men at the Heart