



May 31, 2019

As we head into the weekend of Pride, we want to take some time to connect and share some things that are both personal and political. Over the past few weeks our community has been through a lot of loss, during a time when we are also celebrating our strength, resilience and visibility. This tension holds an intensity that we feel is important to acknowledge.

On May 16<sup>th</sup>, Chad Smith passed away. Chad was the Executive Director from 2009 – 2014 at Rainbow Resource Centre. Chad was a passionate advocate and strong leader who grew the organization immensely during his time here – from finding a new space, and launching programs, his legacy can be seen throughout Rainbow. Chad had a way of connecting, honouring and supporting our community and would always remind us to hold space for possibility, to have hope, and always work toward change. His experience as a social worker and ties to the community uniquely positioned him to support the growth of the Centre and he changed many lives through offering countless meaningful student placements, working one-on-one with clients, and supporting programming. We will miss his smile, unbounded energy, and commitment to the wellbeing of the 2SLGBTQ+ community.

Past and present participants of our Youth Program, as well as current and former staff members have been greatly impacted by the recent loss of two young community members, Lilja Bruckshaw and Xavier Raddysh. We know it can be hard to see past grief; it can feel as though the heaviness and sadness are taking up all of the space in the room. We hope we can look around the room and notice that even in grief, we are together. United by a sense of urgency, the need for connection and solidarity is palpable. If you have been a part of programming, or accessed our services in the past, we want to remind you that you can always come back. Whether you attended Youth Programming years ago, or use the library, or even if you've never walked through our doors, reach out and let us know how we can help you. The Counselling Program has same-week appointments available for those grieving. Please contact us at 204-474-0212.

Resilience is part of our collective identity. Our community created chosen family; let's rise together to honour the lives lost by creating healing spaces that celebrate strength and show others that they are seen and loved.

Additionally, we would love for you to send us messages of hope for our community. For the youth, for your younger self, for your friends and loved ones. We will post all the messages received anonymously on social media. Please email these messages directly to [josephm@rainbowresourcecentre.org](mailto:josephm@rainbowresourcecentre.org) or direct messages to @rainbowresourceyouth on Instagram.

***In loving memory of Lilja Bruckshaw,  
Xavier Raddysh, and Chad Smith.***

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