

Two Spirit



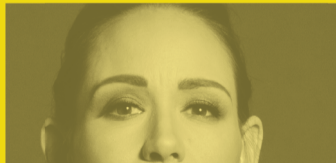
Coming Out



Transitioning

# NEW TRIBE

MAGAZINE



INDIGENOUS AR+  
See this cover  
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augmented reality experience

New Tribe Special Edition V



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## ABOUT THE COVER

The cover of this edition of New Tribe Magazine showcases the gorgeous faces of many of our contributors and has an AR component that stars Arne Fulton, Alycia Two Bears and Chaz Prairie Chicken. Be sure to check out the AR using your mobile device and the USAY AR APP. For more about the cover please go to page 35.

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## Get USAY's AR APP

Whenever you see the USAY AR logo scan over the page with your device with the app open, then watch the image come to life. Make sure your ringer is on and volume is up. Now, flip through this issue of New Tribe Magazine and have fun searching!





## Editor's Note

Welcome to one of our most complex, diverse and AMAZING issues of New Tribe Magazine. When we set out to share the world of Indigenous Pride with our readers, we did not realize the twists and turns this journey would take. While we consider ourselves allies of the LGBTQ2S+ community, we knew we were incapable of properly sharing the stories and experiences that needed to be told without immense input from those in the community. We wanted to learn FROM the LGBTQ2S+ community, not ABOUT them.

In a time when we are all feeling isolated and disconnected from the outside world, we take a moment to realize that this is how many Indigenous members of the LGBTQ2S+ community have felt since contact; wondering where and how they belong and trying to navigate where they, being Indigenous and LGBTQ2S+ fit into the world. Some have hidden their true selves, while others have not and dealt with negative consequences. Our hope is that by sharing this issue of New Tribe Magazine our readers can learn more about themselves, perhaps even see themselves in others and realize that all members of the Indigenous LGBTQ2S+ community are entitled to feel their own sense of Indigenous Pride.

**Stacey Carefoot**  
Editor, New Tribe Magazine

Special Edition V Indigenous Pride

Executive Editor  
Stacey Carefoot

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### About New Tribe

This special edition of New Tribe Magazine features articles and reflections guided by members of the Indigenous LGBTQ2S+ community in combination with pieces completed by our USAY staff writers. We endeavour to share viewpoints and perspectives unique to the community while fostering an environment of inclusivity, understanding and immense appreciation for the valuable contributions that members of the Indigenous LGBTQ2S+ community bring to our lives.

NTM is a publication distributed free throughout the City of Calgary and beyond. NTM's mission is to promote a positive outlook on Indigenous people living in an urban setting by promoting information sharing within the Indigenous and youth communities.



URBAN SOCIETY FOR  
**ABORIGINAL YOUTH**

The Urban Society for Aboriginal Youth (USAY) is a not-for-profit charitable organization located in the heart of Calgary. By nurturing self-empowerment and fostering healthy collaboration and communication USAY strives to enrich the lives of all urban Indigenous youth to ensure healthy future generations. USAY provides free services and programs to Calgary's Indigenous youth.

### Special Thanks

USAY would like to thank everyone who helped make this project possible including:



and the members of our youth council Jared Nelson, Morrigan Caldwell, Dylan Cherniwchan, Zarek Wright-Winnipeg, Alycia Twoyoungmen, Stacie Cranebear, Samantha Robinson, Chaz Prairie Chicken and Kayla Carrillo

Contributors Olivia Condon Storey, Brian Kowikchuk, Terry Hachey-Collins, Sissy Thiessen, Kyla Tolksdorf, Arne Fulton, Taylor Van Eyk, Sydney Hamilton, Alycia Two Bears, Cheyenne McGinnis and Phillip

The opinions expressed in the articles are those of the writers and not necessarily those of USAY (the publisher). The publisher accepts no liability or responsibility for plagiarism in the works in this magazine, all writing is presumed to be the original work of the writers.

This magazine features topics that may trigger or evoke an emotional response. If you require assistance, please call the Distress Centre 403-266-4357.

### Alternate Nouns Disclaimer

USAY recognizes that this document contains a number of different nouns when referring to the original inhabitants of Canada. While our preferred noun at USAY is Indigenous, we recognize First Nations, Inuit, and Métis as Indigenous People, we also honour and respect the writing and preferences of our contributors therefore have not made adjustments to their choices. We endeavour to not offend any individuals or groups with this decision.

# A Blessing

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This blessing comes to us from the traditional territories of the Blackfoot Confederacy (Siksika, Kainai, Piikani), the Tsuut'ina, the Îyâxe Nakoda Nations, the Métis Nation (Region 3), and all people who make their homes in the Treaty 7 region of Southern Alberta.

I wish to give thanks to the Great Spirit for the gift of life. We are living in times of uncertainty, isolation, loneliness and with lack of freedoms. These times have brought humanity to our knees. The human race has been gifted the opportunity to reflect on how we have treated our Sacred Mother (Mother Earth), the animals, all living beings and each other. This is a time of opportunity for us to emulate the Sacred teachings and walk this planet in a good way. I wish to remember our Government leaders and pray for them to lead with truth, honesty, compassion and love.

I ask special blessings for the LGBTQ2S+ community as well as all those who suffer racism and other injustices. May the Black, Indigenous, Métis and people of color be treated and valued in an equitable way. We are all equal in the eyes of our Creator. May we come together and support one another with compassion, love and kindness. I give thanks for answering our prayers, all my relations.

Kinanaskomitin/Doreen Spence  
(Bald Eagle Woman Who Leads)



Photo Credit: Olivia Condon Storey

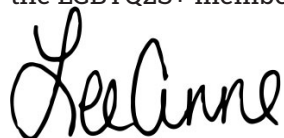
# Greetings from USAY

It became clear to USAY a few years ago that Indigenous youth wanted programming that was specific to the LGBTQ2S+ community and their unique strengths. We were so happy to be invited to create an Indigenous Pride project. This project was the first of many that allowed us to explore, discuss and participate in meaningful conversations about what it means to be part of these unique, wonderful and amazing communities.

USAY supported the development of an Indigenous Pride Augmented Reality poster series, which allows individuals to interact with different sexual and gender identities through the use of our app. However, bringing awareness to definitions did not tell enough of the story, so this Special Edition of New Tribe Magazine was created.

Our hope is that Indigenous people who identify with the LGBTQ2S+ community have the opportunity to tell their stories in a way that is authentic to their journeys and their hopes for a more inclusive future. USAY wanted to highlight the struggles, but also the strength, resiliency and abilities that this community has.

As always, we invite you to become part of our tribe and begin your journey with us as we honour the LGBTQ2S+ members of our community.



LeeAnne Ireland  
Executive Director, USAY  
She/Her



New Tribe writer Alycia Two Bears shares her take on pronouns, deconstructs the acronym and breaks down sex assignment vs gender to help everyone down the path of understanding

## they/she/he/ze

# The Power of The Pronoun

By Alycia Two Bears

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Photo Credit: Harold Horsefall/Thunderboy Photography

One of the ways everyone can show respect and care for our friends, family and community members is correctly using the pronouns they/she/he/ze. When asked to use a pronoun that is not what you have been using for the length of your relationship with an individual is not an invitation to impose your opinions on someone's identity. This is a time to listen and very possibly, be uncomfortable and prepare to make mistakes which are bound to happen and when they do, do not spend time and attention on your intention, instead, correct yourself by correcting your previous sentence and move the conversation forward.

An apology when you mistake a pronoun can be done later, one on one, with a simple and heartfelt, "my apologies for using the incorrect pronoun repeatedly, I will do better." A long drawn out apology in front of a crowd about

how you did not mean to make a mistake and this learning process has been difficult for you, is not an apology for your behaviour, it is both time and energy that has the potential to create an atmosphere where someone feels the need to accept or decline a non-apology to soothe someone else's ego. Ignoring someone's personal pronoun request is silencing their voice about their own identity, perpetuating their identity as disposable and unimportant. It is important to use proper language to affirm someone's identity as welcomed and valued within the community.

Remember, when you share your personal preferred pronouns in circle, in meetings or informally, you are telling people who you are, everyone deserves the right to decide their own identity and ultimately have it respected.

**"Ignoring someone's personal pronoun request is silencing their voice about their own identity, perpetuating their identity as disposable and unimportant.**

”

There are ways in which many of us choose to identify. This list is to support the understanding of identities you may have heard but are unclear of the definition.

## LGBTQQ2S

### Lesbian

A female identifying person who is attracted to other females.

### Gay

A male identifying person who is attracted to other males. Gay can also be used broadly to define when one person is attracted to the same gender as themselves.

### Bisexual

A person who is attracted to all or other genders and sexes.

### Queer

The history of the word queer has often been one of negativity. It is being reclaimed within the community and often used as an identity that does not conform with any of the other identities in the acronym. It is used to describe an attraction to any and all other genders and sexes.

### Questioning

Someone who is unsure and has not decided on their identity. While this is not directly related to sexual attraction, it is an identity included in the acronym.

### 2S, 2 Spirit or Two Spirit

Used for the Indigenous community to identify having both a female and male spirit, with their physical assigned sex at birth. This identity can be linked to seeing themselves as both female and male; fluid identity, trans identity, gender identity, sexual identity and spiritual identity.

### Gender-inner personal identity

It is important to note, the difference between sex assignment at birth and gender; sex assignment at birth is male/men/boy or female/women/girl based on physical traits. Gender is connected to inner personal identity; these are likely some of the more popular identities you have heard of:

### Gender Binary

The assumption of only 2 genders, female and male.

### Cisgender

When the sex identity assigned at birth matches the gender identity.

### Transgender

A gender identity that is different than one assigned at birth. A transgender man is a man. A transgender woman is a woman.

### Non-binary and Genderqueer

An identity that does not conform to the gender binary.

### Intersex

Bodies born with the physical anatomy that does not match typical male or typical female traits.

### Transition

Any surgery completed to closer match the physical self to the self-identified gender self.

Note: it is not okay to ask anyone, strangers or acquaintances, about their surgeries or their physical body traits.





Photo Credit: Indigenuity Photography by Colé Richards

In her New Tribe Magazine debut, Sissy Thiessen unpacks not being enough, being too much and refusing to be ashamed.

# Damp Home-Fire

**I may be different, and my identity may be complex, but what I am is a strong, beautiful, mixed blood Stoney, Cree, German, Pansexual, Two Spirit woman and I am not ashamed.**

By Sissy Thiessen

I've learned that people are never happy. If I identify as Two Spirit, I have to be Transgender. If I identify as Queer, I have to be a Lesbian. If I identify as First Nations, my skin has to be brown. If my blood contains mixed ethnicities, I have to be called Métis.

As a Pansexual, Cis-gendered, Two Spirited, Mixed-Blooded Stoney, Cree and German woman, and I am none of the expectations placed on me. And as someone who isn't any of the assumed or preferred identities associated with my labels, my existence presents an uncomfortable, unfamiliar and inconvenient concept. Meaning I often walk the earth with an invisibility cloak, written off as complicated or seemingly nothing at all.

It's a constant battle of never being enough or too much of something. I opened one of my social media accounts today to find a hateful comment about my white passing privilege in response to me sharing part of my story of being bullied. It cut deep, and here's why.

When I was a young girl, I attended a middle to upper class rural Alberta school where over 97% of the student population were Caucasian-white. As a child, my skin was darker than it is now. Along with standing out and being bullied for being from a lower income family and athletically challenged in a sports-focused community, I stood out for being one of four visible students of colour in the entire school. Something else I've learned from this lived experience is that people love to point out what's different about others. I can't recall how many times I came home from school crying, praying so hard for lighter skin and to be like the other kids. Not because I actually wanted it, but because I was tired of being different and being bullied for it.

When I got older, not only did my skin get lighter, I fully realized and understood my identity as a mixed blood First Nations and German woman. I also realized that I wasn't completely heterosexual, nor was I completely homosexual. I was planted somewhere on a spectrum I didn't fully understand, nor was I raised with the tools to try to. My mom was quite clear when I came out at 24 as pansexual that, "there was gay and there was straight and anything else was 'choosing' and being greedy." Another instance of being too much or not enough of something for the comfort of others.

Which brought even more tears, self-loathing and prayers to be more normal and fit into mainstream ideas of acceptable and acknowledgeable. To be able to fit into a binary; to have a place and truly belong somewhere. Though I've felt like a homeless drifter my whole life, I'm here to say that the last and most important thing I've learned is that no other person has the right to tell me if and where I belong, if and where I have a home-fire.

I may be different, and my identity may be complex, but what I am is a strong, beautiful, mixed blood Stoney, Cree, German, Pansexual, Two Spirit woman and I am not ashamed. I have nothing to hide or prove, nor do I feel like I have to. If anyone is confused or uncomfortable with my identities, that is their issue to solve. Creator and I know my heart and that's all that matters.

To all my relations who relate to any part of my story-Ahkameyimok-keep trying hard and persevere. Be unapologetically yourself-the rest of the world will catch up if we show them how.

# A Two-Spirit Journey



## The Autobiography of a Lesbian Ojibwa-Cree Elder

By: Ma-Nee Chacaby with Mary Louisa Plummer

Reviewed by Sydney Hamilton

Ma-Nee Chacaby in "A Two-Spirit Journey" provides a first-hand narrative of Ma-Nee's life while giving insight into the core of Indigenous resilience. Written to share insight for Ma-Nee's family, the autobiography is based in the twentieth century and the beginning of the twenty-first century, the reader comes to understand that individuals that lived both as Indigenous men and Indigenous women after contact were not accepted and were often shamed by society for being different. From the beginning to the end, it is an emotional journey. Ma-Nee deals with both physical and sexual abuse from a young age, addiction in many varieties and racism both on and off the reserve, creating a

seemingly never-ending journey that Ma-Nee must face.

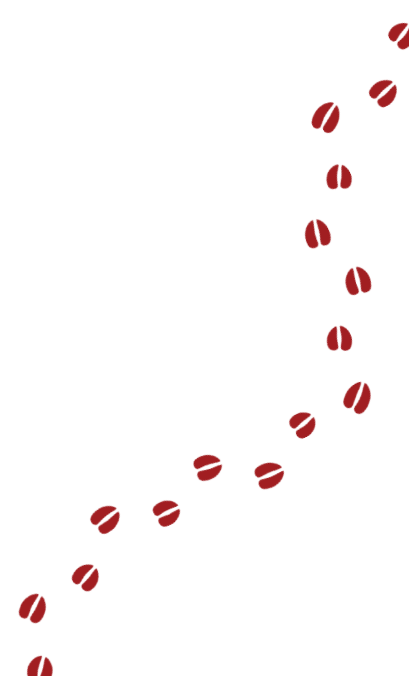
Very quickly one comes to understand the multi-faceted nature of Ma-Nee's life, the aspects of having both a male and female spirit inside coming through in many different forms throughout the different phases of her life.

Even with such a complex life Ma-Nee shows resilience by continuing to do what feels right by not focusing on being an Indigenous woman but rather an Indigenous person that others can gain insight and knowledge from.

Ma-Nee is both trapped within and fighting against the mold often placed upon Indigenous women by her preferring pants to skirts, hunting and trapping to staying indoors and finding pleasure amongst women rather than men. Ma-Nee uses her Kokum's teachings as the core of her life; finding love, forgiveness and humour as a way to heal from all the trauma that she has been dealt, along with finding these same characteristics in others and continuing to resist the hardships of life.

**"From the beginning to the end, it is an emotional journey."**

Though the autobiography still conforms to colonial gender identities, it begins to decouple stereotypes often perpetuated on to Indigenous women. Recognizing the way that



# The Velvet Rage



## Growing Up Gay in A Straight Man's World

By Alan Downs, PhD

Reviewed by Brian Kowikchuk

The book was presented to me by a great friend, who seen the mutual vulnerability that we both succumbed to; the exposure of stepping into the spotlight of being homosexual. Steven Retchless (who made it to the finals of America's Got Talent), bringing life to pole dancing from a male perspective, it opened doors, that strength was infectious. During my journey in learning about myself, I met Steven on a snorkeling expedition in Puerto Vallarta, Mexico (an internationally renowned gay capital, second to Israel).

I went to Puerto Vallarta, Mexico a few years ago with my friend Tiara-Jade Moran. We were aliens. We were Inuvialuit, a rare commodity. My friend had her head on her shoulders, but me, I had no

business being there, I was so raw. I was a child of the Arctic, uneducated to gay culture, shy all over again you would say.

The book catches the reader's attention with its subtitle – Overcoming the Pain of Growing Up in A Straight Man's World. The author, Alan Downs, PhD, was a therapist for a large number of homosexuals that had been fighting the great internal battle. His skill and his supporting analysis have brought light to rainbows. Through mathematical formula, his brilliance surfaced in his studies of the homosexual obstacles of the past, present and future. The men of the past have battled a war that many of us are unaware of. It speaks of the silent battles of our dads, uncles and grandfathers - the intergenerational trauma from homophobia.

I never knew that I was so unattended. I never knew that I had baggage that needed

payment. I never knew that this baggage was going to be so taxing!

Nobody tells you.

Growing up in Tuktoyaktuk, NT, a spit on the Northern Peninsula along the coast of the arctic ocean, as an expected Inuvialuit man, nobody educates you on the dual spirituality you will carry. Nobody.

Reading this book taught me about the secondary emotions that I had been overlapping with shame. There is no manual on being a healthy homosexual. But this written masterpiece is something I recommend. Without it, I would never have become the strong gay man that I am now.

I want to end this with a specific line in the book that resonates with me, which I hold onto with spirit and love. The author writes, "everything is as it should be". He speaks about us understanding that, and if we can, we can understand anything.

I no longer pity the man I was before. I love him, and I forgive him for not knowing.



**The men of the past have battled a war that many of us are unaware of. It speaks of the silent battles of our dads, uncles and grandfathers - the intergenerational trauma from homophobia."**

# USAY'S PANDEMIC



The COVID-19 pandemic was as shocking to USAY as it was to the rest of the world. We were fortunate to be able to spring into action and provide supports to Indigenous youth and their families.

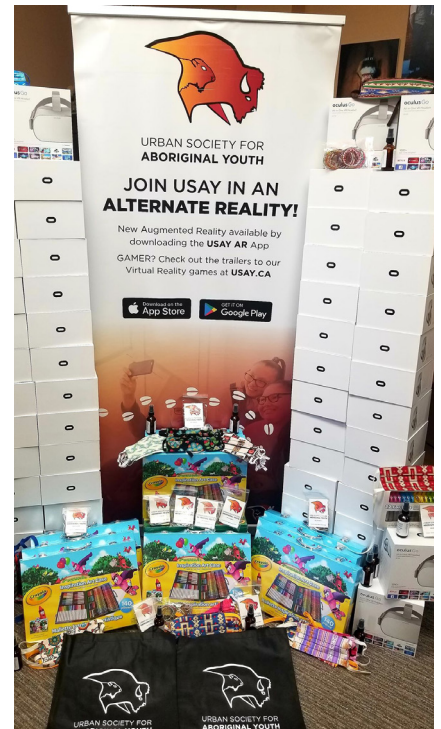
With funding from the Calgary Foundation, Government of Canada and United Way, USAY was able to distribute food gift cards directly to Indigenous youth in our programs, including our Indigenous Inclusion Program, Lunch Programs, Backpack Giveaway recipients and others who reached out to us for support. We did our very best as a team to provide quick, safe and lasting support to families that were experiencing the impacts of the pandemic.

One of the greatest COVID responses USAY undertook was our birthday parades. USAY staff dressed in costumes and showed up to children's homes who were experiencing a COVID birthday, a socially spaced dance party brightened their day and made them feel special. USAY also transitioned in-person programming to the

virtual world, providing Indigenous youth in our programs with virtual reality (VR) headsets to allow them to engage in activities in a digital space. Through the VR headsets, Indigenous youth and our staff could meet around digital campfires, play games and chat using fun and creative avatars. This also meant that they could access USAY's suite of Indigenous games and experiences. They could engage with Blackfoot language, sacred teachings of Writing on Stone and help 'find Victor' in our escape room.

Care packages that were sent out in June 2020, ensured that Indigenous youth and families had access to craft supplies, cultural supports and sanitation supplies to ensure that they had a balanced approach to their wellness during the pandemic. Many families expressed their gratitude in receiving supports during this challenging time and USAY was happy to be able to support our community's strengths.

# RESPONSE



Indigenous youth also wanted to give back to their families, friends and neighbourhoods, so USAY purchased 'Movie Night' care packages that Indigenous youth distributed to those they felt could use a 'pick-me-up'. It was heartwarming to see that Indigenous youth were selecting neighbours they had never met because they had seen them shopping with their kids or 'looking down'. This fun day of providing something enjoyable for others was inspiring to everyone and reminded us that even through hard times it is important to give to others.

USAY was able to mark the achievement of our Indigenous youth graduates that were not able to walk the stage in June because of the pandemic. USAY provided an important acknowledgement of their hard work, educational attainment and their journey to adulthood. It was important to us

to still embark on these celebrations of graduation because in 'non-COVID times', USAY would have been there cheering them on as they received their diplomas. As the pandemic still continues to create challenges in our community, USAY looks forward to providing more support and accessing whatever funding we can to creating access for Indigenous youth and their families. We hope that our contribution to the community is one that can be meaningful during a time that can be very isolating. Our focus will remain on basic needs, primarily reducing food insecurity and allowing Indigenous families to self-determine what is important to them.

**If you are experiencing isolation, need support or have trouble navigating resources available to you, please reach out to USAY at 403-233-8225 or via email at [info@usay.ca](mailto:info@usay.ca)**



LAUGH, LEARN AND RETHINK WHAT YOU KNOW ABOUT  
INDIGENOUS COMEDY AND HUMOUR

Contact USAY for more  
information on how to view  
Original Laughter



# ORIGINAL LAUGHTER

DIRECTED BY

JARRET TWOYOUNGMEN

USAY PRESENTS A NAKODA AV CLUB PRODUCTION

FEATURING DON BURNSTICK | ANDREW BIRD | JACKSON WESLEY | JACOB BILLY | JARED TAILFEATHERS  
DR. LINDSEY CROWSHOE | NELSON MAYER | PATRICK WILLIE | RAQUEL QUINONES | SHERRY MCKAY  
TONY DELANEY | TREVOR PRAIRIE CHICKEN (KIITOKII) DIRECTOR OF PHOTOGRAPHY SOLOMAN CHINIQUAY  
CO-PRODUCERS LEEANNE IRELAND | JESSICA HAWRYLUK ASSISTANT DIRECTOR TASHINA EAR

# NEW ★ TRIBE

## INDIGENOUS PRIDE

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A large part of what we do at USAY is bring people together. Our past events have been enormous successes and the event we had planned for this particular edition of New Tribe Magazine was going to be monumental.

The global pandemic forced us to reinvent ourselves in so many ways, we had to cancel event planning for the foreseeable future. The in-person connection we need with our readers and USAY family was lost but we realized that we could still find a way for our contributors to interact with you while they share important messages.

**Sharing Circles** provide opportunities for our voices to be heard in a safe and open space.

We welcome you to sit with us at our virtual fire, through the USAY AR app, and listen the stories shared by some of the contributors to this edition of New Tribe Magazine.



# PRIDE YYC



## Reimagined Pride Brunch

**Amid the uncertainty and turmoil of a pandemic, we gathered to help Camp fYrefly shine bright during YYC Pride**

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The 30th Anniversary was supposed to be one for the record books. Big celebrations were planned, the parade was going to be larger than life and the events would have been attended by those from far and wide, until COVID.

With the onset of COVID-19, Calgary Pride had to quickly reinvent themselves and run their 2020 Festival entirely online. The result: 61 hours of broadcasting throughout 10 days, bringing together over 31,000 people from across the country (and maybe even farther). They watched performances, danced to DJs and joined panel discussions while 231 LGBTQ2S+ artists and entertainers gave it their all. The result was magic.

USAY was honoured to join in on numerous events over the ten-day extravaganza and while we loved them

all, a couple stood out for us. In keeping with our youth initiatives, we partnered with the Centre for Sexuality's Pride Brunch in support of Camp fYrefly. Pride boxes filled with USAY swag along with delicious goodies were delivered to some of the participants homes while they got ready to join the virtual brunch. Boxes were opened while the brunch began with virtual mingling. We got into the spirit jumping (virtually of course) from table to table in the online chats, meeting a wide variety of amazing individuals, all there to support Canada's only national leadership retreat for lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, two-spirit, asexual, intersex, queer, questioning and allied youth.

Along with the extremely uplifting and entertaining MC skills of Mike Morrison,



participants were treated to a welcoming message from Pam Krause, president and CEO of the Centre for Sexuality. Youth performances entertained us while camper testimonials intrigued us.

We heard from camp attendees whose lives have been transformed by their experiences. Camp fYrefly began in 2013 thanks to a partnership between the University of Alberta's Institute for Sexual Minority Studies and Services (ISMSS) and Calgary's Centre for Sexuality. The camp is designed to help youth develop the leadership skills and resiliency necessary for them to become change agents in their schools, families and communities.

The camp workshops and guest speakers help youth to develop their very own fYrefly fuel designed to help them



## CAMP fYrefly

In addition to the Camp fYrefly initiative, the Centre for Sexuality delivers programs and services that work to normalize sexuality and sexual health across the lifespan. They are leading the way in the areas of sexuality, healthy relationships, human rights, gender identity, sexual orientation, equality and consent.

Check out their community based non-judgemental sexual and reproductive services and supports at [centreforsexuality.ca](http://centreforsexuality.ca)

 @YYCsexualhealth

 CFS - Sexual Health Centre



Top left, a USAY youth participant enjoys the festivities of past pride events. Above, USAY staff get into the spirit of a past pride parade. Top right, entertainer Mavis shares their talent during the online event in September. Below right, Pixie shares some awesome ukulele and vocal skills. The musical talent during the online pride brunch was so good, we didn't want it to end. Pull out your mobile device and see for yourself. Download the USAY AR App. Hover over the photo of either Mavis (top right) or Pixie (bottom right) with your mobile device to see and hear their performances come to life!

keep their inner light shining bright during dark times. Camp fYrefly participants vow to help fight against discrimination, prejudice and oppression in all of its many forms, and to help others in their time of greatest need. The camp provides a space for youth to explore their identity, build resilience and enhance self-esteem, all while having an awesome camp experience.

Camp fYrefly successfully facilitated a COVID-19 version of their 2020 camp through a mixture of workshops, daily

pod meetups and other creative activities. The 2020 camp welcomed 70 participants. "Camp fYrefly is a space that for many of us exists not just alongside a river or lake, in a cabin or forest but in our hearts, minds and connections to community. The people are who truly make camp happen – with a sense of deep caring, respect and passion for improving the lives of LGBTQ2S+ youth in Southern Alberta," says Centre for Sexuality staff member Hilary Mutch.

# **SHOUT IT FROM THE ROOFTOPS!**

**Pride gets a pandemic  
makeover fit for  
Queens and Kings**

**Unique celebration of the LGBTQ2S+  
community had fans dancing from their  
balconies at a downtown Calgary hotel during  
the Celebration of Love Drag Show.**

Story and photos by Olivia Condon Storey



Glitter, balloons, colourful flags, acceptance and love flowed from the rooftops of Calgary's downtown as hundreds gathered to celebrate pride in a new and unique way.

In the midst of a pandemic, Pride Calgary organizers had to get creative, opting to bring community organizations, members of the LGBTQ2S+ community, performers and allies together in a week-long celebration with various events, both digital and in-person.

To mark the second last day of pride week, Plain Jane Events, in partnership with Calgary Pride, hosted a socially distanced drag show from the

pool deck of the Ramada Plaza Downtown.

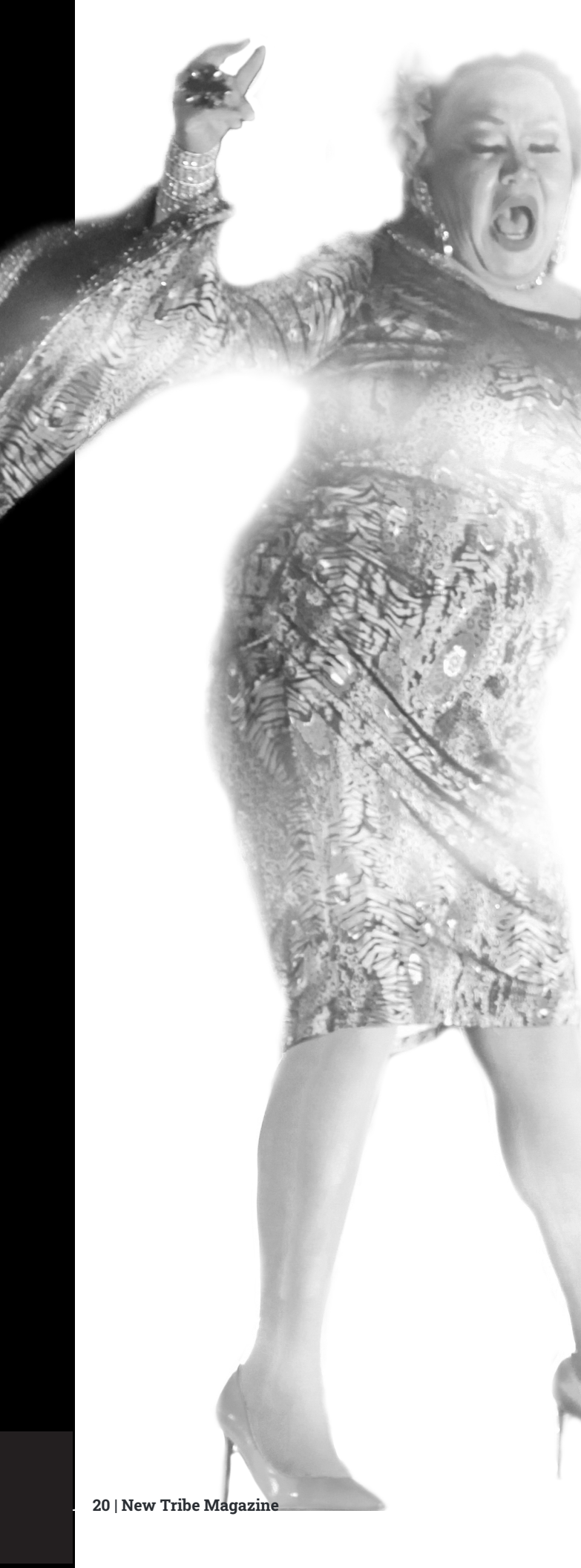
Guests watched from the balconies of their rooms as nearly a dozen drag Queens and Kings, and a burlesque performer, hit the stage as the sun set.

The energy and success of the event had organizers and guests suggesting it be brought back in future years, pandemic or not. There were wardrobe and wig malfunctions, a cannonball into the pool and even a marriage proposal (he asked, and he said yes!), but above all else, there was love.



**There were wardrobe and wig malfunctions, a cannonball into the pool and even a marriage proposal (he asked, and he said yes!), but above all else,**

**THERE WAS LOVE.!**



Argentina Hailey: Morley's Two-Spirit Queen

## EXCLUSIVE HIGHLIGHT

**Argentina took the stage halfway through the evening, strutting her stuff to Queen's *Somebody to Love*.**

She was blown away by the success of the event and hopes events like that will be brought back in the future. "It was an amazing experience; I had a blast." Like many others in her community, Argentina's journey to the rooftop stage wasn't without its challenges. But as a Two Spirit Indigenous person, her road to authenticity was especially bumpy.

Knowing she was "different" around 10 or 11, Argentina kept these feelings to herself out of fear that her ranching family who were "really into the bible" wouldn't accept her.

"I hung out with one of my relatives who was openly Two Spirit. She lived in the community as her authentic self, all dressed up and lived her life as a woman on the reserve and for me that was like oh, she's very brave and I've always wanted to live like that myself but I was scared of my family," she said. "She made me see that I can be my true self and it's up to my family to accept me and truly love me. She's the one that got me into the drag but back then I didn't know it was drag, I just thought I was dressing up as who I was meant to be."

Argentina ran away from home at around 13 and moved in with her cousin in the city but she struggled with honouring her feminine spirit. She kept her distance from her family on the reserve for years, hoping that she could keep her life a secret.

"Somehow they found out and my mother was very, very angry with me," she said. "Eventually my step dad, who has now passed, he was the one that kind of opened her eyes a bit and told her that if you truly loved your son and if you want him in your life then you would accept him for who he is."

At 16, Argintina said she started trying to sneak into some of Calgary's gay bars, like the Rekroom and Boyztown. She laughs remembering how frequently the bartenders caught her and kicked her out. When she "finally turned 18" she went back and saw her first drag performance.

"I was like 'wow' and then I befriended some of the Queens there who taught me I could live both lives," she said. "I could go out dressed as female and it gave me the understanding of what drag was and that's how Argintina was born."

Since then, Argintina has won a number of awards, crowns and titles, including Ms. Gay Calgary 17, Miss Club 2000, 2001 and 2002, Miss Canadian Rockies International Rodeo Queen 2011, Her Imperial Sovereign Majesty Empress 31 1/2, and Elder Princess 36 Sacred Buffalo Woman.

Not only has she gained acclaim across the country, Argintina has worked closely with Elders and other Indigenous leaders on reserve to bring programming and Morley Pride to her own community. But that too was not without its challenges.

"I was very hesitant at first," she said of when Carla Pauls, Chiniki community program coordinator, approached her to bring a drag show to the reserve. "The way my family and some of the older family members treated me, I always felt that was how the whole community felt." After a year of persistence on Pauls' part, Argintina agreed. "I finally said ok, fine," she said, laughing. "The least we could do was try. What's the worst that can happen to us?" From there, the idea took off. The Stoney Nakoda Resort and Casino offered up their space as a venue for the drag performance and Pauls wanted to turn the event into a full-blown pride celebration.

"I told her, I don't think it's ever been done on a reserve before, I think it could be something huge and then she laid the groundwork and I followed her pursuit and supported her in that sense and next thing you know, (in 2016) me and her were dubbed the founders of Morley Pride."

After a few years of pride events, funding became harder to access and Argintina, after paying some of the expenses on her own, is now looking in a new direction.

"I think what we need to do is actually all sit together and have a community talk and see how we can work together and bring back the actual Two Spirit teachings and Two Spirit acceptance."

In addition to teaching all students, on and off reserve, about the history of Two Spirit peoples "as healers, as child givers, as leaders, as warriors," Argintina said it's vital to have spaces for people with questions to go.

In the meantime, she says she'll continue to offer advice, guidance and support for those who want or need it.

"Never be afraid of who you truly are and if you want to live your truth never be ashamed to live that truth. If you want to seek help, there are people out there that are willing to help."

Art by: Bodeen Twóyoungmen





# GAY HISTORY WALKING TOURS ILLUMINATE CALGARY'S QUEER HISTORY

**GUIDED BELTLINE AND DOWNTOWN TOURS BRING PARTICIPANTS TO THEIR FEET  
AND RAISE FUNDS FOR CALGARY PRIDE**

By Olivia Condon Storey

When COVID-19 made its way to Calgary in March 2020, many Calgary Pride organizers were questioning how to mark the annual event and what the celebrations might look like if the pandemic persisted into the fall.

Local historian, author, researcher and fourth generation Calgarian Kevin Allen knew his gay history walking tours were the answer to continue to teach, inspire and keep distant those interested in joining.

Since 2013, Allen has been guiding eager listeners through the city's downtown neighbourhoods, illustrating the queer history behind the alleys, unassuming doorways and landmarks many Calgarian's don't know the history behind.

"I really like showing people places and putting queer history in a landscape," says Allen following the first of four walking tours this year. "These are the streets we all walk on every day and to reframe it as oh there are these layers of the past that we're walking by that we can see I think is really cool."

Around a dozen people gathered outside the Beltliner on a warm day at the end of August to

start Allen's first walking tour, covering around 3.5 kilometers of the Beltline neighbourhood.

Wearing masks and staying six-feet apart, participants followed Allen back in time to pivotal moments and spaces in Calgary's gay history, and learned about the impact they've had on the LGBTQ2S+ scene today.

The Beltline tour starts at the steps of the CommunityWise building, formerly the Beltline YMCA and moves around the corner to the former site of Club Carousel, Calgary's first gay bar which opened in 1969.

At the Club Carousel, straight people would be charged admission to come down into the basement club to "look at the queers." Eventually, the gay community came together to boycott the bar, ultimately buying it in 1970 and starting a more inclusive and safe space that became known as 1207 Club.

Along the walk, Allen discussed the hatred, violence and homophobia that LGBTQ2S+ people have faced in the city including the devastating story of Jeff Harris, a gay nurse who was "beaten within an inch of his life" while walking along 13th Avenue to meet some friends in 1990.

Continued on next page



"It was heartbreaking to hear some of these stories but that it helps to show how far we've come," says Canadian songstress and proud Calgarian Jann Arden, who joined the tour with her dog Midi.

"A lot of changes have happened, the community is strong, we have overcome a lot of obstacles, a lot of hatred," Arden continues. "Looking back and hearing Kevin's stories about some of the violence that obviously still happens in the community, but that there's hopefulness and that there's a lot more places for young people to go, there's a lot more resources. I came out of this feeling like there's progression here, there's good change, there's optimism and there's a much better understanding from the straight community at large."

As an openly gay man since the early 1990s, Allen said he too has seen a radical shift in the city's acceptance and understanding of the LGBTQ2S community.

"This idea that we're here, we're queer, get used to it, that was kind of my rallying cry in the early 90s which was a rallying cry for everyone," Allen said. "But this idea that we belong in this city too, we need you to see us and we're not going to be hidden anymore so that's how I kind of emerged into the gay community and it's still important today that we show up."

At another stop on the tour,

Calgary's one remaining bath house, Allen spoke about the city's gay bath house scene dating back to the 1960s. In 2002, Goliath's Sauna & Texas Lounge was raided by police and fifteen men were charged with offenses related to running and being in a "bawdy house," or a brothel.

"I think the thing that really shocked me too, now that I think about it, was the bath house raid was in 2002... That's just horrifying. It's way too recent," one tour participant Katy Takaoka said. "I was 19 when that happened and so that is like scary to think that that was still happening that recently."

Katy, and her wife Cheryl Takaoka, recently moved to Calgary from London, Ontario and said the tour was a chance for them to connect with their community and its rich history.

"I don't even know anything about Calgary's history, not gay or anything else so I'm still just wanting to learn about where everything is. This is great for me," Cheryl said.

"It's a time to connect we really don't know any other queer people in the city," Katy, who grew up in Calgary, said. "It's a way for us to feel like I do belong here, I do have a place here and I'm not alone." Oral history is vital to preserving gay history, Allen said, adding if he could go back in time, he would speak to older gay people who experienced the trauma of being gay in Calgary in the 40s

and 50s. "I wish I could time travel to talk to my 19-year-old self when I was out and just to talk to people who were that much older because a lot of the queer story is oral history, it's not preserved in libraries and stuff like that so I really try to meet and speak with a lot of old people but they're dying," he said.

"I feel like there's still a lot of stories that we need to reclaim." Following the tour, participants were treated to brunch at the Beltliner, using it as an opportunity to discuss what they learned and ask Allen questions about what they saw.

"It was great to see other human beings and it was great to see such a diverse crowd on this walk," Arden said. "I'm so glad that I joined, I feel very hopeful."

Allen said he will continue to host the history walks as long as there are people interested in taking part. This year the four tours raised more than \$1,400 for Calgary Pride.

"There's this modern phenomenon now that we walk past all these bars on 17th avenue with these rainbow umbrellas you see the rainbow piping everywhere and it blows my mind a little bit because that's not the Calgary I grew up in so it's a good thing," he said. "I really enjoyed the walks this year; it was the most social I had been in months."



## Small Town Queer --- Out in Oil Town

# Film Review

A Film reviewed by Taylor Van Eyk

**Small Town Queer - Out in Oil Town** is a film that is a part of the **Small Town Queer** series funded by **Telus** and can be found on **YouTube**. The series captures the stories of individuals identifying with the the **LGBTQ2S+** community across **Alberta**.



Out in Oil Town focuses on the stories of three individuals; Mitchel, Sithara and Cindy. Each individual featured identifies with the LGBTQ2S+ community in a unique way. During the course of the film they explain how their identity has shaped their experiences in Fort McMurray. They all experienced unique issues including a small dating pool, discrimination, issues finding work and being forced to conform with an identity that is not true to who they are.

In addition to speaking of the challenges faced being in a small town they also share the positives and why they choose to stay, as opposed to moving

to a big city with a more established community. To me, the most compelling of these pros was the opportunity and fight to make Fort McMurray more aware and open to the reality of the LGBTQ2S+ community. Mitchel, who identifies as gay, works in the oilfield but also does drag as a way of both activism and education.

Cindy identifies as transgender, her beautiful personality really had an impact on me, learning of her struggles brought tears to my eyes. Before hearing her story, I had never considered the challenges that people in the trans community face with finding work. It

educated me that there is still a fight for equality in the workplace and that somebody may be denied a job simply because they are trans, despite their qualifications.

*Small Town Queer - Out in Oil Town* is a wonderfully educational and relevant film. The film and others in the series are compelling, interesting and take very little time to log onto and watch, there is every reason for everyone to watch - I highly recommend it.



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We all are designed differently,  
there is no manual to being gay.

# This Journey Is Mine

**Coming out is hard, confusing, stressful but as Brian  
Kowikchuk recounts it can also make us laugh . . .**

By Brian Kowikchuk

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Looking back, I recall the confusion. Who am I? Where do I belong? Is this normal? As if growing up in the foster system wasn't enough, I had those demons to deal with. This entity, other part of me, the person I was supposed to be by man's vision, was not me. I didn't want to let go of the boy or what I was given, but where do I go? Nobody around me knew either. I remember wishing for a life my foster-siblings had, wishing that I can be equal or more. This journey was not easy. This journey was mine.

There was a policeman, he wore his uniform, had his hair up. His walk, those shoulders that complimented the walk. I was 14 years old. That was the beginning of the end of Brian Kowikchuk, the infancy was gone, I had my first crush. There were crushes before, but they were everyone else's. The usual hot boys, the usual one who everyone's eyes followed in a class. Yup, I figured out that this was me. The funny part was... how to be me? The hands of time couldn't point me to the north star for guidance, you may as well had followed the sun in July with the never-ending sunrise/sunset. I had my heart and mind, those things that got me through my childhood, or at the least helped. I confided in my friend. Telling her how I felt brought it to life.

Years have gone by, and the bullying happened. The usual bullying, the conflicting emotions inside. Holding them at bay, ensuring that the emotionally abusive behaviour was not acknowledged. I did

not want to give them that power. I once told someone I was seeing, after he was trying to dangle my heart in front of me (narcissistic sociopath), "you cannot take away something you have not given me." In that, I never felt so powerful. Never felt so obedient to my higher self.

We all are designed differently, there is no manual to being gay. There are no shortcuts. Although, we do have ourselves, if we are all alone together, we really aren't alone, are we?

I was able to reflect so much on myself with the friends I kept. Seeing their faces sometimes meant I was neglecting my own emotions from time-to-time. It is so healthy to keep a steady communication system with close friends. Every single important person in your life has a little bit of yourself in them. When you are feeling a little empty, remember that you are always one choice away from a different life. You are life. Choose you.

I was 19 when I decided I was living a lie. Not so much to anyone but to myself. I was participating in my own sabotage. I had to break free. So, I just started believing in myself. Once you start believing in yourself, everyone else has no choice but to start believing with you.

Funny story, my Nanuk (meaning 'grandmother' in Inuvialuktun) had grown up in Sachs Harbour, NT. Her second language was English. Very bold. She will tell you the truth. Anyways, this story speaks to the importance of family in my gay coming out. It was my

first relationship. The one that teaches you a few things. The relationship that either is or isn't.

Stephen was his name. I threw the VHS tape in the system. I put on Jurassic Park. I introduced my now-ex to my Nan. She glanced back at him from time to time. We get to the part in the movie where the guy gets eaten on the toilet by a Tyrannosaurus Rex when my Nan exclaims, "UHLEE" (like OMG in our language), "Grandson, where are these animals?" I reply jokingly, "It is okay Nan, they are in Edmonton, not here. You will be ok." She really started paying attention. Shaking her head. Then she taps me, and says, "Grandson?". I give back a "Yeah?"...

"Your girlfriend looks like a man..."

We laughed so hard.

Do not be afraid to talk to your family. They are there to love you, to laugh with you. Remember, blood makes you related, but love makes you family. You can choose your family if yours is not close. I leave you with these words to understand my experience. Let you have yours. <3



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### **ABOUT THE ART**

"In this piece, I drew a nameless person split down the middle to represent the two spirits, male and female. I coloured the background to match the medicine wheel, drew the design found on the two spirit pride flag on their chest and finally put the symbols for man and woman of their respective sides." -Artist Kyla Tolksdorf

### **ABOUT THE ARTIST**

Kyla Tolksdorf is an 18 year old Métis artist. Her heritage is from St. Boniface and the Red River area - her sixth great grandfather was Cuthbert Grant. She has recently graduated from high school and is looking forward to pursuing art in the future.

# POETRY

By Alycia Two-Bears

## ODE TO THOSE

Who Never Did Conform

the way you

bend

the gender

And

Love

Live

Life

in the grey scale of

..... gay

Straight .....

Illuminates

like

moon beams

There is

nothing

monolithic

about your

divine

queer

soul

ATB

## I AM SO GRATEFUL

For all the

Two Spirits

In my life

The ways in which each

Showed me

To be someone

Myself.

As a chameleon

I never felt

Quite

Female

Or

Male

Despite having a very female presenting self

My cold, aggressive, hard self

Is not at all

Pretty

Soft

Delicate

And all the ways in which I refused

To accept myself as feminine

As sold to me by the Patriarchy

Left me

As

no one

A bold faced lie.

I am

Evoking

Fluid

Bold

Me

ATB



**"My only solace for many years was the growing online world of video games and chat rooms. I could be anyone, I could be myself."**

Photo Credit: Olivia Condon Storey

# Transgender Masculine, Pansexual, Indigenous and Paving the Way

By Terry Hachey-Collins

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My earliest memories should have made me realize that I wasn't straight or Caucasian. I was raised with old school ideals that tried desperately to white-wash my heritage. My Dad died of alcoholism, I was raised by his parents - my grandparents who did everything they could. My Grandfather suffered from narcotic and alcohol addictions. My Grandmother was traumatized from losing her children and leaned heavily into Catholicism for emotional support. Indigenous traditions were lost. I couldn't claim my heritage under blood quantity because my Dad refused to. My Grandmother said she argued with him about it, in case he ever had children who would want to claim it. Without status, I had no access or proof to access the very closed off tribes in the southern United States. In school, Indigenous people were spoken about as relics of the past. It was lonely and confusing, racists could look at me and see that my skin colour was pale, but my features told a different story.

My only solace for many years was the growing online world of video games and chat rooms. I could be anyone, I could be myself. I could be just a man, not trapped in a body with female anatomy. I could explore what being queer meant and ask questions the adults in my life did not want me to know the answers to. It was freedom at last and honestly, most of the people online were far more caring than you'd expect. I had meaningful friendships along the way. Some I still have today.

When I came to Canada, Calgary's music scene was one of the first things I was introduced to. Coming from a musical background, it was easy to get caught up in the strong current of so many

local artists. It was a great way to engage with my culture without knowing anyone. I discovered public drum circles and circle dances during the summer. I found people ranging from Drag Kings/Queens to bead artists and human rights activists. Community is what I found and even if it is not always perfect, I know without a doubt there is someone out there willing to put in the effort.

I reached out to Calgary's transgender community through support groups. This had to be one of the biggest turning points in my life. It gave me a space to go to be with people I could relate to. It allowed me to interact with those people at the same time on my terms. I was able to educate myself concerning things from safe sex to identities I did not know existed. I started my medical transition.

I never would have made it out if I gave up, believe me, I wanted to. The fire inside me would not allow it. I can never be thankful enough for everyone who has taken the time to just listen. You never know what kind of difference you can make.

Editor's note: After reading Terry's submission we hoped that Terry might expand on the experiences as a Transgender masc, Pansexual, Indigenous person reclaiming culture and following their heart. Learn more from Terry on finding a community, coming out and transitioning on pages 32 and 33.

**Terry Hachey-Collins opens up about finding a community, coming out and even shares a word or two on the medical side of transitioning.**

# The answers to our questions with Terry Hachey-Collins



**I hope I can share more of my experiences and support people the way I needed support. I want to be the adult I needed when I was a youth."**

**NT:** In your article, you mention that you found solace in online video games and chat rooms, can you expand on how this helped?

**THC:** Around the age of 12, I discovered written roleplay. If you don't know what it is, it's like creative writing with other people to build one world. Everyone plays a character they create and write their experiences and interactions from that point of view. I didn't participate until I was a bit older, but it opened up a whole new world for me. I could be anyone. I could be a fantasy creature or any version of myself. The first time I wrote from a male perspective, it just clicked. My character just stood around, but suddenly I found myself in a world that didn't know any better and accepted me for my creativity and not what I was or wasn't.

This carried into video games such as the Sims and then into multiplayer games. Again, I found I could be anyone I wanted to be. It created an escape as much as it created a safe place. I still had to be careful of online predators like any other youth.

Sometimes they were adults, and sometimes they were other kids from school. I would make male characters and just 'hang' with the guys. I found my way to Second Life, which isn't a game as much as it is an open-world style digital platform for creativity from roleplaying to 3D modeling and music. Because I didn't have the means or desire to go out to parties or invest in friends, I did so in the safety of my kitchen on the computer. I found other people like me, Indigenous and Queer. I was able to ask for other transgender experiences and through that, I learned there was a whole lot of us who felt the same way. It allowed me to socialize and build my identity, no questions asked. Having that kind of freedom online when my offline life was so smothering and unaccepting provided me room to breathe. It allowed me to grow little by little while I was stuck in life. I think if I never had this experience, I would have ended up so fearful of other people. I might have never transitioned or had that fire in my belly to survive until I created a life of my own.

**NT:** Can you share your coming out story?

**THC:** Coming out never ends. The first time I came out, it was as bisexual at 15 years old to my parent. I remember we were in the car, going home from the library. I said, "I find boys and girls equally attractive. Thought you'd like to know." We never talked about it, other than the strict rules of don't bring anyone home. And if I had a crush, they didn't want to hear about it. I didn't know pansexual or transgender existed. I hated my body as soon as puberty hit. I just never felt comfortable. I struggled with eating and starving myself to get rid of the fat that made my curves. I didn't want to be attractive or pretty. I just wanted to disappear into the wall. I didn't come out as transgender until I was in my 20s with a fiancé. It was an up and down journey. Time is so important. People need time to deal with change and that was my hard lesson to learn. I was surprised by how many people were accepting and even supportive. I came out in stages and to this day, I'm still coming out. I don't mind people knowing in general because I tend to enjoy the company of others who are accepting of diversity.

**NT:** If you are comfortable sharing anything about your physical transition could you do so, in hopes that others might learn or relate.

**THC:** The two biggest things I wanted out of transitioning was facial hair and a flat chest. I started by seeing a therapist at the Calgary Sexual Health Centre, who was able to refer me to a specialist psychiatrist at the Misericordia in Edmonton. It took under a year for me to get in to see him, which was a miracle in itself seeing as the waiting lists can be years. After seeing him for 6 months, he agreed that I was indeed transgender and in a safe place in my life to undergo such a big transformation. I was referred to an Endocrinologist in Calgary who was taking on transgender patients to begin testosterone therapy. This kind of hormone replacement therapy is more popularly done through injections of the hormone, and that is what I've been using for the last six years. From there I was able to get a referral through my psychiatrist again for the two surgeries I needed for myself - hysterectomy and double mastectomy. The hardest part of it all was the anticipation of waiting. It felt like it would never end. It was worth the wait, and I had to be gentle with myself to get through to surgery.

Recovery is one of the biggest questions I get from friends. What was recovery like? Surgery is always a big deal, and there are always risks. I was extremely

blessed to have very caring friends and family on my husband's side who helped me through recovery each time. I had no problems with my double mastectomy. The toughest part is the scar tissue and muscle exhaustion as the body bounces back. Scar tissue is tough and can irritate surrounding nerves so it's so important to gently massage them to help break them down. Muscle exhaustion just takes time, and some babying. Recovery from my hysterectomy was a little more eventful. The surgery itself went perfectly. I had everything removed except for the cervix, which is the canal itself. After being home for a few days, I developed a bladder infection. I wasn't recovering at all and developing a fever with a lot of pain, we went to the emergency room of Peter Lougheed where my surgery was originally completed. I happened upon my surgeon on the way in! What luck, right? Well, thanks to that we didn't have to call his office to pass on the news. He was able to prepare an examination and a room for me, so things went quickly after triage. It took me a little over a week before I was able to go home with the infection completely gone. Walking was so important to recovery and walking correctly, it's so easy to over exhaust yourself post-surgery and it is very important to walk at your own pace as often as possible. I'm very happy with the long-term results of both.

**NT:** When you discovered drum circles, how did they resonate with you? How did they spark feelings of culture and connectivity to the Indigenous community?

**THC:** Drumming reaches a deep, primal level. There is something ancient about the sounds, the way the vibrations sing through to your heart. It is the closest thing to closing my eyes in the middle of the forest and just listening. It's a kind of medicine that clears the mind. Just like any kind of music, it speaks in a language we can all understand. Because of this, I feel it brings me together with everyone else listening. I haven't seen enough Queer drummers!

**NT:** Visions and plans for the future. How have you pursued your Indigenous roots? How are you staying connected with culture?

**THC:** In the next three years, I hope I can share more of my experiences and support people the way I needed support. I want to be the adult I needed when I was a youth. I hope to get better at my beading, and my storytelling. I hope to grow with every piece of education I can find available to me whether it's about history, song or craft that will further intertwine me with my roots.

# Find your People and your Passion

**Surround yourself with friends who are like family and cook up your own good times...**



"In junior high school we were told during sex education class to anonymously write our questions down on a piece of paper and the teacher would answer them in-front of the class. When it came to my question, the teacher read it in silence, turned red, crumpled up the paper and moved on to the next one."

The question: Why am I attracted to girls and boys?

The response: Immediately sent to the principal's office and reminded that if I continued down this path, I would have a very miserable existence.

They were wrong.

That was 1988, over 30 years and many

lifetimes ago. Arne, now in their mid 40s has a job they love, a husband they also love and passions that keep Arne and those around Arne inspired (and well fed).

After being ostracized for asking a very legitimate question, Arne trudged their way through the remainder of school, finally leaving small town Alberta to follow their passion of cooking. Becoming a Chef allowed Arne to gain confidence, meet new people and leave the past behind.

Although no longer working in a kitchen for a living, Arne loves to roll up their sleeves, toss on an apron and create traditional and non-traditional dishes and recipes.

## Arne's Spruce Tip Jelly

4 Cups Young Spruce Tips

½ Cup Sugar

Juice of 1 Lemon

1 pkg of Pectin

**"The healing properties of these trees is well known and well respected. To me, the jelly tastes like the forest and carries deep memories of all the people who have walked among the tree spirits and who have been touched by their medicine." - Arne**



Pour 4 cups of boiling water over young, fresh spruce tips\* and allow water to cool completely, strain juices into a pot.

Set spruce tips aside.

Add sugar and lemon juice to strained spruce juice, bring to a boil.

Add 1 pkg of pectin and boil on high for 1 minute.

Test jelly on a cool spoon. If it sets, pour into jars. If it does not set, continue to boil for an additional

minute, then pour into jars.

Store in the fridge or heat process them in a canner for 30 minutes (make sure you learn more about heat processing and food safety before attempting this method).

Serve with dry meats, sausage, salami or cold cuts, cheeses, toasts, crackers, pork roast or chicken.

\*Spruce tips are best picked in early spring, when they are small and tender, right after the brown papery covering starts to burst.



**“Mom, I want to be a boy”**

# Reflections from a Transgender Teen

By Philip

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I knew I was transgender at an extremely early age. I began to experiment with my gender in 5th grade, but with research came the bad stories I'd hear from other trans people. From that day, I was scared to tell my parents out of fear of them disowning me. In 7th grade, I was exposed to my school's GSA. I was slowly opening up to all my friends and teachers about how I was feeling. It was a huge part of my life I was keeping away from my parents, and it did nothing but hurt me.

This is my true identity, and they didn't even know it. My family and I moved to our reserve for 8th grade. There, not only could I connect to my classmates based on mutual experiences growing up Native, but a lot of them were LGBTQ2S+ like me. Then, one night, I was having a breakdown in my room. I remember the moment my mom came in. I was so scared, but I was so hurt, I knew that telling her my secret would be the best thing to do. So, I did it.

“Mom, I want to be a boy”. Since then, a lot has changed within the year and a half. I have been seeing a counselor for a year, my psychologist gave me the thumbs up to start hormone replacement therapy (HRT). I've been on hormone blockers since June and will be starting testosterone later this winter or spring. It's been a long journey, but one that has shaped me into the person I am today. I hope that as I get older, I will be able to share my story so others know that regardless of what happens, good things come in time, I promise

## About the Cover



The cover of this edition of New Tribe features eight of the remarkable people you will meet inside the pages of the magazine. We were so grateful to be able to share the life experiences, successes and challenges of every individual in this issue, we felt that we wanted to ensure that as many of them as possible could make an appearance on the cover. They say that a picture is worth a thousand words and we think that the expressions of our cover models really do speak for themselves. We are honoured to introduce our cover models: Chaz Prairie Chicken, Alycia Two Bears, Arne Fulton, Brian Kowikchuk, Sissy Thiessen Kootenayoo, Justin Many Fingers, Argentina Hailey and Terry Hachey-Collins. These individuals exemplify the powerful, engaging, and exceptionally unique LGBTQ2S+ individuals in this magazine and in the Indigenous community.

A portrait of Mii-Sum-In-Iskum, a person with long, wavy hair that is black with blonde highlights. They are wearing a black cardigan over a sequined top. The background is a soft-focus field of yellow autumn leaves. The text is overlaid on the right side of the image.

# Meet Mii-Sum -In-Iskum

By Cheyenne McGinnis

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**Mii-Sum-In-Iskum (Long Time Buffalo Rock) is a Queer, Indigenous, disabled and MAD artist from the Kainaiwa Blackfoot Reserve in Southern Alberta. His Canadian name is Justin Many Fingers.**

Photo Credit: Olivia Condon Storey



## Meet Mii-Sum-In-Iskum

An international artist who has studied performing arts, Justin is a graduate of the Centre for Indigenous Theatre and has also studied at the Soulepper Actors Academy. Many Fingers is also a programmer, producer, director, choreographer and creator, and is in the process of creating Indigenous programming in Southern Alberta through the Making Treaty 7 Cultural Society and other avenues.

Justin is currently working on setting up a Queer BIPOC Collective that can act as a safe discussion place for artists, activists and other allies interested in using their privilege to support the Indigenous LGBTQ2S+ community. He has aspirations that this collective will go on to create and host a Queer BIPOC Festival. Justin is also working on a project centered around language. Did you know that within the Blackfoot Culture, there were seven different names a Queer person could be called? Justin's project will seek to uncover the current language, the past language and aspects of Queer culture from a Blackfoot perspective

to honour current members and ancestors.

It felt as though there were no resources, no community, and a load of stigma when Justin lived on reserve, and he didn't quite feel free to be himself until he left for Toronto and Calgary to pursue an acting career. This kick-started his career in the arts and gained him international recognition.

Justin describes that identifying as Indigenous, Queer and disabled as being like a minority within a minority - the LGBTQ2S+ community still has instances of racism and stigmas still exist within the space, according to Justin. These are issues that compose a very challenging, complex culture to navigate, however Justin does feel that events such as Canada 150, the Truth and Reconciliation Commission and changes in government have created more understanding and more openness towards and within the LGBTQ2S+ community, especially in Southern Alberta.

## 2019: Calgary's First Indigenous Drag Show - The Queer Cab Fab

One of the projects that Justin is most proud of is his involvement in launching and executing an Indigenous Drag Show event in Calgary in 2019. The Queer Cab Fab Drag performers represented a diverse cross section of First Nations and the Métis culture and came from Vancouver, Calgary, Winnipeg, Morley and Kainai. The Queens dazzled and shone during the night and the showcase of Indigenous culture was a source of pride for all Indigenous Peoples who attended. The space felt safe and welcoming as all were invited to share in the Pride that these Queens felt for their art, their identity and their community.

Justin hopes that talks about including the

Indigenous LGBTQ2S+ community in further programming during future Pride events will continue to happen moving forward while cautioning that the need for inclusivity still exists.

Having privilege within the space in Southern Alberta can make you an ally to the Indigenous LGBTQ2S+ community. Privilege can be used to help others gain understanding and provide defense mechanisms and insight. Justin believes that with the support of Calgary Pride and Making Treaty 7 Cultural Society, these conversations are happening and will continue for years to come.

### About the Writer

Cheyenne McGinnis was fortunate enough to be in attendance at the Queer Cab Fab Drag event in 2019 and believes that there have been great strides made towards understanding. Cheyenne is proud of the work that individuals like Justin are doing in the LGBTQ2S+ and Calgary arts space.

# RESOURCES

In 1996 the Canadian Human Rights Act was amended to prohibit discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation. In 2009, Alberta included sexual orientation in the Alberta Human Rights Act. In 2015, Alberta added gender identity and gender expression to the Alberta Human Rights Act. These Acts ensure that you have protection in Canada to freely express your identity as an LGBTQ2S+ individual without fear of discrimination.

Note: This list is not meant to be exhaustive, however provides readers with resources to find support in their respective community and become involved with the LGBTQ2S+ community.

Compiled by Cheyenne McGinnis

## ADVOCACY

### ALBERTA URBAN MUNICIPALITIES ASSOCIATION

Established in 1905, the Alberta Urban Municipalities Association (AUMA) represents urban municipalities in Alberta. They have provided a resource guide for LGBTQ2S+ individuals in finding support in their respective municipality: [auma.ca/advocacy-services/programs-initiatives/welcoming-and-inclusive-communities/tools-resources](http://auma.ca/advocacy-services/programs-initiatives/welcoming-and-inclusive-communities/tools-resources)

### BULLY-FREE ALBERTA

A 24-hour helpline if you or someone you know is being bullied. It also offers an online chat and resources for reporting lines and health helplines: [alberta.ca/bullying-find-supports.aspx](http://alberta.ca/bullying-find-supports.aspx)

GOVERNMENT OF ALBERTA GAY-STRAIGHT ALLIANCES  
Gay-straight alliances (GSAs) and queer-straight alliances (QSAs) promote welcoming, caring, respectful and safe schools for LGBTQ2S+ students and their allies: [alberta.ca/gay-straight-alliances.aspx](http://alberta.ca/gay-straight-alliances.aspx)

### YOUTHSAFE

Youthsafe.net provides links to information and resources, in Alberta, for LGBTQ2S+ people and allies. The website is focused on services for youth and young adults. Youthsafe is updated and monitored regularly by the Alberta Civil Liberties Research Centre

(ACLRC). The mission of the ACLRC is to promote respect for civil liberties and human rights in Alberta through research and education to contribute to a more just and inclusive community: [aclrc.com/youth-safe](http://aclrc.com/youth-safe)

## HEALTH

ALBERTA HEALTH SERVICES  
Alberta Health is committed to providing a patient-focused, quality health care system that is accessible and sustainable for all Albertans. Find supports for LGBTQ2S+ through following this link - it has information about finding a doctor, building connections and Transgender health: [albertahealthservices.ca/info/Page15590.aspx](http://albertahealthservices.ca/info/Page15590.aspx)

### FAMILY & COMMUNITY RESOURCE CENTRE, ALBERTA HEALTH SERVICES/ CHILDREN'S HOSPITAL

The FCRC has an entire page dedicated to Gender Identity. This resource guide includes information for parents and individuals questioning their Gender Identity. There is a number of crisis supports, community resources, books and even videos you can watch that discuss Gender Identity: [fcrc.albertahealthservices.ca/health-information/library/information-prescriptions/gender-identity/oteenow.com](http://fcrc.albertahealthservices.ca/health-information/library/information-prescriptions/gender-identity/oteenow.com)

MYHEALTH.ALBERTA.CA  
This link provides individuals with information on how to address and talk about being LGBTQ2S+ issues with your

health provider. It talks about sharing your experience, tips for talking and important health topics you should address with your provider: [myhealth.alberta.ca/Alberta/Pages/Talking-about-being-lgbtq.aspx](http://myhealth.alberta.ca/Alberta/Pages/Talking-about-being-lgbtq.aspx)

USAY will have an updated link to this resource list on their website and welcome groups who support the Indigenous LGBTQ2S+ community to contact USAY to be included

## COMMUNITY & SUPPORT

ALBERTA HEALTH SERVICES  
AHS has created a one-page document on how you can best be an ally to LGBTQ2S+ peoples: [albertahealthservices.ca/assets/info/pf/div/if-pf-div-bpg-being-an-ally.pdf](http://albertahealthservices.ca/assets/info/pf/div/if-pf-div-bpg-being-an-ally.pdf)

CALGARY OUTLINK  
Calgary Outlink is a hub that promotes support and community connectedness for all gender and sexually diverse people. They are a community-based, not-for-profit charity dedicated to providing support, education, outreach, and referrals for the LGBTQ2S+ and allied community in Calgary, Alberta: [calgaryoutlink.ca](http://calgaryoutlink.ca)

THE PRIDE CENTRE OF EDMONTON  
Provides programming, events, and support services including group meetings and counseling to LGBTQ2S+ individuals of all ages: [pridecentreofedmonton.ca](http://pridecentreofedmonton.ca)

# GROUPS WITH OPEN DOORS AND OPEN HEARTS ARE

# HERE TO HELP

Housing, food security, safe and appropriate medical care and Ceremony are basic needs. Sadly, being treated with dignity while accessing these basic living services is not always a guarantee when you are Indigenous and Two Spirit, or LGBTQIA.

By **Alycia Two Bears & Taylor Van Eyk**

The following groups are available in Mohkinstsis (Calgary) and Edmonton to help those in need of services or looking for connection navigate their way.

## **CALGARY**

New Tribe contributor Alycia Two Bears takes a look at some available resources and groups in Calgary.

**SOVEREIGN SPIRITS:** Treaty 7's Two Spirit Indigiqueer Society is a grassroots, not-for-profit organization that represents Two Spirit and Indigiqueer Folx within Treaty 7. Check out their Calling Our Spirits: Sovereign Spirits Revealed series on their Facebook page as they introduce followers to amazing individuals who are proudly representing.

The intention is to create a safe place of connection and resources for those in the community who are among the highest at risk of discrimination.



@sovereignspirits



Sovereign Spirits: Treaty 7's Two Spirit Indigiqueer Society

Another organization that is committed to advocating for racialized and marginalized communities in Mohkinstsis is **VOICES: CALGARY COALITION OF**

**TWO-SPIRIT AND RACIALIZED LGBTQIA2+** and their chosen allies. Their physical presence has been visible at events such as Calgary's Pride Festival.



@YYCVOICES



VOICES: Calgary Coalition of Two-Spirit and Racialized LGBTQIA2+

Alberta based ally **SKIPPING STONE** envisions a province where trans and gender diverse individuals are surrounded by positivity, affirmation and support free from barriers, stigma and discrimination. Learn more about Skipping Stone Trans ID Clinic in our feature on page 40.



@skippingstoneca



Skipping Stone

## **EDMONTON**

New Tribe contributor Taylor Van Eyk takes a look at some available resources and groups in Edmonton.

**E2S - Edmonton 2 Spirit Society**  
The Edmonton 2 Spirit Society (E2S) was established by Dr. James Makokis and Ryan Buffalo in 2015. E2S was created with the intention of revitalizing cultural Two Spirit practices in the Edmonton area. They are achieving their goal of having Two Spirit individuals recognized and respected in

society by creating a supportive environment that offers online and in-person events that strengthen and bring together people in the community. Their site [e2s.ca](http://e2s.ca) offers links to other organizations with more specific supports.



@edmonton\_2\_spirit\_society



E2S - Edmonton 2 Spirit Society

**OKIMAW KIHÊW MÊKWANAK**  
Okimaw Kihêw MèkwanaK is a Cree translation of 'leader eagle feathers', the group started out as the first and only Indigenous PFLAG [Parents and Friends of Lesbians and Gays] chapter. Once a month (prior to COVID-19) the group meets in the kihêw waciston center of MacEwan University to share new ideas and resources that may be helpful to one another. The ideas shared reinforce feelings of Indigenous kinship and traditional ceremony. Together in this group they work to create greater resources and support for Indigenous youth who identify with LGBTQ2S+. Elders are regularly invited to share knowledge and teachings.



Okimaw Kihew Mekwanak



## **Trans ID Clinic returns to Calgary for third year**

SKIPPING STONE BRINGS BACK ID CLINICS AND  
INCREASED PROGRAMMING FREQUENCY AMID COVID-19

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By Olivia Condon Storey

Navigating through the process of legally changing one's gender can be a tedious and frustrating journey but Skipping Stone Foundation has brought back their Trans ID Clinics for a third year to help ease the transition.

The Skipping Stone Foundation is a Calgary based non-profit whose mission is to "connect trans and gender diverse youth, adults and families with comprehensive and low barrier access to the support they need and deserve."

Various mentorship and support programs as well as gender gear, expression options and transportation make up the organization's mandate. When COVID-19 hit, they pivoted to offer most of their services online.

Now, in the midst of a pandemic, they are hosting their Trans ID Clinics digitally on the fourth Thursday of each month, except for the month of December, until the end of March 2021

The clinics are run in partnership with the Pro Bono Students Canada - University of Calgary Chapter who provide free legal services to people looking to legalize their transition.

"We have staff, volunteers and partner members, lawyers and law students who are able to walk folks through the different steps for the ID change process, provide information and support with filling out the forms and then the lawyers are able to provide commissioner of oath services for free," says Laura Pope, Skipping Stone's community connections team lead. "In addition, we're able

to offer individual follow up support and information about different ID documents like SIN numbers, tax information, status cards and other things to help folks navigate that system."

The idea was born from a need within the community, Pope said, adding it can be a daunting and very time-consuming task.

"The founding Skipping Stone member was someone who had gone through the process herself and found while the information is publicly available, it's really hard to find and the process continually goes through updates and changes," Pope said.

"Anything we can do to lessen and ease that process for folks, where you can come and get all the information in one place... For some it will be a multistep process so if you need to you're always welcome back and we can provide information and also welcome you into the Skipping Stone family where you can access our other services or just feel welcome and supported."

Pope said though the organization is geared towards supporting the transgender community, their programs are completely inclusive.

"We have a group for youth and adults 16 and over specifically who fit under that trans feminine umbrella and another for those under the trans masculine umbrella, one for those who maybe identify as gender queer or non-binary. Some folks come to us identifying as Two Spirit and they're welcome to join any of the groups that they

feel fits best for them and will have others with similar lived experiences attending the groups," she said.

There is also an art group for teens, open to people of any identity as well as ally youth.

Due to a need for increased social connection during the COVID-19 pandemic, Pope said the organization has doubled the frequency of their programs to run them twice a month.

"The gender diverse umbrella is very broad and no matter where someone is in their journey, maybe they're just starting to question parts of their identity or wonder about wanting to explore different parts of their gendered selves, or they're further along and know exactly what they want but are having trouble navigating the systems out there to get it, we welcome everyone to get in touch with us and connect."

Since the Trans ID Clinics started back in 2018, right after the province allowed people to self-declare their gender on government issued pieces of ID, the clinics have assisted hundreds of trans individuals in making the changes to their identification cards.

Trans ID Clinics are a nation wide initiative that Pro Bono Students Canada supports in various cities across the country including Calgary, Victoria, Edmonton, Windsor and Fredericton.

To learn more about the Skipping Stone Foundation please go to [skippingstone.ca](https://skippingstone.ca)

CPS works to bridge gaps and form relationships with LGBTQ2S+ community amid COVID-19

# CPS Diversity Resources Team



The Calgary Police Service (CPS) Diversity Liaison Team and Gender and Sexual Diversity Advisory Board have found themselves reinventing how they discover opportunities to liaise with the community and build relationships that encourage trust and understanding while addressing issues of concern.

Like other resources amid this global pandemic, the CPS has had to reinvent how their team members are showing up, in most cases virtually; reaching out via social media asking the community what they need in the way of support from CPS.

The group works to reduce stereotypes and negative images while promoting education and awareness inside and outside the CPS. They have connected with the LGBTQ2S+ community at recent protests and are striving to show up, be consistent and follow the Diversity Liaison Team approach to policing. CPS also follows specific recruitment practices to ensure that sexual orientation or gender identity are not barriers to a career in policing.

Are you a victim of same sex domestic abuse in the Calgary area?  
Contact the Domestic Conflict Unit at 403-428-8339

## Diamond Willow Youth Lodge

By Taylor Van Eyk



Diamond Willow Youth Lodge (DWYL) wishes to create a comfortable space for all Indigenous youth (12 to 29), this includes welcoming LGBTQ2S+ youth. DWYL uses cultural practices and exploration of self with health and general wellness support in their programs which include cultural crafts, games, teachings with Elders, meals and more. Elders play a key role in supporting youth who are struggling with cultural displacement offering youth opportunity to practice traditional ceremonies as well

as share stories and ideas. Diamond Willow ensures that the spiritual names given to youth coincide with the pronouns the youth have chosen for themselves. An increasing number of youth who participate at Diamond Willow identify as LGBTQ2S+ and as a result the youth lodge is looking into creating specific programming. During COVID-19 many of DWYL's events and programs have had to adapt through Zoom, online and socially distanced in-person programs.

In the face of COVID-19, a focus on mental health has become more important than ever. DWYL has created a Facebook messenger group called 'Gratitude Group', it was started by an employee reaching out to youth asking them what they are grateful for. DWYL encourages its members to reach out to their trained mental health counselors and Elders for support when needed.

For more about  
Diamond Willow Youth Lodge  
[www.miskanawah.ca](http://www.miskanawah.ca)

# Diversity and Inclusion

## Best Practice Guide: *Being an Ally*

An ally is a person who advocates for the human rights of marginalized and vulnerable people by challenging discrimination and stereotypes.

Allies are needed. Allies are essential. This is especially true with vulnerable populations whose voices are often ignored or drowned out.

### Who is an ally?

We can all work towards being an effective ally to your colleague, friend, family member or neighbor.

### What is an ally?

The word ally is a verb, not a noun. It is a continuous action, an ongoing commitment to standing for and with vulnerable individuals and communities.

### Remember!

It's always their story to tell.

- An ally never shares any part of the story of the individual unless they say it's ok.
- An ally never outs (discloses) someone else's sexual orientation or gender identity.

Besides being disrespectful, sharing such details about another person could put them at risk of harassment, discrimination or physical / psychological harm.

### How do I become an ally?

There are ways to be an effective ally by remembering:

- An ally begins by asking ... "how can I be an ally?"
- An ally listens without judgment and is open to continually learning about others and themselves.
- An ally is always keenly aware of the space they take up where other voices should be instead.
- An ally is one who listens to what the individual or community is saying.
- An ally takes the time to educate themselves on the terms, definitions and language used by the individual or community. It's not the job of the individual you are advocating for to always be educating the ally. It takes considerable energy for a member of a vulnerable group to educate.
- An ally listens.
- When an ally learns what is offensive, they don't say it or do it.
- Be aware that, as an ally, you may be exposed to backlash directed at you.
- Never make assumptions. If you don't know? Ask.
- Be humble. There is always more to know.
- An ally is always listening.

For more information, contact: [DiversityandInclusion@ahs.ca](mailto:DiversityandInclusion@ahs.ca)

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# Indigenous PRIDE



Terms relating to sexual orientation and gender identity can vary based on culture, location, and generation.\*

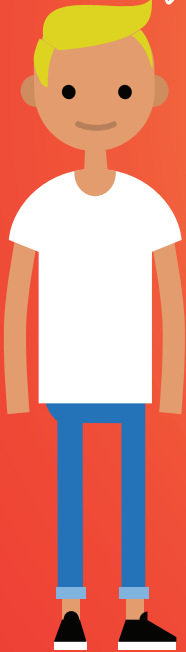
<b>L</b> <i>Lesbian</i> Women who are attracted to other women	<b>G</b> <i>Gay</i> Men who are attracted to other men, but can be applied to women as well	<b>B</b> <i>Bisexual</i> A person who is attracted to people of their gender and another gender	<b>T</b> <i>Transgender</i> A person who lives as a member of a gender other than that assigned at birth	<b>Q</b> <i>Queer</i> Individuals who don't identify as straight, or who have a nonstandard gender identity
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## LET'S GET REAL

LGBTQ+ Terms by: Health.ca

Adding more terms to the LGBTQ acronym means including a much larger variety of community members!

*Questioning*



*Genderqueer*



*Genderfluid*



*Two-Spirit*



*Demi-Sexual*

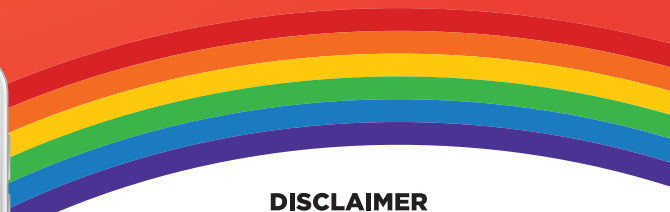
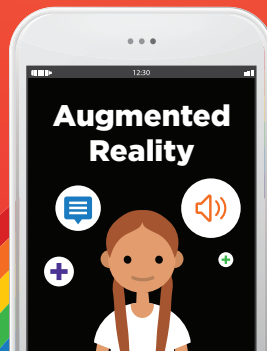


*Demigender*



## HOW TO USE THIS POSTER

Download the **USAY AR App** for free to reveal the terms above in AR+



### DISCLAIMER

\*This list is neither comprehensive nor inviolable. With identity terms, always trust the person who is using the term and their definition of it above any dictionary. USAY, an Indigenous youth organization, strives to support all those in and outside of our community. It is not our hope to offend but merely to support awareness building. Should you require any additional resources please reach out to us:



URBAN SOCIETY FOR ABORIGINAL YOUTH

(403) 233-8225 | usay.ca