

Finding Rainbows Summit

Addressing Social Isolation in the LGBT2SQ+ community of Manitoba
Led by those 55+

Tuesday, November 7, 2017 at Canad Inns Destination Centre Polo Park

A forum to address issues specific to the LGBT2SQ+ aging process

This project will be a first in Manitoba of its kind and is funded in part by New Horizons for Seniors Program. The summit will provide the opportunity to identify the needs of the community and will be shared with the community to empower and support LGBT2SQ+ older adults.

It is estimated that there are 13,000 LGBT2SQ+ seniors in the province. Considering their families, caregivers, senior serving agencies, and the larger society (including non-seniors), it is difficult to quantify all those who will benefit.

While many of the issues faced by Canadians as we age are common, some of the needs and challenges facing our LGBT members as they age, including issues with the health care system; legal rights, including powers of attorney; housing and long term care, etc., differ from their heterosexual counterparts.

–Canadian Association of Retired Persons' (CARP)

Source: <http://www.carp.ca/2009/06/15/welcome-to-carps-pink-chapter-2/>

Aging members of the LGBT community are:

- *Twice as likely to live alone.*
- *Half as likely to have life partners or significant others.*
- *Half as likely to have no close relatives to call for help.*
- *Four times less likely to have children to help them.*

–Services and Advocacy for Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual & Transgender Elders (SAGE)

Source: <http://www.carp.ca/2009/06/15/welcome-to-carps-pink-chapter-2/>

Objectives

To reduce social isolation by facilitating community building and supporting individuals' involvement in the LGBT2SQ+ as well as broader communities. To accomplish this, the steering committee will:

- Provide a space that allows community members to connect, share their experiences, and express their needs
- Develop a needs assessment survey prior to the summit
- Develop a report from the post-summit evaluation
- Establish a strategic plan that will meet the needs of the senior LGBT2SQ+ community and improve the quality and breadth of programming to be offered
- Develop a cultural competency education module related to LGBT2SQ+ aging based on the report and train LGBT2SQ+ seniors to deliver the education
- Identify initiatives for follow-up

How the project addresses its objectives

This project will address social participation and inclusion of seniors the following ways:

- The entire project is focused on identifying the current and emerging needs of the aging LGBT2SQ+ community. As a participatory and volunteer led project, seniors have been invited and encouraged to participate in the planning, organizing, and execution of the conference as well as in developing the strategic plan.
- Trained 55± volunteers will facilitate small group discussions following keynote presentations and workshops to identify key aging issues in the senior LGBT2SQ+ community. In these conversations, attendees will be asked to provide suggestions and develop strategies to address those key issues.
- After the conference, a community working group comprised of seniors will be established to implement strategies.
- To ensure volunteers feel supported, the steering committee offers training sessions and allows volunteers to choose roles that match their interests and skills. Social engagement will be further fostered by providing opportunities for volunteers to take on leadership roles at various stages of the project.

How individuals will benefit from the project activities

While the impact of holding such a conference will have immeasurable positive impact on the Manitoba community as a whole, the conference itself is designed to have 150 individual attendees from the senior LGBT2SQ+ and ally community. The conference will be of interest to social service agencies and allies of the community.

The conference is anticipated to host 150 attendees, however, the impact of this conference will be much broader. The target audience for the conference is senior LGBT2SQ+ adults, but given the topic and growing interest it is expected organizations and social service agencies who serve seniors will be in attendance. Given the wide range of individuals who will be in attendance, it is difficult to provide exact numbers of who will benefit. It is estimated that there are 13,000 LGBT2SQ+ seniors in the province. Considering their families, caregivers, senior serving agencies, and the larger society (including non-seniors), it is difficult to quantify all those who will benefit.

The greatest benefit will be for those LGBT2SQ+ seniors who may not immediately 'come out' but who will know they are not alone and there is opportunity for safe social participation.

Moreover, the impacts of this conference will extend beyond the project as the results will be used to generate a strategic plan and improve programming and services offered to senior LGBT2SQ+ adults, making it challenging to estimate how many people will begin using them. However, it is expected more seniors will attend the programming and use the services once the strategic plan is implemented.

Significantly, this conference will provide LGBT2SQ+ seniors with knowledge that there are social groups and services available, for those who are not out or haven't disclosed their gender identity or sexual orientation, this information could increase their knowledge of safe ways to participate in their communities.

Volunteers

Seniors will play a major role throughout the project's development and delivery. The steering committee will be -10 people (at least 80% seniors); at least 90% of two dozen conference volunteers will be seniors; and of the 150 conference attendees, we expect 85% to be seniors. Thus of the 180 people total, we anticipate 150 (85%) will be seniors.

Finding Rainbows Steering Committee

Dr. Kathy Jones, Chair, kjonesclare@gmail.com or (204) 806-6001
Vic Hooper, Marketing & Communications, findingrainbows@rainbowresourcecentre.org or (204) 471-4736

Roberta Bishop, Project Coordinator, Rainbow Resource Centre
Connie Newman, ED, Manitoba Association of Senior Centres
Madeline Kohut, Community Development and Seniors Specialist, Winnipeg Regional Health Authority
Kathy Henderson, Support Services to Seniors Facilitator, Winnipeg Regional Health Authority
Ruth Carol Feldman, Logistics
Frances Ennis, Winnipeg Transgender Support Group
Ron Krug, Registrar
Sue Ennis, Member at Large

About Rainbow Resource Centre

The Rainbow Resource Centre (RRC) is a not-for-profit community organization whose mission is to 'provide support, education & resources to foster a proud, resilient, and diverse LGBT2SQ+ community'. Its Vision is 'a society in which diverse sexual and gender identities, orientations, and expressions are included, valued, and celebrated as a result of our active commitment to promote and maintain dignity, human freedoms, and human rights.' We are the only resource centre in all of Manitoba dedicated to serving the LGBT2SQ+ (lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, two-spirit, queer) community. Numerous support groups for LGBT2SQ+ people, their families, and their allies are facilitated at the centre. As well, the Rainbow Resource Centre organizes and holds regular events such as education sessions, academic and community presentations, museum exhibits, and art shows to serve the LGBT2SQ+ community. Since December 2015 we have regularly scheduled social activities for community members 55+, and in March 2016 joined the Manitoba Association of Senior Centres (MASC). (quotes from RRC's Mission and Vision statement - www.rainbowresourcecentre.org)

About New Horizons for Seniors Program

Organizations that want to help seniors make a difference in the lives of others and in their communities are eligible to receive federal grants and contributions funding. Projects must be led or inspired by seniors and address one or more of the following five program objectives:

- promoting volunteerism among seniors and other generations;
- engaging seniors in the community through the mentoring of others;
- expanding awareness of elder abuse, including financial abuse;
- supporting the social participation and inclusion of seniors; and
- providing capital assistance for new and existing community projects and/or programs for seniors.

Community-based projects are eligible to receive up to \$25,000 per year, per organization, in grant funding. Organizations can apply for funding for community-based and pan-Canadian projects in the same year when calls for proposals are open.