



### **About Us**

QMUNITY is a non-profit organization based in Vancouver, BC. that works to improve queer, trans, and Two-Spirit lives. We provide a safer space for LGBTQ2S+ people and their allies to fully self-express while feeling welcome and included. Our building serves as a catalyzer for community initiatives and collective strength.

### Mission

To improve queer, trans, and Two-Spirit lives through services, connection and leadership.

### **Core Values**

### Celebration

We value and celebrate the lives of queer, trans, and Two-Spirit people, and are committed to creating inclusive, safer spaces.

## **Vision**

Vibrant, diverse and celebrated queer and trans communities, where individuals are empowered to live their lives fully, free from discrimination.

### Reconciliation

We recognize that we operate on the traditional, ancestral, and unceded territories of Indigenous people across British Columbia.

### **Anti-oppression and intersectionality**

We believe in a person's right to define their sexual orientation, gender identity, and gender expression. We value our complex intersectional identities and operate from an anti-oppression framework.

## Support .....

Support queer, trans and Two-Spirit people to be their best selves.

# Connection .....

Strengthen the inclusion, connection, and resilience of our community of communities.

# Leadership .....

Challenge discrimination based on sexual orientation and gender identity, and shape our cultural conversations.





### We believe in the power of community!

We celebrate and work to improve the lives of LGBTQ2S+ people 365 days a year across British Columbia by providing services, making connections, and leading conversations. We serve as a catalyst for community initiatives and collective strength within BC and across Canada.

QMUNITY, BC's Queer, Trans and Two-Spirit Resource Centre is about community services and programs that celebrate, support and enhance the diverse cultures of queer communities.

We support community development through innovation, volunteerism and collaboration and provide a host for resources that value, celebrate, and transform the lives of queer, trans, and Two-Spirit people and communities.

We are building upon a strong 40-year history as a leader in the fight for equality and acceptance. Our work provides safer spaces for LGBTQ2S+ people and their allies.

QMUNITY's innovative programs make tangible, life-changing differences in the lives of individuals and communities by ensuring that every person has an opportunity to feel safe, included, and free from discrimination; we are translating our legal equalities into lived equalities.

QMUNITY continues to champion real change by responding dynamically to the needs of LGBTQ2S+ communities. QMUNITY is there for you at all life stages and we pride ourselves on being a centre for LGBTQ2S+ communities. Your support allows us to make it all happen! We hope we can count on your continued support!

Osmel B. Guerra Maynes

Executive Director, QMUNITY He / Him / His / el



Morgan Camley

Chair of the Board of Directors QMUNITY She / Her / Hers







# **Education & Training**

"Stories, it has been said, are all we have. They tell our lives, and keep those not with us still alive. For every person's story we learn, we ourselves are expanded. We also recognize that it may not always be easy, or safe, to tell our stories. Often, those living at the margins are ignored and their stories go unheard.

In 2018. QMUNITY worked throughout the Yukon Territory to hear stories from LGBTQ2S+ Yukoners: how were they navigating day-to-day life? Could they access medical care and transition support that was gender-affirming? Could queer youth safely come out at school, without fear of bullving. harassment, violence or family rejection? The QMUNITY team was tasked with asking these questions, listening deeply, and providing recommendations to the Yukon Territorial Government on how to revise, update or draft new policies, procedures and legislation to explicitly support LGBTQ2S+ Yukoners.

Through dialogic principles and public engagement techniques. our skilled team of facilitators designed and implemented a series of community town halls, public forums, online engagements and smaller focus groups to hear from LGBTQ2S+ Yukoners. This vear-long public engagement brought together hundreds of LGBTQ2S+ Yukoners, advocates. allies and service providers. Together, we began to imagine what an inclusive and safer Yukon could look and feel like for LGBTO2S+ Yukoners.

Our work in the Yukon was an extension of the hard work of many queer, trans, and Two-Spirit advocates and activists in the Yukon before our arrival. In particular, we would like to thank All Genders Yukon, Dawson City Pride, Northern Gender Alliance, and Queer Yukon.



Joel Harnest
 Manager of Programs &
 Community Engagement
 He / Him / His



12 Focus groups



3 Community dialogues



250 participants, attendees, interviewees, collaborators



13 Local LGBTQ2S+ notetakers & facilitators



**500+** Consultative and facilitation hours



66

Recommendations to Yukon Territorial Government



24,000 KM cumulatively travelled, between Vancouver, Whitehorse, Dawson City, Watson Lake, and Haines Junction







" We believe that sustainable change has to come from the very foundations of systems that serve to oppress LGBTQ2S+ communities. When we design our education and training program we know this will be a long-term process, that we have to build systematically to be successful, and weave many efforts together. Our education and training program strategically targets and mobilizes those working within systems to bring about change from facilitators, social workers, educators, health workers. human resources professionals, and beyond, and empowers them with the needed skills and strategies to impact others and the systems they operate within.

The teams of the YVR Airport are long standing beneficiaries of the aforementioned trainings. They first contacted us seeking support to develop their gender-neutral facilities, only to uncover through the collaboration that there is essential work to be done to bring more inclusive policies and practices to the Airport community.

Through the provision of regular LGBTQ2S+ awareness and ally-ship training and consultation, we continue to be proud of our joint accomplishments with YVR.

Their teams increased their understanding of queer, trans, and Two-Spirit folks, and the organization has become an influential example of gender-diverse and gender-inclusive policies Today is an outstanding representative of BC's culture of commitment to diversity and equity."

"We hope our program can continue to carry out support to those working to bring inclusivity and equity to our communities."

- Rana Nu **Specialist, Education & Training** She/ Her/ Hers
- Listen Chen **Queer Competency Training** Coordinator They / Them / Theirs

### **ABOUT**

- Queer Competency Trainings are experiential workshops to help you understand diversity and make your organization more inclusive for queer, trans, and Two-Spirit clients and staff.
- Our staff is available to consult with service providers, educators, business leaders, and other professionals to help them understand how to best work with queer, trans, and Two-Spirit clients, how to make their services more welcoming, how to reach out and engage with local LGBTQ2S+ communities, and how to address and remedy situations where inclusion has been compromised.



 $^{\prime\prime}$  Many of our facilitators first wanted to become Pridespeak facilitators because of presentation they saw at their own school. They experienced first-hand the unique opportunity that Pridespeaks facilitators had to create meaningful change in their own classrooms. And now they get to experience it again and again, in every classroom they speak to.

Youth join our program because they have something to say, because they want to make a difference in a space that has been one of the hardest for them: schools. Giving them the tools and then watching them into confident, grow compassionate peer educators is such a vital behind-the-scenes piece of this program.

Last time we brought the facilitators together for training, a new facilitator confessed that he was nervous about talking to younger classes. Now, he is our resident expert on Pridespeaks for younger classes.

We can't talk about Pridespeaks without including a story from one. One of our facilitators was leading a workshop for a Grade 3 class. Using stick figures, they introduce the class to George and his friend Elizabeth, who has just asked George to call her Elizabeth for the first time. The facilitator asks how George might be feeling in this moment, and one of the students puts up their hand:

### -"Proud of how brave Elizabeth is."

-"And what could George say to Elizabeth, to support her?"

Another small hand goes up:

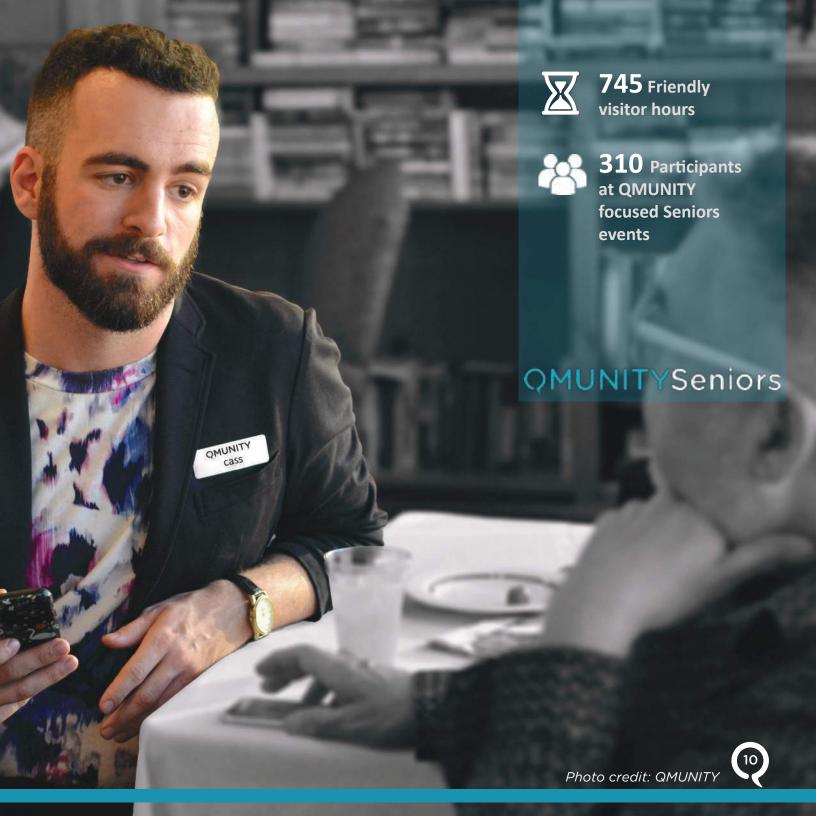
### -"Don't worry, Elizabeth. They're all going to love you."

Hearing that, coming from a class of Grade 3 students, when half an hour before none of them had heard of the word transgender? That's powerful. That's tangible change. And it's a moment that perfectly encompasses what Pridespeaks are all about."

### - Ziggy Schutz **Pridespeaks Administrator** He / She

### **ABOUT**

- Pridespeaks are interactive workshops for and by youth about sexual orientation. gender identity, and bullying.
- Youth facilitators provide accurate, non-judgemental information about sexual orientation, gender identity, derogatory language, bullying at school, and myths and stereotypes about LGBTQ2S youth. The workshops can be tailored upon request and are available for K-12 students.
- The workshops are supported by the Ministry of Children and Family Development and the Vancouver School Board.



### **OLDER ADULTS & SENIORS PROGRAM**

**B**ritish Columbia is aging. Within 20 years, 1/4th of the population will be seniors.

An aging BC means that community based seniors serving organizations are going to face increased and continued demand as folks look to bridge the needs not met by medical service supports.

Without acknowledging the needs and the challenges historically marginalized community members may face in accessing services, or maintaining community connection, we can't ensure that aging seniors are being treated equally. Consider for a moment: where will you grow old? Will you feel safe being 'out' to staff charged with taking care of you when you're no longer able?

How we design our services and supports need to keep our queer experiences of aging in mind. All persons deserve to age with dignity, and QMUNITY is committed to championing these values in ways that improve queer, trans, and Two-Spirit lives.

In 2018 The QMUNITY Seniors program presented a symposium at the International Federation on Aging, on the importance of prioritizing inclusive policy and programs, to some of the 1400 delegates from over 70 countries in attendance. We do this because our voices need to be represented if we want a hand in deciding how LGBTQ2S+ aging is considered, affirmed, and prioritized.

It is vital that QMUNITY shares our expertise, advocates for inclusivity, and confronts complacency in order to support current (and future) LGBTQ2S+ senior lives."

"We're all growing older, and I for one want to know that there will be space for me somewhere down the line."

- Cass Elliott
 Specialist, Seniors Programming
 He / Him / His

- Finding inclusion. belonging, and meaningful connections can become more challenging as we age. We host social events. co-develop and provide educational workshops, assist in one-to-one support and referral services, while fostering connections within diverse communities to improve the lives of LGBTQ2S+ persons 55+ years and older.
- We acknowledge the lived experience of Older Adult and Senior members of our community and seek to hold space for those members to be supported in connecting, supporting, and leading one another and the community at large.





### YOUTH PROGRAMMING

Youth who might not be able to express themselves fully in the rest of their lives are free to be exactly who they are in our Drop In space, without fear of repercussions or judgement. My favourite part of my job is to see the difference from when vouth enter the space for the first time, usually nervous and unsure of what to expect, to becoming more comfortable with both the space and who they are. In the time that I've worked at QMUNITY, I've had the privilege of witnessing many young people grow more comfortable with themselves, and interact more confidently with the world around them.

I'm often surprised at how far some of these young people travel in order to attend Drop In for a mere two hours. Youth commute from Coquitlam, Tsawwassen, Richmond and even Langley in order to find connection with our queer, trans, and Two-Spirit youth and volunteers who have similar experiences, and who can hear their stories and understand.

Youth who haven't attended Drop In for months return and bring along their recent partners, into a safe space where they may not be comfortable introducing them elsewhere.

Many youth return week after week, citing Drop In as the favourite part of their week, as a place where they can connect with friends and enjoy activities that they may not have access to otherwise.

Recently during Drop Ins, we've started to brainstorm ideas for the annual Queer Prom, an event that attracts over 300 young people. With a long list of ideas and enthusiastic discussions around the various themes, we landed on a theme; Circus! This announcement was met with excitement from many of our youth, who can now begin to brainstorm ideas about their fashion for the big night, one that our youth can remember as a highlight for years to come."

- Han Hugessen
 Specialist, Youth Programming
 They / Them / Theirs

### ABOUT

- Our Youth Program consists of group drop-in spaces, our Bras, Binders, and Breast Forms Exchange Program, one-on-one support, and referrals and resources for LGBTQ2S+ youth between the ages 14-25.
- Our Youth drop-ins are a community-oriented space where youth can hang out and seek support. Our drop-ins are a great place to meet similar people and to just be yourself. During drop-in times, there are always Youth Workers, volunteers, and other youth who are excited to get to know you.
- QMUNITY drop-ins:
   Gab: drop-in for youth 14-25
   meets Wednesdays 4-6 PM
   Fridays 6-8 PM.







### **COUNSELLING SERVICES**

"As Clinical Supervisor I am tasked with the responsibility of ensuring queer, trans and non-binary people are able to access appropriate counselling that will contribute to their spiritual, emotional and psychological healing. I constantly strive to build the capacity and scope not just of our program, but of our skilled and dedicated team of queer, trans and non-binary counsellors.

I was hired to supervise QMUNITY's counselling program in 2013 and was immediately moved by the tremendous need and resilience our community members were bringing.

I am very proud to continue to build and grow our counselling program. I am also grateful to QMUNITY, as their part in hiring me into a small position has led to a career shift down this wonderful path of queer centred counselling."

Meera Dhebar
 Clinical Supervisor
 She / Her / Hers



# QMUNITY's counselling program contributes to the health and wellness of our community in key ways:

- We are the only counselling program dedicated exclusively to the LGBTQ2S+ community, and run by counsellors who are queer, trans or non-binary, in the Lower Mainland.
- Our clients travel great distances to see us, in order to know they will be safe to express themselves and be understood without having to explain the nuances of their identities.
- Our clients experience social isolation and often experience challenges in employment, housing, family, relationships, citizenship, and / or building community.
- Our clients have been negatively impacted by health care and mental health systems.

Jennie MacPhee-Woodburn
 Social Worker: Counselling
 Youth Support Services
 She / Her / They / Them

### ABOUT ---

- Our free counselling program is offered by Masters Level placement students, in either counselling, counselling psychology, art therapy, or social work.
- Counselling clients are eligible to receive up to 10 sessions on a weekly basis, counselling is focused on health, wellness, community building, reducing isolation, and minimizing the impact of problematic thoughts.
- Our new low-cost counselling program is offered by professional counsellors who have completed their counselling placements at QMUNITY and are now registered professionals.

# A Two-Spirit / Trans / Non-binary Perspective

In 1965, I was born on Treaty 6 territory in so-called Edmonton, AB. I am Nehiyawak/Cree and Norwegian. My family is from Peguis Nation, on Treaty 1 territory, and Burns Lake, BC. I identify as Two-Spirit, trans/non-binary, queer, disabled, and low-income; I am light-skinned/white passing and experience varying levels of privilege at this point in my life. I also have lived experience with sex work, homelessness, addiction, and incarceration. After running away from home at the age of 15, I have spent the majority of my life on unceded Coast Salish territory, in so-called Vancouver, BC.

of Remembrance (TDOR), which took place in Vancouver on November 20th, 2002. It was organized by approximately 10 people, most of whom were trans, with some cis queer allies. We organized out of QMUNITY which was called "The Center" back then. TDOR is an event which memorializes the hundreds of trans people who are murdered every year, most of whom are Black and Indigenous trans women—many of whom are also sex workers.

The Vancouver Trans Day of Remembrance Society officially registered as a non-profit within colonial British Columbia in 2006. The event itself was growing in visibility, with academic institutions like UBC and SFU offering and providing support, as well as the attendance of local politicians.



Van TDOR has and continues to go through its growing pains and mistakes. Only in the past six years has there been concerted effort in prioritizing accessibility and formalizing group structure. Throughout the years, I've also dealt with my own personal issues and burn out. However, Van TDOR has endured. I retain most of its memory and share it with others who show up to provide support and solidarity. We commit in doing our work within an anti-oppressive, intersectional, decolonial framework.

(For more info: visit https://vancouvertdor.wordpress.com/ or contact vantdor@gmail.com)

Over the past five years I have noticed a decline in trans activism and community organizing. As improvements are made to our healthcare system, as legislation passes to protect trans people from discrimination, as the gender marker "X" becomes a possibility, some of our trans community members—mostly white, light-skinned, abled, middle/upper class, university educated settlers—secure jobs for themselves within the non-profit industry, academia, and various health authorities. In my experience, folks in these social and financial positions are only accountable to their funders, including, and especially, colonial governments.

On the flip side, trans people who are multiply marginalized as women, femmes, Black, Indigenous, people of colour, disabled, poor/low-income/working class, aging, neurodivergent, sex workers, and in other ways continue to struggle with the day-to-day. Housing security, fair wages, education, and social acceptance are particular issues that create barriers for multiply marginalized trans people to meaningfully participate in activism and community organizing.

Now, we find ourselves in a time where paid professionals are speaking for the trans community, instead of trans people who are multiply marginalized and who have critical views of



colonization and oppression—especially community organizers and activists. Strange times indeed.

#### I believe it needs to be both.

I believe in united community, not a wishy washy corporate version. A dynamic, politically engaged, and gritty community led by trans folks who are Black, Indigenous and/or disabled. One that centers trans women of colour. One that strives to put into practice the ideas put forth by intersectionality and decolonization.

Oppressions exist everywhere. It is everyone's responsibility to identify and work on eliminating them within our communities and beyond. Racism, ableism, ageism, lookism, sizeism, and classism — to name a few — remain rampant within the local trans community.

Outside of it, in the greater LGBTQ2S+ community and in cisheteronormative society in general, there are cis supremacists and sex worker abolitionists who promote gender essentialism and biological determinism—ideas which directly target and harm trans women, trans people as a whole, and sex workers. One manifestation of this hatred and bigotry exists as Trans Exclusionary Radical Feminism and Sex Worker Exclusionary Radical Feminism (TERFs & SWERFs).

Some easy examples include Meghan Murphy (FeministCurrent), Lee Lakeman (Vancouver Rape Relief), Derrick Jensen and Lierre Keith (both from Deep Green Resistance). They connect and organize with each other promoting exclusionary, reactionary, fascist, colonial, and oppressive ideology.

Both Murphy and a representative from VRR flew to Ottawa to speak against Bill C-16, legislation that has since passed to prohibit discrimination on the basis of gender identity and gender expression.

It is no coincidence that they both sat alongside right-wing, Christian fundamentalists arguing against the bill—or how Murphy aligns herself with Men's Rights Activists (MRAs) and white supremacists in her fight for **"free speech"**.

An equally important issue is the complicity of our communities in enabling TERFs and SWERFs to organize and create platforms for themselves. While not everyone may agree with TERF/SWERF ideology, too many people are willing to work alongside them, creating unsafe spaces for trans people to organize and participate in.

Coalition Against Trans Antagonism (CATA) formed to specifically address anti-trans and anti-sex worker rhetoric, oppression and violence. Our mission is to identify and challenge oppressive ideologies and practices within (and not limited to) governmental bodies, non-profits, academia, unions, community organizations, and individuals, to reduce and eliminate the harms experienced by trans and sex worker communities. We envision a world where there is safety, support, acceptance, dignity, autonomy and self-determination for trans people, especially trans women, and sex workers.

(For more info: visit noterfsnoswerfs.wordpress.com or email againsttransantagonism@protonmail.com)

With the rise in overt right-wing, white supremacist, extremist, and fascist movements in Canada and abroad, marginalized groups are at great risk, including trans and gender nonconforming people around the world. At the same time, I also believe that we, as humans, are experiencing a moment of reckoning, where those in great positions of privilege and power are being exposed for their histories of abuse. This applies here locally, too. More and more people are learning the language and skills to recognize oppressive behaviours and practices. As a social justice community, we are (slowly, but surely) building our capacities to address and transform oppression within ourselves and our personal lives, and within community organizing. My hope is that we can move from theories and discussion into action. Before it is too late.

We are the problem we have been waiting for, and we are also the solution."

With love and rage,

# **Tami Starlight**





### **VOLUNTEERS**

**"Q**MUNITY's more than 500 volunteers are an integral part of our programming. They help us to achieve our mission of improving queer, trans and Two-Spirit lives through services, connection and leadership.

There are many opportunities to volunteer at QMUNITY. Some people are interested in making long-term, ongoing commitments such as becoming an Information and Referrals Services volunteer, while others find that casual opportunities such as volunteering at events are better suited to their lives and interests. People volunteer for a variety of reasons- they may want to give back, gain job experience, or make community connections. We, the QMUNITY team, strive to help volunteers achieve these goals.

Volunteers help our members see themselves reflected back in a multitude of ways — from trans youth accessing drop-ins, making connections with trans volunteers. and seeing hope for their futures, to our seniors who witness the success of their fight for LGBTQ2S+ rights lived out by senior volunteers. The importance of representation is also key component of our peer-facilitated social and support groups, in which volunteer facilitators create and manage groups along specific LGBTQ2S+ demographic lines. These groups help to create

opportunities for our members to find like-minded people and lessen the feeling of isolation.

QMUNITY's volunteer program aims to be well-rounded, and to provide volunteers with valuable job skills, as job security is one of the biggest challenges for the LGBTQ2S+ community. In our ongoing volunteer streams, we provide extensive and accessible training that is open to all youth, senior and IRS volunteers. Opportunities like dementia training for volunteers in our Seniors Program and Queer Competency Training for all volunteers offer professional development opportunities that can help volunteers advance their career goals."

"It's safe to say that QMUNITY would not be the organization it is today without our passionate, committed, wonderful volunteers."

- Christen McDonald
 Specialist, Engagement &
 Donor Relations
 She / Her / Hers

lan Handy He/ Him

- IRS Volunteer with over 600 hours of service

"I have had the privilege to help many parents of LGBTQ2S+ youth who are phoning or emailing in for help.

Once when I was volunteering for IRS I received a call from a parent whose child had come out to them. They had no idea what to do. They wanted direction for themselves and their child. As a start, I acknowledged the parent's efforts to support their child and that they had called the right place. I reviewed language use and the programs/services available to them.

This included making a referral to Qmunity's programming. At the end of the call, the parent felt supported, had goals on which to focus and expressed gratitude for the assistance."





### **EVENTS**

Discover, empower, and celebrate your identity at one of our special events throughout the year. From Queer Prom to Honouring our Elders Tea and to volunteers, we love to bring people of all ages together to celebrate each other.

### Seniors & Older Adults (Adults 55+)

- Spring Fling
- Holigays Celebration
- Aging with Pride
- Honouring our Elders High Tea

### GabYouth (Youth 14-25)

- Youth Spring Cabaret
- Queer Prom
- Youth Winter Cabaret

### **Engagement & Donors**

- International Day Against Homophobia and Transphobia Breakfast (Fundraising event)
- **Pride Parade** (All ages)
- **Stack the Rack** (Fundraising event)
- Volunteer Appreciation Party (Active Volunteers)

# QMUNITY is what happens when LGBTQ2S+ folx searching for community come together to meet, guide, and support each other.

• **Become a member**.....gmunity.ca/take-action/become-a-member

- Carl@ Campodonico Information Referral Services Coordinator He / She / They / Them Tamara Touma
 Visual Communications
 Designer
 She / Her / Hers

# 

- QMUNITY successfully hired its first
   Person of Colour as Executive
   Director- Osmel B. Guerra Maynes.
- Secured over \$100,000 new grant funding and/or fee for service contract projects QMUNITY's profile as a provincial agency has risen, including work within Education & Training, Seniors, and national reputation through our work with the Yukon Government.
- Convened **50 LGBTQ2S+ facilitators** from across British Columbia for a 2-day forum on LGBTQ2S+ diversity and inclusion strategies, education and training techniques.
- QMUNITY secured a \$20,000 grant from City of Vancouver for Education & Training work for newcomer/immigrant serving agencies.
- Stewarded a territory-wide, year-long public engagement in the Yukon, consulting with LGBTQ2S+ Yukoners on how to make territorial government services more inclusive and affirming of LGBTQ2S+ folk.
- Distributed 200+ gender affirming garments to youth across British Columbia, providing additional one-on-one support to help youth navigate health systems, identify peer and social supports, and advocate for school and parental support.



# Thank you! QMUNITYDonors

The generous support from our community members, corporate partners, government, and funders allow us to provide our comprehensive programs and services. We are grateful to the following partners for their continued support of our work and LGBTQ2S+ communities.

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## • \$250 - 499

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