

The background of the page is a vertical rainbow gradient with horizontal bands of color: purple, red, teal, blue, dark blue, light blue, yellow, and dark grey.

RAINBOW RESOURCE CENTRE

2020/21
ANNUAL
REPORT

MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIR OF THE BOARD

For the 2SLGBTQ+ communities in Manitoba, like most others, this was a year of upheaval, uncertainty and change as we were forced to find new ways of being community in the midst of a global pandemic. For the Rainbow Resource Centre, it was also a year of significant transition and adaptation.

In November, we said bon voyage to our former Board Chair, Cynthia Fortlage. Cynthia chaired the Board from 2017-2019 and led us in building our fundraising capacity as well as encouraging more diversity in programming. Cynthia has gone on to travel the world, sharing her insights on making workplaces more inclusive. We wish her well in this new adventure. I also want to thank Kathy Jones who provided vital leadership to the board as Vice-Chair and Interim Chair during this period. Thank you to outgoing Board members Elliot Leven, Robert Fairbairn and Veronica Gingles for years of commitment and valuable contributions.

At the same time Mike Tuthill, our former Executive Director who served the Centre from 2013- 2019 left for an exciting new opportunity. We are very grateful to Mike for his immense contribution to the Centre over the years. Mike worked locally to expand and diversify programming, helping to shape the Two-Spirit initiative and expand the older adult and youth programs. He was also instrumental in the development of Enchanté, a national network of 2SLGBTQ+ Centres. While he is missed at the centre, we share his excitement in this next phase of his career.

After undertaking a National search, the Board was excited to welcome Noreen Mian as our new Executive Director at the beginning of March. Noreen has worked in Winnipeg's not-for-profit sector for over a decade and upon arriving at Rainbow she found herself leading a remote team of staff that she had only just met, supporting a community through an event none of us were prepared for. We are very thankful for her strength and leadership during this time and look forward to introducing you all to her in person sometime soon.

It is hard to ignore the effects that the COVID-19 shutdown is having on Rainbow Resource Centre and the wider 2SLGBTQ+ community. After closing our doors to the public, the Centre team quickly mobilized to find new ways to deliver programming. It has been a time of challenge but also great innovation as we took the first steps implementing technology to stay connected with our communities in all areas of the Province.

As a member of the LGBT2SQ+ community and a long-time donor of the Centre, I am encouraged by how well the Centre has adapted to meet the needs of our clients. Our experience and learning from this time will only shape our future programs and services for the better. Our community has always faced challenges head on; and with the support of our staff, volunteers, donors, funders and friends we will continue to respond in creative ways, demonstrating our strength and resilience. I'm so glad you've joined us on this journey.

Matthew Cutler,
Chair of the Board

2020-21 CENTRE STAFF

NOREEN MIAN
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

LIANA LUTZ
ACCOUNTANT/HR MANAGER

SARAH DACK
CLIENT SERVICES MANAGER

CRAIG GIBB
COMMUNICATION AND
EDUCATION MANAGER

**SONYA
BERTONCELLO-MAY**
FUND DEVELOPER

ROBERTA BISHOP
OPERATIONS MANAGER

DIANNA GRYWINSKI
COUNSELLOR

KAYLEN LAMB
COUNSELLOR

ADAM ROUT
VOLUNTEER COORDINATOR

JOSEPH MOORE
PARTICIPANT SUPPORT
COORDINATOR

MATEO LLANILLOS
YOUTH PROGRAM
COORDINATOR

BRE GIESBRECHT
TRAINING AND EDUCATION
COORDINATOR

DENE GUILLAS
SCHOOL EQUITY AND
INCLUSION COORDINATOR

LAURA TAIT
OLDER ADULT PROGRAM
COORDINATOR

BRYCE BYRON
INFORMATION AND
INTAKE AND ASSESSMENT
COORDINATOR

SAMARA LUPRYPA
CAMP AURORA COORDINATOR

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REPORT FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

2020 has been a year of uncertainty, resilience, and re-imagining at Rainbow Resource Centre.

The COVID-19 pandemic threatened our ability to provide social and emotional support for the 2SLGBTQ+ community. Our mantra became “social distance does not mean social isolation” and staff quickly reimagined how we engage with the community.

We found ways to offer innovative programming and meaningful support in an online environment. Thirty-five youth attended virtual Camp Aurora, a three-day online forum for 2SLGBTQ+ youth from across the province. We increased our capacity for counselling services in rural Manitoba through an affirming satellite counsellor in Winkler. Our education team redeveloped the school and workplace workshops to be delivered online. The older adult program grew robustly and started offering a hot lunch delivery, online learning sessions, and an intergenerational book club in partnership with Youth Program. All volunteer-led social support groups began meeting over Zoom. Overall, virtual programming has increased rural and remote participation.

We were fortunate to receive a generous grant from Women and Gender Equality (WAGE) to support governance work and strategic planning. We have enthusiastically welcomed ten highly-skilled volunteers who support this work through committee roles. This work contributes to a healthy organization and lays the foundation of future growth and stability. We accessed COVID relief funding that enabled us to more effectively work from home and we have reimagined our fundraising strategies in the absence of an in-person event.



The pause of in-person programming gave us the opportunity to look back throughout Rainbow’s nearly 50-year history. Using the Manitoba Gay and Lesbian Archives, we assembled a comprehensive timeline of our history and evolution. We discovered our own carefully preserved archive of posters that date back to the early 1970s and have digitized the collection. Working with the older adults from Over the Rainbow, we are collecting stories that will supplement these images with narrative and history.

The year ahead is unpredictable, however, Rainbow Resource Centre will continue to provide support for the 2SLGBTQ+ community to connect while remaining responsive and vigilant—no matter what the next twelve months look like.

NOREEN MIAN,
Executive Director

COUNSELLING

Over the past year, Counsellors experienced a significant increase in the request for same-week counselling appointments. We rose to the challenge of continuing to provide free same-week and short-term counselling sessions to individuals, couples, and families, as well as supports to rural and northern community members, while adapting to delivering services remotely and meeting the increased mental health needs of the 2SLGBTQ+ community during the COVID-19 pandemic.

“[The counsellor’s] words really mean so much to me. I’m so fortunate to have had them on this journey with me. Their help, guidance, encouragement, insights were healing and helpful in so many ways. I’m so grateful.”

- COUNSELLING CLIENT

In March 2020, we started to provide counselling services remotely, and offered both telephone and Zoom call sessions. This allowed us to make services more accessible, especially for community members in rural and northern locations, which has been critical in a time when many people are experiencing isolation and increased mental health concerns due to the pandemic.

With the support of BellMTS, we welcomed Greg Costen from Manitoba Video Counselling as our satellite counsellor based in Winkler, Manitoba. Greg provides affirming counselling for rural 2SLGBTQ+ folks living in South East Manitoba.

In the past year, our work has included counselling, collaboration, and consultation with:

- Children, youth, adults, and seniors seeking to better understand their gender identity and sexual orientation
- Families, including grandparents, parents, children, and teens who are seeking to better understand and support their 2SLGBTQ+ loved ones

- Members of our volunteer-run support groups needing additional support
- Rural Manitobans and those from northwestern Ontario
- Community members coping with the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic on their mental health, employment, and relationships
- Service providers, clinicians, and organizations to ensure 2SLGBTQ+ identities, experiences, and relationships are respected, valued, and understood outside of Rainbow

In addition to counselling, we continued to consult and collaborate with other service providers in order to ensure that 2SLGBTQ+ identities, experiences, and relationships are seen, understood, and respected in systems and agencies outside of Rainbow.

“Again I love how fast I got an appointment, the counselor I got was amazing, and I love talking to her.”

- COUNSELLING CLIENT

In March 2021, Sarah Dack left Rainbow to go into full-time private practice. Sarah has been with Rainbow Resource Centre since 2006 when she began as a volunteer, facilitating a support group for 2SLGBTQ+ youth. Over the years she worked in both education and counseling, and eventually as Client Services Manager, providing support to Centre staff and programs that work directly with clients. We are thrilled for Sarah to continue her valuable support for our community in her private practice, and we are grateful for her contributions to the Centre over the years.

Counselling is generously supported by donors, the Province of Manitoba, and BellMTS.

KAYLEN LAMB,
Counsellor

DIANNA GRYWINSKI,
Counsellor

RESPONSE TO CAMP AURORA HAS BEEN OVERWHELMINGLY POSITIVE. THIS PAST YEAR, WE ANALYZED EIGHT YEARS' WORTH OF CAMP DATA AND FOUND THAT OF THE 283 RESPONDENTS, 77% OF CAMPERS SAID THAT THEY LEARNED A NEW SKILL AT CAMP, 91% OF CAMPERS MET A NEW FRIEND, AND 42% SAID THAT THE CAMP AURORA COMMUNITY— FRIENDS, VOLUNTEERS, AND STAFF— WAS THE HIGHLIGHT FOR THEM.

VOLUNTEERS

2020 brought with it a number of unique challenges for all of us at the Centre, and fortunately we were able to pivot seamlessly by moving all 9 of our social support groups to a virtual platform. They continued to meet at least once a month to share in a variety of activities and discussions, and most importantly, maintain the connections of community that were so drastically affected by the pandemic. Providing virtual meetings has also allowed us to expand our reach, giving people from rural Manitoba and other parts of the globe the opportunity to check us out and connect

OUR GROUPS:

BLiNK: a playgroup for trans and gender creative children aged 12 and under and their parents, continues to meet twice a month, often welcoming new families and offering a wide variety of dynamic activities for both children and parents to enjoy.

New Pride of Winnipeg: a social and support group for newcomers to Canada, continues to meet once a month, often serving as a safer space for newcomers to claim their identity and seek support from fellow group members who are similarly navigating what it means to be 2SLGBTQ+ in this new country.

Parents, Family, and Friends of Trans Individuals (PFFOTI): a support group for families and allies of people who have come out as trans, continues to meet twice a month, sharing lived experiences and fellowship with people who want to best support their loved ones.

Rainbow Alliance for Men: a social group for community members who identify as male, continues to meet every two weeks, providing thoughtful discussion, fun activities, and meaningful connections for the community.

with their peers. In an effort to offer participants a change of scenery and a reason to venture outside their homes in a safe manner, a number of groups hosted meetings in parks and other outdoor locations where social distancing could be maintained from May to October. Although we saw an understandable decline in the number of participants who attended our groups this year, almost **950 individuals** attended the meetings, and the **21 dedicated group facilitators who volunteered 800 hours** of their time to help strengthen Manitoba's 2SLGBTQ+ community.

Wonderful Outstanding Women of Winnipeg (WOW): a social group for all individuals who identify as women, meets once a month to socialize over games and other activities in a safe and respectful environment.

Transmasculine Manitoba: a support group for people who identify as transmasculine or are questioning/exploring their gender, continues to meet monthly, offering a safe space for individuals to share their experiences and advice.

Winnipeg Transgender Support Group: a support group for people who identify as trans or are questioning/exploring their gender, continues to meet monthly, offering an important lifeline and source of support and community for those in search of it.

Library: Our library continues to grow and thrive, all under the hard work and dedication of our volunteer library team who has been hard at work reviewing and cataloging thousands of books and hundreds of DVDs to ensure they have 2SLGBTQ+ content. Library nights will resume once the other groups return to the Centre.

CHANGES IN LEADERSHIP: Several of our groups saw changes to their facilitators this year, and we offer our deepest thanks and gratitude to the following outgoing people who went above and beyond to support the 2SLGBTQ+ community:

- Society of OUT-Standing Artists (SOSA): Anthony Santoro and Teagan Izzard
- Trans Loveline: Alycia Mann, Jess Alexander, Alyssa Hourie, and Sav Jonsa.
- Transmasculine Manitoba: Forrest Gleason
- Winnipeg Transgender Support Group: Veronica Gingles
- Additionally, we wish to offer our sincere thanks and welcome the following individuals who have joined the groups as facilitators:
- Wonderful Outstanding Women of Winnipeg (WOW): Andrea Vincent and Marilyn Bosc
- Winnipeg Transgender Support Group: Kerrie Kole

VOLUNTEERS: This year the Centre expanded its volunteer pool with the introduction of our older adult peer phone line and Community Facilitator positions bringing our total compliment to **42 active volunteers**. They have been absolutely instrumental

in keeping our social/support groups up and running, donating almost 800 hours of their time while giving members of the 2SLGBTQ+ community the opportunity to connect and maintain the friendships they formed while meeting in person at the Centre. We look forward to welcoming back all of our volunteers once the pandemic subsides and our Youth Program, Camp Aurora, and special events like the Annual Gala, Pride, LGBT Centre Awareness Day Open House, and RBC's Day of Caring resume.

As an organization that was started almost fifty years ago by volunteers, Rainbow Resource Centre acknowledges that we would not be here without all of the time, energy, and hard work our volunteers have donated to us now and over the years. Our deepest and most heartfelt thanks to all of you!

ADAM ROUT,
Volunteer Coordinator

FUND DEVELOPMENT

This past year we reimagined fundraising and took some time to focus our efforts on areas that will grow and sustain us into the future. With the help of a newly established Development & Community Relations Committee, we leveraged expertise from community leaders and began building a suite of fundraising policies and developing our donor program. This hard work paid off—our annual appeal resulted in a significant increase in donations totaling \$12,000!

We were unable to hold our annual gala, however, Gala partners generously converted their sponsorships to donations, allowing us to continue our operations uninterrupted. We regretted not being able to celebrate the diversity of the 2SLGBTQ+ community in person, however, we are holding onto the Great Gatsby theme and look forward to the party once it is safe to gather.

“Having access to local, affirming counselling will help to break down the isolation so many 2SLGBTQ+ folks experience in this area. I hope it will be an important part of building strength within the community in South East Manitoba.”

-RESIDENT OF SE MANITOBA

We have been supported by so many incredible people—many of whom increased their donations or gave for the first time in 2020. In some cases, folks got really creative! First time donor Stefano Castellaneta planned out his own marathon and gathered pledges from family and friends. On June 28, Stefano ran 42 km and raised \$3,125 for the Centre.

SMALL BUSINESSES undertook sales of specific rainbow themed items to help support the Centre. This exposure helped promote the Centre to a new, and often, broader audience. Black Market Provisions, a 2SLGBTQ+ owned and operated local small business, sold rainbow masks at the beginning of the pandemic, raising \$250! Later in the year, Transgender Day of Remembrance candle sales raised \$776! Similarly, Keauna Nadia Beads sold rainbow earrings and donated \$650 to the Centre from their sales. St. James Burger & Chip Co. made rainbow cheese curds and served up rainbow poutine, raising \$660! We deeply appreciate the generosity and sacrifices that small businesses make when choosing to support us.

CORPORATE PARTNERSHIPS helped us run programming in new and innovative ways. Through Bell Let's Talk, BellMTS granted us \$20,000 to support counselling in South East Manitoba. We know that coming out can be an isolating experience, and support during this process greatly contributes to people's mental health and well-being. We are pleased to be able to support rural 2SLGBTQ+ folks through on the ground, affirming counselling services. TD Bank Group supported our youth programming with \$10,000.

Below is a list of dedicated supports from corporations, small businesses, community, and individuals. Rainbow Resource Centre relies on the generous support from all of you. Thank you for investing in us, trusting us to care for and build a resilient 2SLGBTQ+ community.

GALA SPONSORS

RBC Royal Bank
Bell MTS
Manitoba Hydro
Payworks
G is for Glasses
Gail Asper Family Foundation
Wawanesa Insurance

Manitoba Liquor & Lotteries
Red River College
APTN
CTRI
Johnston Group
Friends Funeral Service
PSAC
Deloitte
Manitoba Blue Cross

SMALL BUSINESSES & COMPANIES

Adam And Eve Stores
Atlantic-Garden City United Church
BellMTS
Black Market Provisions
Brittany Jayda Kessler
Bar Mitzvah Fund
Canadian Association Of Pharmacy Students And Interns (CAPSI) Manitoba
Center Link
Chartered Professionals In Human Resources
Coal And Canary
Ecole Constable Edward Finney School
Farmer's Son Co
First Unitarian Unaversalist Church
Four Crowns Inn & Event Ctr
Hope Mennonite Church
Investors Group (IG)
Charitable Giving Program
Jeffrey Kraemer Family Fund
Jones & Company Wines
Keycon Science Fiction Convention
Kind Roots Clay
Knits N Knots
Lawson Tollefson CPA's
Linzle Chrochet
MAC Cosmetics

MANSO (Manitoba Assoc. Of Newcomer Serving Organizations)
Margo & Maude
MJ Roofing
Moksha Yoga
Oh Doughnuts
Onyx Financial Group
Pride Winnipeg
Recreation Connections Manitoba Inc
Riot Cycle /204 Fitness Group Ltd
Samantha James Hair Design
Scotia Bank
Snowy Owl Monarchist Society Inc.
St. James Burger & Chip Co.
Sunflower Knit
Survivor's Hope Crisis Centre
TD Bank Group
The Ian And Rochelle Laing Family Foundation
The Law Society Of Manitoba
The Winnipeg Foundation
True North Sports & Entertainment
University Of Winnipeg
Westoba Credit Union
Winnipeg Labour Council
Zane Benjamin Peltz Bar Mitzvah Fund
Zita & Mark Bernstein Family Foundation

RAINBOW RESOURCE CENTRE

INDIVIDUAL DONORS

\$1-\$99 RED

Anonymus x 17	Asha Tota-Maharaj	Chiee Tae	Gerry Verscheure	Jean-Marc Blanc	Karol Rogers	Louise Blanchard	Nadia Tamilya	Rhiannon (Lynn) Frost	Sydney Morris
Abby McGivneh	Asia Reyes	Craig Adolphe	Gillian Fortlage	Jeff Dickens	Kate MacMillan	Lynnette Regehr	Nan Campbell	Terri Stevens	Terri Stevens
Acelyn Doran-Campbell	Belinda Ugjuk	Dani Wenger	Grace Seville	Jennifer Gyde	Kathy Remple	M Jane Dick	Nicole Closs	Roberta Bishop	Tia Simoens
Adam Christianson	Brian & Debby Hirsch	Daniel Berube	Harold Bell	John Gordon	Kelly Malcolmson	Margaret Birch	Nicole Kaneski	Ryan O'Hara	Toni Hawthorn
Adriana Mingo	Brittany Kessler	Daria Rakowski	Heather Petrychyn	Jonna Peters	Kelsey Persowich	Marla Nystrom-Smith	NiZhi Xu	Sam Carriere	Tristen Foy
Aimee Cadorath	Cal MacKendrick	Denise Geverink	Helen Hesse	Joshua Salamandyk	Kristie Matheson	Martin Bajt	Noa Farage	Sandra Stuart	Ty Shore
Alexa Parker	Candice Saunders	Denise MacRae	Ian Livingstone	Joshua Weston	Lakin Rose	Martin Curtis	Norbert Uday Sharma	Sarah Jacobsohn	Valerie Parker
Allison Russell	Carol Kirkhope	Dexter Peters	Isabel Cockle	Judy Morton	Lauren Milne	Matt Milkowski	Paul Von Wichert	Sascha Modha	Wayne Ruff
Amy Striemer	Catherine & Kevin Drennan	Diana Dela Cruz	Jackie Avent	Justin Delorme	Leanne Foley	Megan Bresch	Paula Kreitz	Signy Brownell	William Curtis
Andrea Vincent	Celia McLean	Erin Blair	James Ouellette	Kameshia Hope	Lesley Ternowetsky	Mikayla Carter	Philip Giles	Stacey McReur	Wyatt King
Anna Maniquiz		Evan Weins	Jared Webber	Karlie Debets		Monelle Benjamin	Rena Nayar	Stephan Hardy	
Arlene Benningfield		Gennevieve Bourdeau	Jason Van Rooy	Karlie Debets		Myrna Donald	Rh�anne Reimer	Stephan Manaigre	
		Jaxson Wallace					Susan Tessler		

\$100-\$249 ORANGE

Anonymus x 8	Colin Desmarais	Elizabeth Morton	Guy Bannister	Joan Helms	Kathy Penner	Kyle Gibson	Melissa Novocosky	Rhonda Chorney	Tiffany Angela Wilson
Adam Kalechyn	Coralee Penner	Elliot Leven	Heather Sandilands	Joanne Bertoncello	Kayla Sinclair	Kylene Dube	Michaela Jantzen	Ruth Carol Feldman	Timothy Dueck
Alan Gershuny	Dann Bjornson	Ernest Cholakis	Ian MacIntyre	Julia Anderson	Kaylen (Kay) Lamb	Larissa Boning	Nichole Matheson	Sara Raymond	Tracy Sandmoen
Andrea Gordon	David Burpee	Eugene Boychuk	Janelle Cancade-White	Julie Husband	Keith Booth	Laura Boyle	Owen Campbell	Scott Friesen	Trevor Doner
Andrea Kaplen	Derek Innis	Gaetan Bourdon	Janice Dack	Kameron Hilroy	Kendra Hobbs	Lauren Baird	Scott Henderson	Scott Henderson	Valentina Briceno
Andreas Youseph	Donald G Teel	Garry Markham	Jennifer Stadtmiller	Katelynd Brosowsky	Manness	Lisa C. Douglas	Pam Homenick	Scott Henderson	Veronique Reynolds
Angelica Marie	Donelda Basler	Geof Langen	Jessica Nowell	Katherine Balagus	Kerri Pries	Lukas Maitland	Patricia Skakum	Tanna Motuz	Vicki Burns
Carlos Colorado	Douglas Tkach	Gerhard Thiessen	Jessica Stefanik	Katherine Sheppard	Kieran Lloyd	Lydia Schoeppner	Paul Grower	Terry Sykes	
Charles (Chuck) Sanderson	Edgar Governo	Gilles Beaudry			Kinsey Toews	Lynne Mulvihill	Prashant Modha	Thomas Yarduk	
	Elizabeth McAdam				Kit Muir	Margo Storey			

\$250-\$499 YELLOW

Anonymus	Anna Weier	Craig Lawrence	David Neufeld	Gord Richardson	Maggie Cox	Millie Dietrich	Serge Balcaen
Alana Fiks	Beverly Friesen	Darron Field	DeLayne Toews		Maria Santos	Scott Piggott	Vincent Quirion

\$500-\$999 GREEN

Anonymus	Jessee Havey	Joseph (Joey) Moore	Kerry Bertoncello-Dale	Kim Thiessen	Peter & Denise Wohlgemut	Rebecca Raddatz	Stephen Brodovsky
Alberto Forzan	Joni Sawatzky	Kathy Jones		Kristie Pearson		Richard Boggs	
Andrew Krahn				Nadia Daoudi			

\$1000-\$2499 BLUE

Barbara Goldman	Gail Purcell	John Millward	Matthew Cutler & Dr Avery Miller	Michael Diehl	Naomi Finkelstein	Robert Daudet	Sonya Bertoncello-May	Stephen Nightswander-Rempel	Tim Reddecopp
Chris Dillistone	James Christie	Justin Schinkel		Mike Tutthill	Noreen Mian	Ruth Krindle			
	Joel Marcon	Kelvin Shepherd							

\$5000+ INDIGO

Jocelyne Poirier

CAMP AURORA

Camp Aurora was held virtually August 14-16, 2020. Thirty-five 2SLGBTQ+ youth from across Manitoba came together online, creating a positive and identity-affirming digital space. For many, Virtual Camp was their first experience with Camp Aurora and it was incredibly impactful to connect with community during this particularly isolating time.

Packages filled with workshop supplies, headphones, bandanas, pride sticker, buttons, positive messages, and USBs filled with resources were sent to each Camper to welcome and prepare them for Camp. Campers who participated in the Two-Spirit Lodge were gifted sacred medicines and smudge bowls, and Campers who participated in the BIPOC Circle of Support received a zine showcasing music, art, and history by and for 2SQTBIPOC+ individuals.

Programming included cross-stitching, a cooking demo, a vogue dance class, drag on a dime, and a virtual drag show. Campers participated in workshops exploring boundaries and pleasure through self-care and creative expression, healthy relationships with a focus on consent, and the increasing use of technology due to COVID-19 and imagining futures through poetry.

"[Camp Aurora] helped me in navigating my identity and reminded me not to rush to figure myself out. I've never had much representation in front of me, only ever online, and so to have someone who knows where you're coming from and to be able to communicate with them is really nice (I only wish my younger self had that sort of guidance and reassurance when I was younger, but better late than never)."

-CAMP AURORA 2021 VIRTUAL PARTICIPANT

Unstructured time allowed youth to connect with one another. Campers showcased their artwork, cross-stitch projects, new make-up looks, and shared stories in a supportive and affirming environment. Some campers who expressed being in generally unsupportive homes or communities shared

that they felt a sense of belonging, acceptance, and inclusion in the Camp community.

The Two-Spirit Lodge continued to be an essential part of Camp. Two Spirit and Indigiqueer Knowledge Keepers and Elders shared teachings, drum songs, and smudged with medicines. Youth found the Two-Spirit Lodge connected them to their Indigenous roots and helped in discovering their identity.

This year, we introduced the BIPOC Circle of Support; a virtual space for BIPOC youth to connect with BIPOC community members and our BIPOC Advisory Committee. Youth found this Circle of Support greatly impactful, by sharing their experiences and engaging with facilitators who have worked to navigate and celebrate their own 2SQTBIPOC+ identities.

"[At Virtual Camp Aurora] I learned more about healthy relationships and what boundaries look like in those relationships as well as the different forms of consent we all see every day."

-CAMP AURORA 2021 VIRTUAL PARTICIPANT

Camp concluded by sharing reflections of our time together and a virtual dance party. This network of support and community is one of the most positive outcomes of Camp each year.

Camp Aurora is generously supported by donors, Winnipeg Foundation, Province of Manitoba, Tegan and Sara Foundation, Carolyn Sifton Foundation, and TD Bank Group.

SAMARA LUPRYPA,
Camp Aurora Coordinator

TIA OBEROI,
Summer Staff

YOUTH PROGRAM

Social media played a vital role in our engagement throughout the pandemic because it offered Youth Program a stage to share programming updates, educational information, and a means of connecting with youth, caregivers, and local organizations. Staff used YouTube, Discord, Kast, and Zoom. Instagram and Discord have been essential for 2SLGBTQ+ youth to connect with one another and seek support from program staff. The Discord channel has developed into a constructive online space where youth receive support, share interests, access resources, and develop meaningful friendships.

One theme that came up often in discussions was the feeling of isolation. As a response, we created a Winter Cheer Card initiative for youth to receive a handmade card in the mail from staff in December. Youth from across the province signed up to receive cards filled with positive and affirming messages.

“Being your full true self is the only way to go, always take the chance, be brave because it will be worth it, the 2SLGBT community is utterly amazing and diverse”

-CAMP AURORA PARTICIPANT

Despite our inability to meet in-person, Youth Program maintained regular programming events. By partnering with community organizations, youth were provided with workshops on safer substance use and overdose prevention, art expression, and financial management, as well as a Drag Safe Grad event.

Additional programming comprised of educational and skill-building workshops were held over Zoom and YouTube. Educational workshops were balanced with fun activities like virtual bingo and online movie nights.


One programming event we were particularly enthused by this year was our Intergenerational Book Club with *Over the Rainbow*, which included **16 participants** ages 13-21 and 55+. Each participant received a copy of *We’ve Always Been Here* by Samra Habib. The book, a Queer Muslim memoir, encouraged important discussions about sexuality, religion, race, migration, and privilege. Many participants spoke about how the book and discussion with 2SLGBTQ+ peers challenged their perspectives and made for fruitful discussion. With such success, both programs plan to move forward with future book clubs and more Intergenerational programming in the future.

Responding to this year’s challenges has made Youth Programs more accessible than ever before. We are looking forward to prioritizing online engagement to connect with youth across the province and continue to work collaboratively with 2SLGBTQ+ community and youth-serving organizations.

MATEO LLANILLOS,
Youth Program Coordinator

JOSEPH MOORE,
Participant Support Coordinator

**"I MADE LOVE LETTERS TO BRIGHTEN
SOMEONE'S DAY [BECAUSE] WHEN I WAS
AT ROCK BOTTOM AS A TEEN, I WENT
TO RAINBOW RESOURCE CENTRE. I WAS
GIVEN A LITTLE SACK OF LOVE NOTES AND
POSITIVE AFFIRMATIONS. I KEPT THOSE
NOTES FOR YEARS AND CARRIED THEM WITH
ME IN MY BAG WHEN I WENT FROM COUCH
TO COUCH. I HAVE NOW FOUND HEALING
AND A SAFE PLACE TO LIVE." -ANONYMOUS**



EDUCATION

WORKPLACE EDUCATION AND TRAINING:

The Training and Education Coordinator provides workshops and consultations to not-for-profits, unions, corporate offices, healthcare professionals, service providers, special events staff/volunteers, and postsecondary faculty and students.

In 2020-2021, we delivered **32 workshops** and **8 consultations**, reaching a total of **916 participants** throughout the year.

“As someone who is queer[,] one of my biggest fears is being misunderstood, so having the affirmation that people can understand is comforting.” - NEED BYLINE?

When the Centre closed its doors due to the COVID-19 pandemic, all education workshops were offered virtually. While the virtual format makes building community and fostering communication more challenging, it did allow us to reach workplaces and organizations that typically would not have been able to access our services.

Many informal consultations took place over the phone or by email. Workplaces seek our assistance when it comes to hiring practices, signage, policies, and inclusive language. These consultations build relationships and often lead to new workshop bookings.

Participant evaluation forms indicate that we exceeded expectations and that participants can apply the knowledge they have gained from our workshops to their workplaces and personal lives. Participants frequently cited our workshops as engaging, the presenter passionate, and the information important.

BRE GIESBRECHT,
Training and Education Coordinator

SCHOOL EQUITY AND INCLUSION: The School Equity and Inclusion Coordinator supports elementary to post-secondary students as well as adult education centres and youth service providers across the province. We provide consultation and workshops for teachers, staff, and administration to enhance the safety and inclusion of all 2SLGBTQ+ youth. In addition, we offer support to school guidance counsellors and aid youth in the start-up and sustainability of Gender and Sexuality Alliances (GSAs).

This past year, we delivered **29 workshops** reaching **832 youth, teachers, staff, and parents**. Due to COVID, we moved all of our training online and reworked all of our presentations, supplementary materials, and evaluation tools to fit this virtual medium. Over **60 consultations** were done on documents, policies, and reference and training material for staff.

This past year, we visited **6 GSAs** supporting **59 students**. In these visits, we offered guidance, shared experiences, answered questions, and provided info on how to start their GSA. COVID was extremely hard on GSA youth, making it difficult to meet in-person, where a lot of the youth feel a sense of community and comfort. We were able to provide guidance and support in transferring GSAs to a virtual platform.

This work continues to be necessary as 2SLGBTQ+ youth continue to face barriers to inclusion. For example, safe washrooms and change rooms are an ongoing issue at many schools. Gender diverse students are unintentionally excluded through sex-segregation such as sports/physical activities, forms, class divisions, dress codes, etc. Overuse of gendered language, and the overall lack of 2SLGBTQ+ representation in content leads to continued suppression, aggression, and invalidation.

It is our hope that we enriched their learning experiences and provided tools to those working with youth to ultimately make positive changes in the Manitoba school system and beyond.

DENE GUILLAS,
School Equity and Inclusion Coordinator

OLDER ADULT PROGRAM

Over the Rainbow (OTR) is Rainbow Resource Centre's 55+ program that provides social connection among 2SLGBTQ+ older adults. OTR programming has grown robustly over the past twelve months online and over-the-phone.

Laura Tait joined OTR as the Older Adult Coordinator from November to March. Lara brought a lively energy and deep connection to farming, art, and creating. Laura implemented a monthly calendar of activities:

CRAFTERNOONS were held in partnership with ArtsJunktion, who delivered packages of supplies to folks' doorsteps and facilitated online sessions introducing participants to macramé, weaving, and leatherworks.

TECH TUESDAYS aimed to increase tech literacy among older adults. Session topics included *Intro to Zoom and Email, Social Media & Privacy.*

LUNCH & LEARN were held the first Friday of the month and hot meals were delivered by Big Deal Catering (Club 200). Community professionals hosted a series of informational presentations. March's topics included *Financial Literacy: CFCS & Tax Rebates* and *Power of Attorney/Health Care Directive.*

YOGA: Held weekly on Zoom and tailored for older adult participants.

A core group of 12-15 people attend OTR, anchored by Coffee & Chat that is held twice-weekly on Zoom. Lively discussions take place about topics such as *Classic Hollywood – That's Entertainment!* and *Garden Stories, A Tribute.* Coffee & Chat serves as a connection point and strategy to help reduce social isolation among 2SLGBTQ+ older adults. Guest facilitators step in to lead the discussion from time-to-time, a special thanks to Sally Papso, John & Richard Kletke, and Roberta Bishop for their help!

In January, we began our over-the-phone peer support program. OTR volunteers reach out to isolated or homebound peers for a friendly chat. Since the program began on March 1, twenty-one calls have been made.

In partnership with Youth Program, twelve older adults and youth took place in our first ever Intergenerational Book Club. Held over Zoom, this initiative was hugely successful and all of those who took part felt that it was a valuable experience to share knowledge and understand different perspectives.

"The 55+ group gave me encouragement, connection and a sense of security. I felt safe and inspired by the words of queer adults with more experience and comforting advice."

-YOUTH PARTICIPANT IN THE INTERGENERATIONAL BOOK CLUB

"I so much enjoyed the younger generation's participation in the book club. It was so heartwarming to realize that they actually wanted to be a part of it. They were a breath of fresh air. I was so worried that they would become disinterested and just drop out. I thought, and am hoping, that this will be the first of several opportunities for the generations to engage with each other and to realize we have a lot to share with each other."

-OTR PARTICIPANT IN THE INTERGENERATIONAL BOOK CLUB

OTR is generously supported by donors, New Horizon's for Seniors, The Winnipeg Regional Health Authority, and the City of Winnipeg.

REPORT FROM THE TREASURER

It has been my honour to serve as Rainbow Resource Centre's Treasurer again this past year. I would like to extend a big thank you to the staff of the Centre, management, and to the entire Board of Directors for making my time meaningful and enjoyable, with a special thank you to our accountant, Liana Lutz, and Executive Director, Noreen Mian.

To say that this year was challenging would be an understatement. We've seen the Centre navigate new leadership at both the Board and staff levels while simultaneously working to provide meaningful programming and services to the communities we serve all under the shadow of the COVID-19 pandemic. It's been a year that required tough decisions when it came to balancing the needs of everyone who frequents the Centre and benefits from the services we provide and ensuring that we were compliant with public health restrictions and doing our part as an Organization and members of the community to prevent the spread of COVID-19.

Easily the most daunting impact the pandemic had on the Centre, from a financial perspective, was that our most significant fundraising effort, the annual Gala, had to be cancelled. This naturally put us in the position that so many similar organizations and businesses would have found themselves in this year, wondering how best to continue operations with a potential significant hit to funding during the year. Fortunately for Rainbow Resource Centre, we have an incredible group of Gala sponsors who went above and beyond and donated their Gala sponsorships to the Centre despite our having cancelled the event and despite the uncertainties that their own businesses/organizations were facing. We are so grateful. Those funds, along with the outpouring of personal donations that we received during the year completely changed the landscape we were operating in and allowed us to continue to deliver programming and services at levels as close to prior years as possible, albeit in a socially-distanced, and often virtual, way.

As a direct result of the tremendous support of our partners and the individual people who care about the Centre, this year saw the Centre closing its fiscal year in a small surplus position. I wish to extend a heartfelt thanks to every individual and every corporate and organizational donor who committed to helping the Centre in a very uncertain year. You are directly responsible for allowing us to continue the work we do.

The Board of Directors, staff, and management of the Centre are committed to strong financial stewardship and committed to ensuring that the Centre remains a constant for the communities we serve. We look forward to the year ahead where we hopefully see the most difficult parts of the pandemic begin to move past us and we begin to regain some sense of normalcy. We are very excited to meet all of you in person again one day soon, perhaps at Gala 2022.

Thank you all for your unwavering support. You make it all possible.

Respectfully Submitted,
TIM REDDECOPP, CPA, CGA,
Treasurer

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