



Annual Report 2019

1 SPECTRUM's Mission

SPECTRUM is a volunteer-based LGBTQ community venue that is sustainable, supportive, positive and a safe space for people of all ages in the Waterloo Region. By providing resources, information, rainbow-related events, and programming, SPECTRUM will work together with partners and allies to ensure a strong and inclusive community.

2 SPECTRUM's Organizational Profile

SPECTRUM opened its doors on 2012, August 7 as the first LGBTQ community centre serving Waterloo Region. Over the years, we have developed a comprehensive set of programs and services for the rainbow community and the broader public.

Our **support and recreational programs** include (a) a group for **transgender** people; (b) a group for **older adults**; (c) a group for **youth** (aged 13 to 18); (d) a social drop-in for **rainbow families**; (e) a **general** social and discussion group; (f) a **games** evening; (g) **social outings** to a local restaurant; (h) a support group for **parents and relatives** of LGBTQ people.

Our **information services** include (a) a monthly listing of **community events**; (b) an annual directory of **community resources** likely to be of interest to LGBTQ-identified people; (c) a book and DVD **library**; (d) an extensive **local history** website; and (e) a **gender-neutral washroom** survey.

Our **community outreach services** include (a) **LGBTQ cultural awareness training** workshops for local senior-serving institutions; (b) similar **rainbow diversity training**

workshops for a broad variety of organizations; (c) a **housing committee** that works with local agencies to explore options for safe affordable housing for LGBTQ-identified individuals; and (d) **immigrant and refugee services** that assist LGBTQ-identified immigrants and refugees with claims, socializing, and other needs; (e) **legal aid clinic** (in partnership with *Waterloo Region Community Legal Services*); (f) **collaboration on projects** with various local services agencies.

3 Developments in 2019

3.1 Support and Recreational Groups

Our **Trans Peer Support Group** has been functioning so well that it increased from meeting twice a month to four times a month. Late in 2019, we supplemented the general Trans Peer Support Group (which has been attended predominantly by trans women) with a twice monthly **Trans-Masculine Peer Support Group**.

Isolation is a significant problem for the **aging population**; it is especially severe for the LGBTQ population, since fewer of us have children who can provide emotional support. In July of 2016, we started up an **Older Adults Group** that meets twice monthly. We have had good attendance with participants being very grateful that the group exists.

In 2018 we began to organize social events that occur outside of SPECTRUM. The most popular of these is a monthly **Social Outing** to a local restaurant. These gatherings have a good mix of genders, sexualities and ages.

We struck a **Youth Service Team** that in 2019 organized a Sunday afternoon drop-in to supplement the good work that is being done by OK2BME and the high-school GSAs during the week. This Team has also supervised practicum students who did outreach to some local GSAs). The Team is also working on a robust marketing and promotional program for the drop-in.

At the urging of some community members with children, late in 2019, we began sponsoring a social drop-in for **rainbow families** (interpreted fairly broadly).

3.2 Information Services

The biggest change in our collection of information services has occurred with "**The Rainbow Pages**" which was first published by SPECTRUM in 2014, and has been updated several times since then. It provides a listing of organizations, agencies and professionals likely to be of interest to the local LGBTQ population. In 2018 we converted the information into a database format and produced the 2018 edition from the database for the first time. Around the same time, we set up

a working search engine using that database. We are able to keep the database completely up-to-date.

In late 2019 we realized a long-time dream – the creation of a story-telling video for promotional and fundraising purposes. We began by using money from a Trillium grant to create an informational video of 1:09 minutes for our Aging with Pride Committee; this was accomplished in October. We used lessons learned from this experience to move forward to create a 2:56 minute **promotional/fundraising video** by mid November; we had considerable assistance from a couple of practicum students who were placed with SPECTRUM for the Fall and Winter terms 2019/2020.

3.3 Community Outreach Services

In 2019 SPECTRUM's **Aging with Pride Committee** continued to develop and deliver its LGBTQ cultural-awareness training sessions for local senior-serving institutions – including retirement homes, long-term care facilities, a hospice, and some recreational centres. In 2017/2018 we used a federal New Horizons for Seniors Program grant (\$25,000.00) to develop and run a program to help **reduce isolation** for LGBTQ-identified seniors, especially those in **institutional settings**. In 2018, October SPECTRUM and Community Justice Initiatives jointly received a \$75,000.00 grant to create safer spaces in (1) a retirement home (which was Winston Park, a Schlegel home) and (2) an affordable housing project run by Waterloo Region Housing on Franklin Avenue.

In 2019 SPECTRUM's **Rainbow Diversity Training Team** continued to deliver **general-audience LGBTQ cultural-awareness training workshops** like those that Aging with Pride uses – but for institutions that serve clients of all ages, not just seniors. We have been using the services of practicum students placed at SPECTRUM from WLU and UW to continue creating specialized packages for several different sectors. We now have workshop packages for 7 different sectors (senior-serving, housing, health-care, hi-tech/engineering, financial/business, athletics/recreation, and addictions).

We struck a **Safe Affordable Housing Committee** with the goal of surveying the needs of safe and affordable housing for LGBTQ individuals of any age. The Committee will also examine options that exist across the world, and make proposals to Waterloo Regional Housing. It will also act to assist our work with Community Justice Initiatives on safe affordable housing options.

SPECTRUM hosts an annual **December 25th Gathering** with food and good company that runs from noon to late in the evening, to allow members of our community the choice to be in a safe and friendly environment on a day that is difficult for many people. The 2018 Gathering was successful and much appreciated by people who attended; it was the first time that we served a hot meal (starting at 3 PM). We have planned the same thing for 2019.

3.4 Human Resources

We have begun to create a Procedures Manual that spells out in considerable detail how to carry out the various tasks that our volunteers handle. This should help preserve institutional knowledge.

3.5 Financial Resources

In 2019, **municipal grants** from the cities of Cambridge, Kitchener and Waterloo continued to form a significant support in keeping our doors open and our programs running.

In January 2018, we received charitable status (BN 85096 0576 RR0001) from the Charities Directorate of the Canada Revenue Agency. As a result of receiving charitable status, we mounted our first year-end fundraising campaign in 2018; we are in the process of doing the same in 2019. As a result of this, we received enough donations to move us in the direction of financial sustainability.

In November 2018 we established a Contingency Reserve Fund to be used only to deal with emergency situations over which SPECTRUM has no direct control, specifically for a significant increase in rent or insurance premium – or a significant drop in funding.

4 What About 2020?

Sexual Assault Survivors Group – We will be starting this group up in 2020 with the assistance of staff from the *Sexual Assault Support Centre of Waterloo Region*.

Non-Binary Group – We have had requests to start up a non-binary group, since they do not feel that their experiences are well reflected in our general trans group. We will need see whether we can find enough facilitators to do this.

Pathfinders Project – We are just beginning work on a set of informational tools called Pathfinders, which are intended to answer critical questions related to using particular agencies – questions around eligibility, expectations, documentation required, questions to be asked, and procedures around complaints. The first Pathfinders will be cover agencies that deal with clients that are living with addictions.

Volunteer Recruitment – We hope to fill more key job positions both on the Board and in our volunteer pool.

A New Home – We would like to move to a home that is closer to bus lines, and better laid out for the work that we do. We are also at the limit of our capacity to seat all attendees at our trans group. To achieve this move, we will need to be able to bring in an additional \$500 per month.

Sponsorships – We will be seeking a variety of sponsorships from corporations and local businesses.