



Annual Report 2016

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. We provide support and recreational programs for the local LGBTQ community, and also services that benefit the local LGBTQ community as well as local service agencies. We provide some educational programs to the public. We also work with a number of local service agencies to develop training in some areas.

We work to provide **support groups** targeting trans-identified individuals, older adults and people from other cultures. We also provide **recreational programs** for everyone: a games group, a crafting group (mainly knitting), an outdoor group and a reading circle. We provide listing of **community events** and a directory of **community resources** likely to be of interest to LGBTQ-identified people. We maintain a book and DVD **library**, and an extensive **local history** website. We also provide **LGBTQ cultural awareness training** sessions to local senior-serving institutions. We also collaborate with several local services agencies on various projects.

3 Developments in 2016

3.1 Support Groups

Our **Trans Peer Support Group** has been functioning well, and continues to support trans-identified people in the challenges that they regularly encounter. The facilitators plan to increase promotion of this Group over the next few months.

Our **Rainbow Newcomers Group** is also functioning well and clearly helps in decreasing isolation for LGBTQ-identified people who do not feel welcomed by the local immigrant communities from their countries of origin. More will be done to promote this 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**. We have had good attendance with participants being very grateful that the group exists.

3.2 Social/Recreational Groups

The Friday evening games group (**day5games**) is one of our most popular events.

The monthly **SPECTRUM Reading Circle** has a loyal core of about a half dozen attendees. Efforts are being made to promote this event more aggressively.

The **Outdoor Recreational Group** has a core of people who attend regularly, with others coming depending on the venue chosen. We are trying to find additional hosts for this event, in order to provide more flexibility.

The Tuesday evening crafting group (**Queercraft**) has a small number of participants who really enjoy getting together and practising their portable craft (usually knitting). We hope to increase participation and find additional hosts.

3.3 Services

SPECTRUM's "**Rainbow Community Calendar**" has served Waterloo Region since 2012 by providing a monthly listing of events of interest to the LGBTQ community. In September 2016, Lyn McGinnis became the new Editor and has improved the graphical design of the publication and supplied editorial content and some news items.

"**The Rainbow Pages**" 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. We are currently updating the information and working towards delivering it from a searchable online database on our website.

The “**Grand River Rainbow Historical Project**” was established several years ago with the goal of documenting the history of the various rainbow communities in the Grand River region of Southwestern Ontario. In the Autumn, a couple of university graduates interested in local LGBTQ history have become involved in a sub-project (**Places from Our Past**) to document information on the buildings and other venues in Waterloo Region that were important in our past. **Places from Our Past** will involve digitizing old photographs, and doing video interviews with people reminiscing about their experiences of those venues. The outcomes will be (1) a section of the website with photographs and written and video narratives, and (2) museum-quality displays.

In 2016 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 2016, we applied for and received a grant to hire a person to develop our training packages further. We have now hired that person and look forward to having improved training modules.

Our new **website** went live at the beginning of June. It represents a major improvement over the existing website and has been very well-received.

3.4 Human Resources

Thanks to the new **website** and our subscription to the **Volunteer Action Centre** of KW, we have increased the number of non-Board volunteers from 6 volunteers in late 2015 to over 20 in late 2016. Processing the volunteer applications has involved a lot of learning by SPECTRUM’s **Volunteer Management Team**, but we now have procedures in place that allow us to deal with volunteers applications (usually 2 or 3 a week) in as efficient a manner as possible.

We currently have a dozen active job postings. Some of those job postings are particularly important; we hope to fill them in the near future.

3.5 Financial Resources

For 2016, we received **municipal grants** from the cities of Cambridge, Kitchener and Waterloo. We still rely heavily on municipal grants to keep operating. We are working on other options, including looking for sponsorships, taking advertisements, and fundraising events – in order to increase financial sustainability.

Our operating expenses are dominated by the rental costs of our current space: Unit 210, 283 Duke St W. Our unit is generously sized and is adequate for nearly all our programming. Our rental costs are significantly below market value, but we face the prospect of large rental increases in the future.

4 What About 2017?

Gender-Neutral Washroom Project – We hope to update this Project (which is realized through a Google map) and also take the opportunity to encourage facilities with gendered single-usage washrooms to make them ungendered.

“The Rainbow Pages” – We would like to add more business resources, and have the entire collection of resources delivered through a searchable database residing on our website.

SPECTRUM/TMMC Student Awards Program – We will be awarding the first student awards using the sponsorship funding that came from Toyota Motor Manufacturing Canada.

Charitable Status with the Canada Revenue Agency (CRA) – We hope that at some point in 2017 we will have received status as a charitable not-for-profit corporation. We already have been approved as a charitable corporation by the Government of Ontario, but we need CRA approval to be able to issue tax receipts for donations to SPECTRUM. With this in place, we will have an additional source of revenue.

Sponsorships – We anticipate obtaining a variety of sponsorships from corporations and local businesses.

Fundraising – We will be exploring various possible fundraising opportunities.

Volunteer Recruitment – We hope to fill more key job positions in order to reduce the risk to SPECTRUM of losing key volunteers.